THE TEACHING OF SPANISH AS A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN TRINIDAD: A CASE STUDY OF THE SPANISH INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

Thesis submitted for the degree of
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by

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The teaching of Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language in Trinidad: A case study of the Spanish Initiative Implementation in the Primary Classroom. Desrian Wilson

ABSTRACT

The focus on human capital development in the republic of Trinidad and Tobago may be viewed as an instrumental economic imperative. This government position has brought with it changes to the educational landscape of the local primary school. Recognition of the impetus for improved trade within the region has brought with it a new curricular focus, that of a modern foreign language at the level of the primary school. It is generally noted that policies are often imported and implemented in the local context without an evaluation of their efficacy. This study thus considers the issue of the implementation of Spanish at the primary school level in a quest to describe the perspectives and experiences of educational stakeholders locally.

The research questions that directed this study were 1) How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad? 2) What are the factors that impact on the initiative's implementation? 3) How do teachers, principals and curriculum officers perceive the introduction of the primary Spanish initiative? 4) How do teachers and principals describe their experiences of implementing the primary Spanish initiative? and 5) What are the students' perspectives on learning Spanish at the primary level?

Given the study’s overarching aim to determine how Spanish is delivered in Trinidadian primary schools, the research concentrated on the teaching-learning process as it was conceptualized and implemented by generalist primary school teachers. The study’s objectives and research questions required a qualitative-dominant methodology within an interpretivist paradigm. A multiple case study was undertaken at two primary schools within the southern region of Trinidad.

Data were collected through pre-observation and video-stimulated recall interviews with teachers, structured classroom observations, focus group interviews with students, interviews with principals and curriculum officers and a school questionnaire.

The findings point to the critical success factors of available, qualified teachers, administrative support, resource readiness and clear policy direction as variables that impact on the initiative’s successful implementation. On the other hand, the learners’ infectious enthusiasm for the language heralds the opportunities that can be grasped from a successful, sustainable initiative.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my beloved, youngest sibling, Annique. She has gone to a place of rest, yet her inspiration has made this journey, as she first envisioned it, possible.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many persons to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisors for their support and guidance throughout this academic journey. To Dr. Diane Davies, who began this journey with me and Dr. Wasyl Cajkler, who so valiantly took up the mantle that was passed, albeit late along the way, a tremendous thank you for accepting and rising to the challenge.

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And last but not least, to the Almighty God with whom all things are possible, I express my profound gratitude.
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Historically speaking, the Anglophone Caribbean has often advanced educational initiatives based on models utilized in developed countries (Cooper, 2008; Lewis, 2008). This is similarly true of language programmes adopted in the region, which have been modeled after systems used in Europe and in more recent times, the United States (Cooper, 2008). One such Caribbean nation, Trinidad and Tobago, has recently followed the global trend of introducing foreign language (FL) instruction to students at the primary school level. This stance reflects one of the hallmarks of twenty-first century instruction, an emphasis on ‘global education’ that promotes FL consciousness and competence to meet the demands of a global future (Tinsley and Comfort, 2012; Wiley, 2010). The flourishing global fascination with early language learning (Tinsley and Comfort, 2012; Scovel, 2000) has translated to a similar momentum in the Caribbean, with countries such as Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago introducing Spanish in primary schools (Luengo-Cervera and Albornoz-Chacón, 2008; OAS-CIDI, n.d.).

An examination of primary education in the twin-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago reveals several curricular reforms over the last five decades (Bishop, 2012), but for the first time, the government has embarked on the implementation of early language learning (Luengo-Cervera and Albornoz-Chacón, 2008; Valley, 2005; Yamin-Ali, 2004). Implementing successful and sustainable language programmes is undoubtedly the goal of many school-based FL initiatives globally, and similar objectives explain Trinidad and Tobago’s adoption in 2004 of the Spanish primary initiative, an early language learning programme for primary schools funded in part by an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) loan agreement (IDB, 2009). While there are many views on this governmental initiative, some local educators assert that the introduction of Spanish in the Trinbagonian primary school context presents both challenges and opportunities (Morris, 2004; Yamin-Ali, 2004). Gaining a deeper understanding of the FL
implementation process may uncover important insights that can add to existing knowledge on early language teaching and learning, especially in a sociolinguistic Creole context like Trinidad and Tobago with English as the official language. Noteworthy insights may thus be obtained given the fact that previously, no studies have been conducted on primary FL instruction in the Trinidadian multilingual context, the latter distinct from that of developed nations often studied.

This thesis details a research project in the field of early FL learning. It seeks to explore several research questions that focus on the primary Spanish initiative’s implementation in the Trinidadian milieu. The introduction of early foreign language learning is a fledgling area in Caribbean pedagogy and research that merits deliberate investigation as it may serve to shape and/or redefine our understandings, provide the foundation for data-driven decision-making in the implementation of educational policy and practice and contribute to the scholarly literature on foreign language instruction. This study thus seeks to address a gap in knowledge, that is, the need for evidence-based research on early foreign language instruction in Caribbean regions.

1.2 The research problem

In recent years there has been heightened international interest in introducing early FL learning in schools as a means of creating globally competent learners (Enever, 2009; Harris and O’Leary, 2009). Though this thrust has been more common in developed nations, there has been a new surge of awareness of the value of early FL instruction in developing nations such as in the circum-Caribbean region, an area that includes the islands, the Caribbean Sea and surrounding coastal states of North, Central and South America (Lemelle, 2013; Sanz, 2009). Trinidad and Tobago has embraced the Spanish initiative as an imperative that would equip its human resource base with competencies in Spanish to meet regional and international trade demands (Valley, 2005).
Contemporary educational literature has similarly focused on the development of global competence as integral to effectively preparing students to take their place in today’s society (Boix Mansilla and Jackson, 2011; Gardner, 2011; NEA, 2010). Global competence entails an awareness and appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity, an understanding of global issues and the acquisition of skills, especially foreign language proficiency, which foster effective communication in increasingly interdependent international contexts (NEA, 2010). Foreign language learning is viewed as a critical success factor in this undertaking, promoting improved cross-cultural interactions in economic and social spheres (Marian and Shook, 2012; NEA, 2010; Redmond, 2014).

The introduction of early FL learning in the Caribbean, which may be viewed as an attempt at preparing globally competent citizens, should also be considered against the backdrop of the region’s unique linguistic landscape. Many islanders speak a Creole or patois whose lexifier, the country’s official language, is that of its former colonizers. The official languages of many Caribbean countries are European, and include French, Spanish and English. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, a country once colonized by the Spaniards, French and British, English and Trinidadian as well as Tobagonian Creole co-exist along a continuum. In addition, some citizens also speak Spanish, Hindi and French patois (Williams, 2007). Vestiges of Spanish, French and languages such as Hindi and Chinese of the former migrant plantation workers are evident in Trinidadian and Tobagonian Creole, though its speakers are generally unaware of the linguistic origin of words retained from these languages.

An examination of Caribbean language research reveals varied emphases. In regional sociolinguistic research an often-explored theme has been the geopolitical and historical factors impacting the development of Caribbean Creoles (Carrington et al, 1972; Youssef and James, 2008). Other research has identified phonological and morphosyntactic differences between the Trinidadian mesolectal and Tobagonian basilectal English Creoles (James and Youssef, 2008;
Youssef and James, 2008). Several investigations have turned to language socialization practices in Caribbean multilingual communities (Garrett, 2005; Paugh, 1999; 2005) and the impact of the ineluctable Caribbean Creole on the acquisition of English as the required educational standard (Abd-Kadir et al, 2003; Phillips-Peters, 2008). More recently, the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Caribbean secondary schools has been brought to the fore (Bakker-Mitchell, 2002; Bankay, 2007; Yamin-Ali, 2006; 2011). Against such a research landscape, however, no previous studies have explored the delivery of FL instruction at pre-secondary school levels in Caribbean settings such as the one undertaken for this study. It is this divide in the research literature that this study seeks to bridge.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe how generalist primary school teachers who are non-native speakers of Spanish deliver the Spanish curriculum in schools. The specific focus is on the Trinidadian context where the first language of most of the population is an English-lexified Creole (Youssef and Deuber, 2007) with English as the language of instruction. Apart from research on FL teaching at the secondary school level (Yamin-Ali, 2006; 2011), the introduction of Spanish as a modern foreign language (MFL) in primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago’s unique sociolinguistic context has been afforded scant attention. Notwithstanding, previous Caribbean language research has implicitly opened the way for an examination of this concern by its exploration of linguistic concerns that include the mother tongue’s influence on the acquisition of the official standard, English, and foreign language pedagogical practice at post-primary levels.

Morris (2004), discussing Spanish language instruction in the country, posits that traditional grammatical methods prevail with English instead of the TL used by teachers. Apart from this anecdotal information, there is need for empirical evidence about how Spanish is taught in the nation’s classrooms. Youssef (2006)
highlights the trend of inconsistency in the realization of language policy in Trinidad and Tobago’s education system, contending that “with no clear direction for the implementation of a language policy, … educational situations remain very mixed, dependent on the views of the educators in any single school” (p.149). Youssef (2006) explains ‘mixed’ educational circumstances, stating that teachers, who are expected to use English consistently, often alternate between strictly Creole usage or predominantly Creole combined with some English in the classroom, in keeping with their individual perspectives. Thus this study seeks to examine and describe the implementation of the primary Spanish initiative in Trinidad, with a view to contribute to early language learning (ELL) knowledge, practice and policy focus. This, it is hoped, will be attained through the documentation and exploration of Spanish teaching and learning at the primary school level.

### 1.4Research objectives and questions

In order to explore the primary Spanish initiative’s implementation in Trinidad, this research sought to realize a number of objectives.

#### 1.4.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

1. To determine how Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language is delivered at the primary school level in selected schools in Trinidad;

2. To examine the factors that impact on the implementation of the government’s primary Spanish initiative; and

3. To explore the experiences of principals, teachers, students and curriculum officers involved in the implementation of Spanish at the primary level.

#### 1.4.2 Research questions

Following are the study’s research questions, which echo the research objectives and provide the focus for this investigation:

1. How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad?
2. What factors impact on the initiative's implementation?
3. How do teachers, principals and curriculum officers perceive the introduction of the primary Spanish initiative?
4. How do teachers and principals describe their experiences of implementing the primary Spanish initiative?
5. What are the students' perspectives on learning Spanish at the primary level?

1.5 Situating the research context

In this section, the international, regional and local contexts of early FL learning are presented along with a discussion of Trinidad and Tobago’s educational context.

1.5.1 The international context

Globally, governmental policies have shifted towards introducing MFLs at an increasingly early stage of schooling. This international trend is apparent in Europe and other areas of the world (Nikolov, 2009), caused in part by beliefs about enhanced cognitive gains brought about through the early learning of an additional language (Bialystok, 1997; Chen et al, 2004; Lesaux and Siegel, 2003). The increasing interconnectedness of the world through technological advances such as social media has increased intercultural interactions, impacting on the focus on modern language learning. What is evident is that there is now a mushrooming of early foreign language programmes worldwide (Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006, p.234).

While internationally there appears to be tremendous enthusiasm on the part of parents and educational authorities for implementing modern foreign language (MFL) programmes for young learners (Knagg, 2011), evidenced by 23 European countries with start ages of nine years or below (Enever, 2011) and Asian countries in which FL learning is introduced at the beginning of compulsory education (ELLiE, 2011), an early start should not be viewed as a panacea for efficacy. Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006, p.234) sound a note of
caution as “on the one hand, early exposure is often seen as the key to success, and a solution to all problems in language education; on the other hand, it may be seen as a threat to first language development and identity.” A look at international contexts further highlight the role that planning must play as a critical success factor in the implementation of early language programmes and managing the transition between primary (first) and post-primary (second) levels (Chambers, 2014; Harris and O’Leary, 2009). Harris and O’Leary (2009, p.13) emphasize the need for “comprehensive planning to respond to issues such as (a) increasing the availability of teachers with the requisite modern language skills, and (b) coordinating language learning and teaching at first and second level.”

Positive cognitive and attitudinal impacts on learners, borne out in part by “the generally perceived wisdom that somewhere in the first three years of schooling children should be introduced to a foreign/second language in some way” (Enever, 2009, p.19) have been recognized in international research contexts. While the effects of this international pattern of early language learning on the development of national human resources should not be underestimated, critical success variables such as high standards of teacher proficiency and target language input (Pinter, 2011) are important. It may bode well, therefore, for educational stakeholders to heed this comment from the international arena:

"Early exposure to a target language will have excellent results in the right circumstances, not only in the development of specific language skills but also in the development of a valuable international outlook. However, the advisability of an early start could be tempered by a number of factors — most especially by the availability of suitably qualified teachers in the right numbers."

(Knagg, 2011, p.1)
1.5.2 The regional context
Since 1997, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) heads of government saw the need for MFL instruction to its young citizens and mandated the implementation of this process. Its aim was for primary students to attain acceptable communicative skills in Spanish by 2005 with a view to forge deeper cultural and economic linkages within the region and Latin America (Insanally et al, 2003; OAS-CIDI, n.d.).

Given the variety in languages spoken in the region, it was recognized by CARICOM that to be full participants in regional developments and to make maximum use of the opportunities that greater integration affords, it was necessary and urgent that the people of the CARICOM region should possess a high level of multi-lingual skills. (OAS-CIDI, n.d., p.14)

The above statement, which appears in the Organization of American States/Inter-American Council for Integral Development report on strengthening Spanish instruction in CARICOM primary schools, clearly reveals regional governmental views that FL skill development reflects a global competency issue critical to maximizing economic gains. This is demonstrated by plans for increased intra-regional and international trade from the proposed free trade area comprised of Caribbean nations and Central and North America, called the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

In 2002, twelve curriculum officers from member states agreed to introduce MFLs in their nation’s schools (Insanally et al, 2003). In collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS), funds were approved to begin this project. A unified, regional philosophy was developed along with country-specific curricula by member states, with Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname leading in the adoption of this undertaking (OAS-CIDI, n.d.). Notwithstanding, the region’s educational systems were unable to meet the
target 2005 time frame for the introduction of Spanish in primary schools due to several deficits. These included the lack of teachers trained to deliver the primary Spanish curriculum, the absence of Spanish as a core subject in Teacher Training institutions and relevant teacher education and primary school MFL curricula (OAS-CIDI, n.d.). CARICOM thus sought to advance strategies to help its member countries “eradicate the deficiencies and move towards the goal of proficiency in one or more foreign languages” (OAS-CIDI, n.d., p.18).

1.5.3 The local socio-economic context

Trinidad and Tobago, “two little dots of earth in the Atlantic ocean” (Collymore, 1995, p.15), is a republic in the Caribbean with a population of 1.3 million people (CSO, 2012). Trinidad, the larger of the two islands, is the southernmost island in the Caribbean and at its closest point, lies 11 kilometres (7 miles) off the coast of Venezuela. There are two cities in Trinidad. The capital city, Port of Spain, is in the north, and San-Fernando is in the south. Port of Spain is the administrative centre and San Fernando, known as ‘the industrial capital’, is situated close to many petrochemical and other industries. Trinidad, the most industrialized of Anglophone Caribbean nations (Baldeosingh-Arjune, 2014), has an energy sector that forms the cornerstone of its economy (American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago, 2014; Gold et al, 2012). The country is the world’s largest exporter of ammonia, a major producer/exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) (Gold et al, 2012; GoRTT, 2014) and ranks second to China in terms of global leadership of methanol exports (IHS, 2013). Previously, Trinidad exported the majority of its LNG to the USA, but due to the discovery of shale oil, there has been a marked decrease in US demand. Currently, demand in Europe, the Americas and Asia have increased sharply, with Europe now the country’s main market (Humpert, 2013; Gold et al, 2012), receiving 40 % of Trinidad and Tobago’s LNG exports (Humpert, 2013). Thus, against the backdrop of an economy largely based on trade, the country’s explicit aim is to increase economic links with neighbouring Latin America. Hence the government’s
instrumental, economic bid to develop its human resource capital’s competence in Spanish as the nation’s first foreign language (Valley, 2005).

Figure 1 shows a map of Trinidad and Tobago, indicating the country’s proximity to Venezuela.

![Map of Trinidad and Tobago](image)

**Figure 1:** Map of Trinidad and Tobago (USCIA, 1976)

### 1.5.3.1 The educational context

Trinidad and Tobago is a former British colony that became an independent nation in 1962 and a republic in 1976. A commonwealth nation, the country’s administrative and educational systems still maintain several vestiges of its colonial past. This is reflected in the educational system, which maintains a two-tiered system of ‘prestige’ schools for the elites and government schools for the
common masses. Although the examination system is based on the British model of Ordinary and Advanced level examinations, there has been the recent introduction of examinations with more local and regional content. This is reflected in Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) examinations replacing the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams at the O’ level and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) at the A’ level respectively. These attempts, though laudable, are viewed as “piecemeal attempts … to adapt curricula and examinations to the realities of West Indian life” (Burnham, 2008, p.318). A further derivative of the country’s colonial history is apparent in the designation of Standard English as the normative, official language used above all other local dialects. In addition, the system of government is a constitutional or parliamentary form of democracy modeled after the Westminster system, with an upper house or senate and a lower house or house of representatives.

Trinidad and Tobago, a republic since 1976, is widely considered the most advanced Caribbean country, in part due to its emphasis on education (Baldeo, 2011) as evidenced by many schools considered to be among the best equipped in the region (Miller, 1991) and the availability of free education for all citizens from pre-school to undergraduate level. The value placed on education by successive governments has been credited to the remarkable education policy of Dr. Eric Williams, Trinidad and Tobago’s first prime minister who led the country through independence. Williams viewed equality through education as transformative, promoting nationalism and social development (Campbell, 1992). “Dr. Williams and the PNM hoped to bring about social integration and economic development” (Campbell, 1992, p.71) while seeking “to eradicate from the minds of the people the mental constraints of colonialism” (Collymore, 1995, p.177). It is generally believed that William’s educational legacy was largely successful in his time, providing the foundation for the nation’s human capital development.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there are 553 primary schools (MoE, n.d.a), which are of three main types-- government, denominational-assisted and private institutions
Of the primary school types, 371 denominational schools comprise the majority, with 130 government schools and 52 private schools. The denominational schools can be further subdivided into 82.47% (n=306) Christian, 12.6% Hindu (n=47) and 4.85% (n=18) Islamic primary schools (MoE, n.d.a). The curriculum focus of the varied primary school types is generally consistent, as this is mandated and supervised by the local Ministry of Education (MoE).

Primary schooling typically begins at age 5 (World Bank, 2013) and at the age of 11+, students transition to secondary school. Throughout primary school there are a number of high stakes examination such as national tests, which finally culminate in the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination. The externally administered SEA examination determines the placement of students into the secondary school system. In spite of explicit curricular demands, it is widely accepted that Trinbagonian society is exam-oriented, with attention usually paid to student performance on examinations (Burnham, 2008; De Lisle et al, 2010). Generally speaking, non-examinable subject areas are largely ignored. This situation is attested to quite clearly by the following statement, which reveals the perennial problem of “the distortion of de facto teaching practice (whatever the national curriculum may say in theory)” (Burnham, 2008, p.246) with almost exclusive emphasis placed in the final two to three years of primary schooling on subjects tested in the national exam. For the locals, an important measure of a successful primary school is the proportion of students placed in “prestige” secondary schools based on the results of the 11+ examination (Burnham, 2008).

The country is home to three universities and fifty smaller tertiary-level education providers, many of the latter affiliated with international accredited institutions (Baldeo, 2011). The University of the West Indies (UWI), the regional university, has three campuses located in Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica. The longest standing regional university, the UWI upholds a tradition of high academic standards in the Caribbean (Agozino, 2011; Bernard, 2011; Harris, 2011). The University of the Southern Caribbean (USC), a denominational institution, has
been in existence for over 80 years and is the country’s oldest private tertiary level provider. The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), the national university, was founded in 2004 with a primary focus on science and technology programmes. In 2004, the UTT was mandated by the government to replace the Teacher Training College two-year diploma programme to become the country’s main teacher education institution (Baldeo, 2011), with the aim of certifying primary teachers with degrees. In 2006, teacher education was incorporated into its bachelor degree programmes (Williams, 2007). In 2014, the UTT was mandated by government to begin post-graduate training of its teacher graduates, a programme still in the infancy stages of planning at the time of this writing. The education system of Trinidad and Tobago as identified in the Trinidad and Tobago Country Report (Williams, 2007) is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: General structure of Trinidad and Tobago’s Education System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Education</td>
<td>16+ years</td>
<td>The University of the West Indies (UWI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Private degree/ diploma-granting institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>11-16 years</td>
<td>Traditional Schools- O’ and/or A’ levels (5 yr. or 7 yr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>New Sector Secondary Schools- O’ levels (5 yr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>7-11 years</td>
<td>Standards 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>Infants (Levels 1 and 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-School Education</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nurseries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an attempt to widen and deepen its relations with its regional neighbours along the lines of political and economic activity, the Trinidad and Tobago government
embarked upon policy initiatives (2004 and continuing), which included enhanced international competitiveness and the free movement of labour and trade with Latin America (Valley, 2005). Collectively, these policies were major outcomes of an overarching regional plan emerging out of CARICOM agreements called the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) (OAS-CIDI, n.d.). In strengthening relations with Latin America, the government’s emphasis on its citizenry learning Spanish is seen as vital for global competitiveness in the area of trade (Morris, 2004; Valley, 2005). This governmental aspiration, as explicitly stated in its draft Spanish Primary Curriculum, is that Trinidad and Tobago’s geographical location as ‘gateway to the Spanish-speaking Americas’ would “create an imperative for strengthening and deepening the national capability in Spanish at all levels” (MoE, n.d.b, p.2).

According to its national agenda, Vision 2020, the People’s National Movement (PNM) government advanced a two-stage developmental plan to achieve developed country status by the year 2020. Included in this plan was the expectation that all primary students across the nation would be introduced to conversational Spanish by 2004 (Anon, 2004). This plan did not come to fruition. However, a pilot project with a limited number of schools (Cooper, 2008) was begun and the B.Ed. teacher preparation programme in primary education, which includes pedagogical methods for the teaching of Spanish (Manning, 2006; 2007) was initiated. The latter’s objectives include the development of oral competence in and a love for Spanish, along with increased awareness of the Hispanic culture.

With the change of political administration in 2010, the People’s Partnership (PP) government replaced Vision 2020 with a medium term policy framework entitled Innovation for Lasting Prosperity 2011-2014 (Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, 2012; Shah, 2011). This document identifies the government’s aim to build its human capital as an economic imperative. A strategy to accomplish this goal is addressing the educational concern of providing “seamless transitions throughout the education system” (Ministry of
Planning and Sustainable Development, 2012, p.91). Strategic reforms include revisions to the primary curriculum, improving literacy by including a second language and reforming teacher education (Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, 2012). There thus appears to be continuity in terms of the country’s foreign language policy, evidenced in September 2013 by a revised primary school curriculum (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013a), also described as the Primary Curriculum Rewrite (PCR), that was disseminated to schools. The revised primary school curriculum includes Spanish as a core subject area along with the mandate for its implementation as a compulsory, non-examinable subject, its principal focus being on oral Spanish (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013b, p.14). Its main objectives include “awakening in the child an awareness and appreciation of the richness of language exploration” and promoting “enthusiasm, excitement and love for language study” (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013b, p.22). Some MoE workshops were conducted from September 2013 to sensitize primary school teachers and/or administrators with regard to instructional practices and curricular content specifically focused on the teaching of Spanish.

Given that teacher training in Spanish as a core subject area for primary schools has begun at the UTT and its graduates, trained to deliver the Spanish curriculum, are employed at the nation’s primary schools since 2010, examining the introduction of the FL learning policy for the primary level should be of importance. To date, however, there has been no empirical feedback about the implementation of primary Spanish as an MFL in Trinidad and Tobago. Clearly, this is an area that merits detailed investigation.

1.5.3.2 The linguistic context
Trinidad and Tobago is a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups (Baldeoingh-Arjune, 2014). The two major races, East Indian (35.4%) and African (34.2 %), form a rainbow society alongside Douglas – pronounced doh-glas – (7.7%), a term used locally for the bi-racial offspring of African and East Indian parents
(Regis, 2011; 2013), as well as descendants from China, Europe, the Middle East and a smattering of other countries.

For the majority of the citizenry, the Creole is the mother tongue though English is the country’s official and second language (L2) (Carrington et al, 1972; Robertson, 2010; Yamin-Ali, 2004; Youssef and Deuber, 2007). Upon entry into school, individuals are met with the “necessity to use Standard Trinidad English, with the inability to use the “proper” forms in appropriate social contexts being educationally and socially disadvantageous” (Burnham, 2008, p.308). In addition, Morris (2004), discussing Spanish language instruction in Trinidad, observes that traditional grammatical methods prevail with English instead of Spanish largely used for instruction by teachers. These observations need to be considered in relation to the use of the predominantly English-lexified Creole in Trinidad and Tobago. This is widespread, with code switching between the L1 and L2 featuring prominently (Burnham, 2008; James and Youssef, 2008; Yamin-Ali, 2004; Youssef and Deuber, 2007). This phenomenon is borne out by Youssef (2006, p.148; 2010a, p.69), who terms this varilingualism. Varilingualism refers to children’s partial or complete knowledge of the codes of closely related languages and the ability to mix or switch these codes dependent on their competence or the social context. They bring to the learning of Spanish this mixed and complex linguistic development from early childhood into school.

The country’s historical legacy reveals influences of French, Spanish and Urdu in the lexicon and syntax of the Creole (Carrington et al, 1972; Cooper, 2008), contributing to the richness of this local speech variety. The Spanish impact on present-day Trinbagonian culture is multi-faceted and deep-rooted, stemming from the Spanish colonization of Trinidad in the 18th century and later from small migrations of Venezuelans. Collectively, this influence includes music, parranda or parang (Allard, 2000), cuisine and Hispanic descendants known locally as cocoa panyols (pronounced ‘pah-yawls’) - a derivative of the word ‘español’. These influences are reflected in several grammatical structures in the Creole
(Carrington et al, 1972). However, the educational context often does not take this into account. As Robertson (1998; 2010) observes, the Creole and the languages that influence it are largely ignored in preference to Standard English in Caribbean educational policy.

Thus, while Spanish is to be delivered in the primary classroom in this multilingual context similar to other Caribbean communities, there continues to be no detailed descriptions of early language learning practices that have emerged to reflect the socio-linguistic and educational circumstances that exist in Trinidad and Tobago’s society or the Anglophone Caribbean. Furthermore, very little is currently known about what benefits, if any, are derived in terms, for example, of linguistic outcomes, attitudes and cross-cultural awareness.

1.5.3.3 Implications for the school context
With an already overburdened curriculum (Quamina-Aiyejina et al, 2001; Williams, 2011) and the fact that English is not the mother tongue of most students (Carrington et al, 1972), primary teachers must grapple with the demands of including this ‘new’ language. Since 2010, graduates of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), trained in the B.Ed. programme to deliver the primary Spanish syllabus, have been employed with the expectation that the FL would be included among the pedagogical events in the primary classroom and that this initiative would survive and thrive.

The literature on FL learning points to teacher competence and age-appropriate pedagogies as significant concerns in early language learning effectiveness (Pachler et al, 2007; Tinsley and Comfort, 2012), while locally dominant teacher education programmes favour constructivism and reflective practitioner roles as hallmarks of effective teaching practice. Added to this is the importance of student motivation in effective instruction. Discussing the prospect of Spanish in Trinidad and Tobago’s primary schools, Yamin-Ali (2004) offers this perspective:
To a great degree, the success of this programme also lies [sic] ability to motivate the learner. The content, including practice and activities, must have meaning and relevance for them. The activities themselves must be structured to facilitate the natural inclinations of a primary school child – including movement, sound, and imagination. The learner’s perception of the language must be such that he/she wants to be associated with it. (p. 2)

This comment appears to suggest the need not only for age-appropriate, meaningful activities, but for cultural relevance in the primary Spanish classroom. Furthermore, she notes the possible added challenge of balancing “input” with “breaking down the sociolinguistic barriers” present in ‘the average classroom’ (Yamin-Ali, 2004, p.2). It would be insightful, therefore, to discover how teacher competencies impact on FL learning at the primary level in Trinidad and Tobago, given that instructional effectiveness is one of the critical variables impacting on learning outcomes (Enever, 2012; Gregory, 2000; Vegas and Umansky, 2005). This is in light of the fact that there are few mechanisms in place for the supervision and monitoring of initiatives (Robertson, 2010) and that oftentimes there is little follow-through in terms of the Ministry of Education’s expectations.

The early FL initiative of Trinidad and Tobago’s government has been premised upon socio-political discourses of globalization and attaining developed country status through improving the quality and relevance of education. By making linkages between primary and secondary education curricula, the government’s aim is to create an outstanding seamless education system (GoRTT, 2010; MoE, 2008; Northey et al, 2007). This is to fulfill the primary curriculum’s goal of enabling students to progress in ‘a seamless, continuous and coherent way’ through the various levels, promoting national developmental objectives (MoE, n.d.c; MoE, 2008).
Issues relating to educational reform are complex in any setting, especially in developing nations (Gooler, 1978). There are those who believe that successive governments have adopted this ‘new’ language policy without determining the best fit for the country. Like Butler (2009), they contend that many policy decisions are imported, popular ideologies without consideration of the local context. Similarly, Oates (2010) argues for harnessing insights from international success stories and developing greater understandings as opposed to callously engaging in ‘crude policy borrowing’ (p.13). Yet this is often not the case with policies borrowed from international milieux and implemented in Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, it would be instructive to document the impact of this new focus on Spanish instruction in the primary context, since there is little by way of published research that explores not only the quality of teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago (Baldeo, 2011; George et al, 2001), but also how teachers interpret and deliver curricula given the nation’s sociolinguistic heritage.

While internationally there have been several studies pertaining to early foreign language implementation in schools (Muñoz, 2006; Lundberg, 2010; Enever, 2012), there has been a dearth of local studies in this area. This provides a unique opportunity to obtain insights into the delivery of Spanish in the primary school context. As such, this underrepresented area in FL instructional research represents a gap that this study aims to fill. Consequently, this study examines how the teaching of Spanish is articulated and implemented at the primary level in the southern region of the island of Trinidad.

There are several reasons why the southern educational district was selected for this research. These reasons include the fact that this researcher currently works in the southern region of Trinidad and all of her years in teaching have been in the southern educational district. In addition, the majority of teacher trainees during the past six years have graduated from the southern campus of the UTT and prior to this study, relatively little but anecdotal information was known about FL instructional practice and stakeholder perspectives within authentic primary
school settings. Additionally, in recent years the top performing primary schools in the 11+ SEA examinations have been from south Trinidad (Dhalai, 2014; Ramdass, 2012). Hence, given this researcher’s interest in exploring the implementation of primary Spanish, Trinidad’s southern educational district, which formed the context of this study, was found to be suitable for information-gathering.

1.6 The significance of the study

This study is significant in that it examines the implementation of an MFL at the primary school level, a novel educational initiative for Trinidad and Tobago. This novelty presents an important opportunity to explore how teachers, in real-life settings, interpret the Spanish language and pedagogical training they received within the island’s varilingual landscape. While general opinion locally suggests the futility of introducing Spanish at the primary level, with statements such as “dey cyah even talk English an’ dey want to teach dem Spanish!” (Yamin-Ali, 2004, p.1), the use of the Creole does not mean an inability to learn a foreign language. Yamin-Ali (2004) maintains that:

The inability, or refusal, of the average Trinidadian or Tobagonian child to use Standard English as a norm, or when required, is embedded in a sociocultural legacy of definitions of power, powerlessness, acceptance and rejection, all undergirded by economics. Their use of their preferred dialect is based, not on ability or intelligence, but on social comfort, which translates into a sense of belonging and identity. (p.1)

Given that research in the local context has established that “the speech patterns of many primary teachers themselves display significant influences from the local Creole English” (Burnham, 2008, p.246) and that, for the primary Spanish initiative, “there is no blueprint” (Yamin-Ali, 2004, p.2), this study aims to
investigate how generalist primary school teachers who are non-native speakers of Spanish deliver the Spanish curriculum along with the factors that facilitate or constrain the initiative’s successful implementation.

To date, feedback on primary Spanish teaching has been obtained from teacher trainees delivering lessons in either ‘contrived’ or real-life classroom settings under examination or practicum conditions. There is a paucity of empirical evidence on Spanish instructional practices in the primary classroom once generalist teachers have graduated from teacher training institutions and secured teaching positions at local primary schools. It would therefore prove insightful to see what teachers really do in instructional settings, given that they, based on research in international contexts, have been trained to use the target language (TL) so that learners achieve communicative competence, that is, meaningful communication by interacting with others (Richards, 2006; Savignon, 2007). As such, the study focuses on how generalist teachers who teach all core subjects in the primary classroom engage students to achieve this goal. In this way, the study would describe how teachers demonstrate their understandings of the primary Spanish initiative as reflected in their classroom practice.

This exploration focuses on how instructional practice addresses learner and curricular needs. The findings of this enquiry may help to counter or support the reticence of educational stakeholders who opine that the primary curriculum is already over-burdened by examining the extent to which student interest, engagement and achievement of learner outcomes may be additional and important indicators for curriculum inclusion of FL learning rather than adult management concerns. In addition, the study’s findings may further promote critical thought, reflection and improvements in the area of teacher education. It is thus expected that the results of this study, though specific to two schools in the southern educational district of Trinidad, can be extrapolated and used to create a climate of greater acceptance and valuing of Spanish in the primary curriculum including cultural considerations by educational stakeholders.
Oftentimes, research is unwittingly undertaken in ‘geographical boxes’ that constrains the provision of collective support (Youssef, 2010a, p.75). This viewpoint seems to suggest that research is restricted and its impact constrained by locale. Were this indeed the case, this implies a need to open these geographical boxes to ensure that a middle ground is found, creating linkages that preserve the best elements of distinct cultural realms while tailoring approaches to meet specific group needs. While globalization is with us, over the years the Caribbean has been guilty, like some developing countries, of the unmodified introduction of ideologies from Europe and America—a type of ideological plagiarization. This approach has proven over time to be inadequate because, as a post-colonial society, there are cultural peculiarities that do not in any way mirror those of these developed countries. Also, as a small island, there is an element of insularity. Given the assertion by some researchers that several local educational policies have been implemented with low fidelity and much variability in primary schools’ performance (De Lisle et al, 2010), this points to a need to consider socio-cultural differences with regard to policy borrowing.

Thus, in spite of globalization, we must take note of the significant cultural and other differences that exist between the metropole (Europe and America) and the Caribbean. An important consideration in any language teaching situation in Trinidad and Tobago, for example, may be the suggestion that “children who enter school with no other language than their Creole vernaculars undergo severe psychological trauma from the institutional rejection of their language, and by inference, their thought” (Carrington, 1978, p.86). Some local teacher educators have suggested that this type of language conflict may translate to the classroom, claiming, like Carrington, that the excision of the Creole as a ‘powerful conditioning factor’ of language teaching and general education can lead to an immeasurably great loss. Furthermore, Carrington maintains that “the effectiveness of all teaching is reduced by the lack of validity of the language teaching procedures and the absence of a clearly articulated policy on language
supported by appropriately developed curriculum materials” (Carrington, 1978, p.86).

Aware of this perspective, this researcher sees this study as filling an important gap by examining how teachers interpret the Spanish curriculum in light of their learners’ particular linguistic circumstances. This study is significant, therefore, in that it seeks to create a fit between two aims of language learning, that is, being able to understand ‘the other’ and being able to understand oneself. As such, this study looks at the way teachers in the Trinadian context seek to marry their training with the reality of the Trinadian classroom so that their FL instruction is relevant and beneficial to learners and curricular aims in an age of globalization. While geographical boxes exist, these can be severely limiting. The suggestion of this researcher is that instead, these ‘boxes’ should become geographical spheres of influence, intersecting with other regions to capture what is best from each setting. This study is thus significant as it seeks to shift the paradigm of ‘geographical boxes’ into cross-border cultural and linguistic streams of influence by describing what teachers do in the Trinbagonian primary Spanish classroom, by harnessing insights from foreign-based pedagogies as they consider the local context.

Furthermore, this study is significant given the historical and cultural legacy in Caribbean societies of a lack of evaluation and continuity of initiatives. This perspective is borne out in part by a release from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that commented on the inadequacies of Trinidad and Tobago “in generating critical data, which hamper effective policy making and lessen transparency” (IMF, 2014, p.1). ) To date, the evidence suggests that there is minimal research in terms of follow-up or evaluative studies, if any, on the effectiveness and sustainability of national initiatives adopted and implemented in Caribbean schools. As Cord et al (2010) advise:

    effective policy making requires information on whether governments
are doing things right and whether they achieve the results intended. Strong monitoring and evaluation systems provide the means to compile and integrate this valuable information into the policy cycle, thus providing the basis for sound governance and accountable public policies. (p.xvii)

Thus, given the embryonic stage of the primary Spanish initiative, the findings generated by this study should provide useful feedback to policymakers, delivering empirical information on the process, promoting transparency and creating a platform for discussion, which can lead to greater efficacy in the initiative’s implementation.

Finally, this study is significant in that it allows for a contribution to a fuller understanding of the implementation of the primary Spanish initiative in Trinidad, further informing FL instruction and supplementing the corpus of language learning research. It is hoped that this study would serve to enlighten the practice of teacher education in the area of primary FL teaching in the Caribbean and other similar contexts and help generate improved, data-driven guidelines to policymakers, teacher educators and other language stakeholders in education, so that the way forward can be charted and assured of quality and sustainability.

1.7 The study’s rationale

This thesis addresses the phenomenon of how primary teachers deliver FL instruction in a context of varilingual learners. This concern is important regionally and locally, given the historical and current debate about best language teaching practices for Caribbean socio-linguistic contexts, which take into consideration the distinct needs of students in the islands.

Given that many of the teachers trained in primary teacher education did not matriculate with prior certification in foreign languages and the widespread belief that Spanish instruction at the primary level would be avoided or ineffective, the
importance of data-driven findings on generalist Spanish teaching should not be undervalued. The absence of scholarly literature on how primary teachers manage FL instruction in a bid to create a linguistically meaningful, culturally relevant environment that addresses curricular demands, merits detailed investigation.

1.8 Participating schools
Primary schools A and B, both located in the southern region of Trinidad, form the context for this study. Both schools have a population under 400, categorized locally as small primary schools, and are managed by school boards. School A is an urban, co-educational, private primary school situated six kilometres from the periphery of the southern city, San Fernando and has been established since 1983 (de Verteuil, 1993). Currently the school has a population of 390 students. School B, founded in 1895, is a co-educational, semi-rural government assisted primary school with 293 students. It is located in the southeastern region, in a village 13 kilometres from San-Fernando.

1.9 Brief profile of the participants
The study’s participants comprised two school principals, two MoE Spanish curriculum officers, two teachers and a Standard 2 class from each of the two schools that engaged in the qualitative aspect of the research. The male and female principals were both 58 years old. The two female teachers were 25 and 29 years old respectively and held a Bachelor of Education degree (primary specialization). At the time of the data collection, the younger had three years teaching experience and the elder, seven years.

Each class comprised male and female students ranging in age from 7 to 9 years. All students began their formal learning of English at the age of 3, at the beginning of their early childhood education. The female Spanish curriculum officers each held a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish as well as a postgraduate diploma in Education with an emphasis on FL instruction. One was 53 years old
with 26 years of teaching experience and 3 years as a curriculum officer, totaling 29 years of employment with the MoE. The other was 46 years old with 16 years teaching experience, 3 years as a school principal and 3 years as a curriculum officer, totaling 22 years of service with the MoE. The questionnaire respondents were principals or senior teachers employed with the MoE.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

This chapter has presented the backdrop against which Spanish is promoted as the first foreign language of Trinidad and Tobago and integral to regional economic development. This novel initiative in the landscape of primary education represents a new passage in Trinidad and Tobago’s history. This chapter’s discussion included the impetus for this governmental initiative, the research problem, purpose of the study and research questions. In addition, the study’s significance and context were detailed.

In the following section, Chapter 2, a review of the related literature is undertaken. In Chapter 3, the study’s methodology is discussed, with attention given to the rationale for the approach to social research embraced in this study. In Chapter 4, the study’s findings are presented. The discussion of the findings is undertaken in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 concludes the research on the implementation of Spanish in Trinidad’s primary classroom. The conclusion provides a summary of the study’s main findings, implications for the educational and national context and recommendations for the way forward.
Chapter Two: A review of the relevant literature

2.1 Introduction

In many countries across the globe, modern foreign language learning has become an important though controversial educational issue, especially in places where English is the lingua franca. Language learning challenges in terms of attitudes, linguistic competence and motivation have been noted amongst nationals of countries such as Australia, the UK and the USA, in sharp contrast to non-Anglophone countries such as the Netherlands and Germany (Bartram, 2010). However, the global trend of early language learning (ELL) found in many educational systems world-wide (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2009; Nunan, 2003) is viewed as important for developing positive attitudes towards language (Rich, 2014). Nikolov (2009) highlights a resultant growth of empirical studies on specific issues of language learning including classroom target language use (Nilsson, 2013; Peng and Zhang, 2009), vocabulary acquisition (Alexiou, 2009; Orosz, 2009; Szpotowicz, 2009) and strategies employed by young language learners (Šamo, 2009; Griva et al, 2009). However, there are few studies that “focus on what is available to children in different contexts and classrooms, on processes and outcomes, and emerging issues” (Nikolov, 2009, p. xiii). The call for an exploration of variants in language learning in different educational spheres sets the context for this chapter.

In this chapter, I attempt to capture the relevant literature that circumscribes this study. The literature under review is aligned with the study’s research questions. The review thus seeks to establish the context for this enquiry, locating it within the research literature under three main sections. The first section reviews ELL research and discusses theories underpinning MFL instruction and the management of change. This is related to the overarching concern of the first specific research question of how an MFL initiative is implemented at the primary school level. The second section examines pedagogical approaches and the conditions for success, which relate to the second specific research question.
section three, the lens is turned on international, regional and local language studies, which relate to the remaining research questions that focus on educational stakeholders’ experiences and perceptions of language learning in particular contexts. The review also reflects the classroom observation scheme employed in this study, which is based on communicative language teaching theories (Aliponga et al, 2007), language acquisition research and studies on communicative language teaching (Spada and Lyster, 1997). The chapter ends with a summary of the themes discussed and points to chapter 3, the study’s methodology.

2.2 Perspectives on early language instruction’s impact

Of interest to stakeholders of ELL has been the question of its impact, given the belief that ‘younger equals better’ linguistic competence. Though prognosticating benefits solely on age of first exposure may seem naïve, early language instruction’s forte is generally perceived to be learners’ attainment of critical cognition, attitudes and skills that enhance other areas of academic learning.

If one assumes a critical position, however, and problematizes this perspective, it will be possible to bring to bear useful insights about early language learning and its related challenges. A problematization of this perspective points to possible deficits in terms of suitable preparation of FL teachers globally (Copland and Garton, 2014; Enever, 2014). Differing levels of teachers’ language expertise, attitudes and/or resources produce variations in instructional experiences, contributing to inequality across contexts. Such diversity may further allow for varied constructions of what good early FL teaching and learning entails. A problematization of ‘the earlier the better’ perspective also points out that a singular focus on introducing language learning early as though panacean, without ensuring the conditions for success may prove disadvantageous. In the Trinbagonian context, a problematization of ELL raises similar concerns? One wonders, are there sufficient trained personnel to implement early language
instruction? Are the schools ready to meet the programme demands? Will a third language be too much, too soon?

2.2.1 Advantages

Research reveals several ELL advantages consistent with high-input instructional contexts (Domínguez and Pessoa, 2005; Singleton, 2003). Clearly, age-related benefits result from the interplay of contextual variables (Cenoz, 2003; Marinova-Todd, 2003; Singleton, 2003), yet young learners’ intuitive and easy acquisition of language structures, native-like pronunciation and positive attitudes toward the target language (Johnstone, 2002; 2009) reinforce the positives of a valuable learning experience.

Recent studies report on the strengths of early language instruction. Cenoz (2003) reported on students in Spain who began learning English as an L3 at ages 4, 8 or 11. Learners’ English proficiency, motivation and attitudes towards the L3 were assessed. Anova analyses revealed the highest scores for younger students in terms of attitude and motivation. Older students scored highest on cloze, listening and reading comprehension tests, suggesting that great maturity translates to quicker learning. These findings indicate positive benefits for all young FL learners.

Some studies, which examined the impact of age and other variables such as programme content, also highlight advantages gained from an early start. Domínguez and Pessoa’s (2005) study compared the proficiency of sixth-grade students who began at kindergarten with 20 minutes of daily Spanish instruction with sixth-grade students receiving 40 minutes of daily instruction in a Spanish FLES programme that integrated other subject content. While all participants performed well on listening tasks with no significant differences in reading, early-start learners performed better in speaking and writing tests, demonstrating greater communicative confidence and FL growth.
Alptekin et al (2007) conducted a quasi-experimental study among primary school 10-11 year-old Turkish students. The experimental group was taught in the target language (TL) using a theme-based approach integrating science and social studies content. This was compared with a grammar-based syllabus in a control group. Both groups, taught for two hours weekly in a context identified as ‘input-poor’ (Alptekin et al, 2007, p.12), were tested in listening and reading/writing skills. Mixed-design ANOVA results showed the experimental group consistently outperforming the control group on all measures, demonstrating that ELL can prove beneficial in theme-based programmes, even in low-input contexts.

Boyson et al (2013) also compared the outcomes from two FL programmes, one beginning at kindergarten and continuing to grade 8 and the other beginning at grade 5 and ending at grade 8. From kindergarten to grade 5, students received 30 minutes of Spanish thrice weekly and 42 minutes of daily Spanish instruction from grade 6 to grade 8. All teachers were certified, fluent Spanish speakers using a minimum of 95% TL for instruction. Teaching techniques included communication in meaningful contexts, scaffolding through gestures, visual resources, songs and games.

Students were evaluated at the beginning, second and final year of both programmes using oral and listening measures. A nine-level COPE/SOPA rating scale based on ACTFL proficiency guidelines was used. The findings revealed higher means in all skills for kindergarten beginners, and point to linguistic proficiency advantages derived from an earlier start in high TL input contexts.

2.2.2 Disadvantages
The literature offers reasonable hypotheses about what might constitute the drawbacks of ELL, but there are no studies that address this concern directly. Such perspectives largely arise out of longitudinal research and classroom observations (Enever, 2012; Robinson et al, 2015), which highlight weaknesses in terms of teacher training, practice and educational policy. Several researchers thus
assert that achieving long-term advantages may prove challenging (Johnstone, 1999, 2002; Muñoz, n.d.; Robinson et al, 2015; Singleton, 1995).

One drawback of ELL is reflected in young learners’ inability to attain high fluency and proficiency levels in low-input contexts, which involve limited instructional time and TL input (Copland and Garton, 2014; Pinter, 2011) coupled with large class size (Copland and Garton, 2014). In some instances, FL teachers modify or simplify their input to facilitate young learners. However, this approach may hinder learners’ progress as it limits opportunities “to hear complex speech, varied patterns of speech or a wider range of vocabulary” (Oliver and Philp, 2014, p.73).

Disadvantages also include a lack of programme coherence caused by FL teaching without appropriately-designed curricula and resource development (Arslan, 2012), deficits in teachers’ linguistic and pedagogic proficiency (Enever, 2012) resulting in teaching methods not aligned to young learners’ developmental needs (Robinson et al, 2015) or curriculum guidelines (Enever et al, 2009). Singleton (1995) posits learner disadvantages in the absence of well-managed FL implementation and coordination between primary and secondary programmes. An important caveat is sounded by Nikolov (2000, p.43), who advises against early language instruction if any of the requirements are absent, as negative experiences may hurt young learners’ motivation towards the TL and their general outlook on language learning.

The above discussion makes clear that early FL learning is not a simple phenomenon. The challenge for many early learner programmes is to provide the best instructional experiences by minimizing or eliminating potential drawbacks. The benefits to be gained justify the introduction of an early FL programme such as the one examined in this study.
2.3 Review of local primary Spanish curricula

Trinidad and Tobago’s first draft Spanish curriculum (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, n.d.) underscores its programme goals for infants to post-primary learners, which include:

- developing basic oral/aural Spanish proficiency;
- reinforcing and increasing knowledge of other subject areas through content-based Spanish language instruction (e.g. Social Studies, English);
- fostering a love for foreign language study in all students; and
- enhancing the levels of achievement in Spanish at the secondary level.

The first draft curriculum (see Appendix A), which has been used since 2008 in the area of teacher education at the UTT, articulates a focus on oral communication, vocabulary acquisition and pleasurable learning through a functional-notional approach. The idea of contextualizing FL delivery with the sequential development of topics across levels is introduced, with emphasis on the need for “a trained and qualified teacher” (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, n.d., p.4).

Topics are presented sequentially and lessons organized around themes, repeated at each level, such as ‘¿Quien soy yo?’ and ‘La escuela’. Basic vocabulary and grammatical structures are listed including Hispanic terms used within the region. Cultural awareness lessons highlighting the nation’s Hispanic legacy are identified for instruction in the students’ first language (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, n.d.).

The 2013 redesigned curriculum (see Appendix B) proposes an exploration of language based on oral Spanish, its related cultures and other language experiences within the Trinbagonian child’s varied socio-linguistic context. The Foreign Language Exploratory Model (FLEX), acknowledged as the basis for instruction, is defined as “functional Spanish that supports other curricular content”, including culture, its interrelatedness with language and valuing
language exploration (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013b, p.22). The curriculum’s objectives are:

- awakening an awareness and appreciation of the richness of language exploration; and
- creating enthusiasm, excitement and love for language learning.

Unlike the first curriculum, new content is introduced at every class level with brief descriptions of skills, dispositions, structures and outcomes to be achieved. ‘A primary but not exclusive focus on spoken language’ (Curriculum and Planning Division, 2013b, p.22) is emphasized through a cross-curricular approach integrating social studies, geography and information technology.

Flexibility in time-tabling is proposed, with 50% of instructional time to be shared amongst Spanish and six other subjects. However, the specific contact hours for Spanish are not stated. The curriculum includes language awareness topics as seen in the standard 3 lesson on ‘Greeting others in Spanish and other languages known to students, i.e. French, Hindi, Arabic, Yoruba and Mandarin’ (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013, p.49). The new curriculum topics reflect its aims to build language confidence, communicative ability and awareness of linguistic diversity.

2.4 Foreign language pedagogical approaches

Many language teachers today acknowledge the important role that the Communicative Language Approach, one of the most prominent approaches in the field of SLA globally, has played in their instructional practice. This approach to early FL teaching, which is advocated at teacher education institutions in Trinidad and Tobago, is implicitly articulated within the 2013 primary Spanish curriculum as students’ ability “to communicate” and “interact appropriately” in another language, which “extends students’ linguistic and cultural understanding” (MoE, 2013, p.21). Hence the focus on the communicative approach in
international and local instructed settings constitutes the basis for its discussion hereunder and provides the context for the instructional choices described in this study.

The Communicative Language Approach, birthed through concurrent movements within Europe and North America in the 1970s in response to the perceived failures of other language methods, has as its central tenet the development of communicative competence, a term first proposed by Hymes (1972). Hymes’ (1972) understanding of “communicative competence” included competence of use in social situations, or “abilities and judgments relative to, and interdependent with, sociocultural features” (p.277). Such competence was revealed by individuals being “able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishments by others”, a type of “competence that is integral with attitudes, values, and motivation” (Hymes, 1972, pp.277-278.) According to this construct, communicative competence means capability for language use (Kurcz, 2004), that is, knowing when to speak or stay silent and what is appropriate speech based on the context. Such suitable behaviour, inclusive of knowledge of sentences, whether grammatical or ungrammatical, could not be taught in the classroom and Hymes posited that these were acquired informally.

Communicative competence thus involved an inherent grammatical competence, versatile in varied social settings (Bagarić and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2007), or, as Cazden (2011) so aptly puts it, “that includes knowledge of language forms and knowledge of form-function relationships learned from the embeddedness of all language use in social life” (pp.366-367). A linguistic anthropologist, Hymes felt that the development of children’s language was largely ignored by others in his field, an aspect he considered the most visible medium through which culture was enacted. Hymes thus maintained the view that in acquiring language, children learn “not only what is systemically possible but what is culturally and situationally appropriate” (Cazden, 2011, p.367).
Several definitions of communicative competence have been refined and offered up over the years since Hymes’ initial proposal. Terrell (1977) identifies communicative competence as when:

   a student can understand the essential points of what a native speaker says to him in a real communicative situation and can respond in such a way that the native speaker interprets the response with little or no effort and without errors that are so distracting that they interfere drastically with communication. (p.326)

Terrell provides further insights, conceding that the level of competence necessary to be understood by a native speaker is much lower than the grammatical accuracy of instructional requirements. As such, he recommends “that if we raise our expectations for oral competency in communication we must lower our standards for structural accuracy” (Terrell, 1977, p.326).

Canale and Swain (1980) interpret the view of communicative competence as referring to “the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use” (p. 6). Savignon’s (2007) notion of communicative competence refers to the ability of classroom language learners to engage in meaning-making through interactions with others, distinct from their participation in memorized sequences consistent with oral drills or discrete-point grammar activities. Savignon’s emphasis on ‘competence’ thus refers to expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning (Savignon, 2002). Richards (2006) also identifies the engagement in meaningful communication as the core function of communicative competence and delineates the following important features:

   - knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions;
• knowing how to vary language use according to the audience and context, that is, whether formal or informal oral or written communication;
• knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts; and
• knowing how to maintain communication in spite of one’s limited language knowledge, through the use of varied strategies.

Canale and Swain (1980) further advanced the definition of communicative competence by subdividing this construct into grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, all of which are interrelated (Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991; Savignon, 2002). Grammatical competence is demonstrated by using rules in “interpretation, expression or negotiation of meaning” (Savignon, 2002, p.9). Sociolinguistic competence is demonstrated by an understanding of how language is used in different social settings, openness to diversity and a willingness to suspend judgment in light of cultural differences (Savignon, 2002). Strategic competence refers to methods employed by speakers to deal with a collapse in the communication process. This has been identified as “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence” (Canale and Swain, 1980, p.30). The ability to get one’s meaning across effectively when problems occur in the communicative process is relevant to both L1 and L2, yet is an aspect of communicative competence often ignored in instructional practice (Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991). It must be noted that communicative competence is not to be confused with communicative performance, the latter being the demonstration of one’s language knowledge “in real second language situations and for authentic communication purposes” (Canale and Swain, 1980, p.6).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) may be viewed as the conduit through which communicative competence, the central theoretical concern of this approach, is achieved. CLT involves “the engagement of learners in communication in order to allow them to develop their communicative
competence” (Savignon, 2007, p.209) with emphasis on learners and their communicative needs (Savignon, 2002). Learners’ oral interaction within a learner-centred process is therefore of significant importance as it enables language learning (Oliver and Philp, 2014). CLT which may best be understood as a set of tenets that undergird language instruction, is currently one of the more prominent approaches preferred by MFL teachers.

One of the main tenets of CLT is its focus on authentic experiences or ‘real life’ discourse in the language classroom (Nikitina, 2011) with the teacher as facilitator of student-centredness and engagement with authentic, meaningful communications that foster increased TL input and student output (Huang and Liu, 2000). It is important to note that the methodological choices that can promote the communicative competence of CLT hinges on an acceptance of differences in sociocultural learning (Savignon, 2002). Berns (1990, quoted in Savignon, 2002) posits that CLT should of necessity accommodate sociocultural aspects of language use. The following are essential principles of CLT, as summarized by Berns (1990, quoted in Savignon, 2002, p.6):

1. Language teaching is based on the view of language as communication. That is, language is a social tool that speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing.
2. Diversity is accepted and recognized as part of language development and use in second language learners and users, as it is with first language users.
3. A learner’s competence is considered in relative, not in absolute, terms.
4. More than one variety of a language is recognized as a viable model for learning and teaching.
5. Culture is recognized as instrumental in shaping speakers’ communicative competence in both their first and subsequent languages.
6. No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.
7. Language use is recognized as serving ideational, interpersonal and textual functions, and is related to the development of learners’ competence in each.
8. It is essential that the learners be engaged in doing things with language—that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of learning.

The emphasis is thus on an appreciation for learners’ sociocultural context in promoting learner achievement of communicative competence. Furthermore, within CLT, the development of local resources, a by-product of teacher agency, has been found to foster curricular innovation (Savignon, 2002; 2007).

Though, over the years, a single definition of communicative competence has not been agreed upon (Llurda, 2000), for the purpose of this study I offer a definition of communicative competence as ‘learners’ ability to obtain meaning and demonstrate understanding by communicating appropriately in the target language’, drawing on Savignon’s (2007) emphasis of ‘engagement in meaning-making’ and Richard’s (2006) ‘meaningful communication’. In addition, Terrell’s (1977) suggestion that a learner’s communicative competence is demonstrated by understanding and being understood by a native speaker with minimal problems provides support for this study’s perspective on communicative competence. Taken together with Bern’s eight principles of CLT, these viewpoints on communicative competence were found to be relevant to the introduction of a foreign language at the primary level of schooling, which is the focus of this study.

Ellis (2005) also discusses FL teaching and puts forward ten principles of instructed language learning that highlight how teachers should organize TL learning. These, he maintains, would lead to learners communicating proficiently and confidently. His guidelines include recommendations that teachers give students a wide range of formulaic expressions, as this caters to fluency. He also
argues for instruction that focuses on meaning, implicit knowledge of the TL, teacher TL input and opportunities for learner output and interaction in the TL. Similarly, Oliver and Philp (2014) emphasize the positive outcomes gained from oral interaction. Learners recognize output challenges and provide and obtain feedback on their communication as they engage with the new language and their peers. Scaffolding through teacher modification of input, including repetition and reformulation that enhances meaning and provides support, is also beneficial.

Enever (2012) similarly stresses that early primary FL teachers’ instruction must demonstrate high fluency competence and age-appropriate methods. The instructional implications for language teaching are that the onus is on the teacher to provide opportunities for student language development while demonstrating linguistic expertise that students can model. These viewpoints all reflect the importance of maintaining a learner-centred classroom. In addition, the teacher’s pedagogical skill and language competence play a vital role in promoting the successful achievement of learning outcomes (Wang, 2002; Nikolov, 2009).

VanPatten (2002) acknowledged the importance of input in language learning, and focused his attention on the strategies language learners use to convert input to intake, a practice he termed ‘input processing’. Intake refers to ‘filtered input’ that learners attend to and keep in working memory to promote comprehension. VanPatten’s (2002) updated processing instruction approach focuses on maximizing input processing in contexts such as classrooms to facilitate language learning. Input processing seeks to explain how learners, whose main focus is on deriving meaning from words, get form while parsing TL input. Forms that contribute to the general meaning of the sentence are said to have ‘communicative value’, and these are the ones attended to by learners and therefore easier to acquire (VanPatten, 2002).

Consequently, to maximize input processing in the classroom context, VanPatten (2002) argued for ‘processing instruction’, which entails teaching learners how to
process input to effectively acquire the underlying grammar. There are three basic steps to processing instruction. To promote understanding of the input’s grammar, teachers 1) provide explanations that facilitate understanding of the grammar, 2) highlight possible challenges with the input and 3) give adequate practice (Sheen, 2007). VanPatten (2002) asserts that these techniques are generalizable in terms of grammatical structures and to diverse learners in varied contexts. The suggestion is thus for language teachers to provide practice that strengthens students’ understanding of grammar while boosting TL communication. Moreover, processing instruction as a cognitive learning tool is a flexible technique that may be modified in relation to the teacher’s unique experience (Sheen, 2007).

The abovementioned principles are relevant to this study given that CLT’s primary focus on learners’ meaningful oral engagement with the TL harmonizes with the MoE’s emphasis on learners’ oral communication in Spanish “in contexts that relate to their lives” (MoE, 2013, p.22). These theoretical principles provide the framework against which this present study explores and describes FL teaching and learning as well as gauges the alignment between CLT and Spanish instructional practice in the Trinidadian primary school context.

### 2.5 Managing curriculum innovation

Curricular change, a continuous refrain of educational systems globally (Priestley, 2010), is echoed in Trinidad and Tobago’s primary Spanish initiative, the first such early FL programme (Manning, 2006). Exploring the implementation of primary Spanish initiative speaks directly to and frames the following conversation about change management.

Managing the curriculum is complex (Briggs and Sommefeldt, 2002) as is managing curricular innovation (Lachiver and Tardif, 2002). While “change requires effective management” (Bush and Coleman, 2000, p.77), realizing the vision of a sustainable initiative is also challenging (Pieterse et al, 2012) given the
tendency of employee resistance to change (Ford et al, 2008). Change management is a process that continually renews direction, structure and competencies to meet stakeholder needs (Moran and Brightman, 2001). It is fundamentally about managing people, as individuals are relied on to accept and adopt change as well as collectively enable successful outcomes (Moran and Brightman, 2001; Prosci, 2012). Change management is a facilitating framework for managing the human resource aspect of change, without which successful change is not attainable. Thus, to realize the vision of a sustainable or ‘embedded’ initiative, effective change management, which entails awareness of the complexity of change and its potential barriers, is crucial.

For schools, change management often includes managing curriculum innovation effectively, which supports innovation uptake (Karavas, 2014) and fosters improved learning experiences and outcomes (Brundrett and Duncan, 2011). Focused efforts by all stakeholders (Levin and Fullan, 2008) are essential, however the foremost element is leadership that adequately provides stakeholders with 1) information while promoting 2) consultation, 3) discussion, 4) involvement and 5) participation in planning and programme implementation (Cardno, 2002). For schools, leadership also involves governing bodies that must collaborate and effect planning and co-ordination strategies to contribute successfully to improvement (Creese, 2002). When there is weak change management, progress is hindered. This occurs in a) a culture of fear and the absence of b) senior management buy-in, c) clarity about the change, d) well-defined transition planning and e) adequate resources for implementation (Curran, 2010; Platz, 2014; Prosci, 2014).

Sirkin et al (2005) maintain that the future of change programmes can be largely determined by several factors. These include performance integrity (the extent to which employees can be relied on to effectively execute the change), commitment of and additional effort made by stakeholders to cope with the change. They propose that initiatives managed by capable leaders whose employees embrace
and implement the change as a cohesive team without the addition of increased workloads, will succeed. Conversely, a disjointed team with much extra work, reluctant to effect change, will fail.

The literature offers a prominent model of change management, the planned change model. While no model is unique to the implementation of a FL innovation, a comprehensive framework that rests upon existing theory can be obtained. The conceptual framework presented here draws upon related theory on educational innovation and change management.

2.5.1 Planned change management model
The planned change management model owes much to the seminal contribution of Lewin (1951, as quoted by Hossan, 2015). The model, which offers three stages in the process of change management, namely unfreeze, change and refreeze, is visually depicted in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Illustration of Lewin’s three-stage change management model](image)

In step 1, unfreeze, existing attitudes are modified through communication. Stakeholders understand and support the change, relinquishing old values and attitudes. In step 2, change, strategies including training are introduced to effect
the change and stakeholders embrace new practices and values. Once change is achieved, refreeze occurs to promote stability as benefits are realized and stakeholder confidence is created. Change is positively reinforced by leaders and new practices. When the change becomes part of the culture, it becomes frozen.

While the planned change model (Lewin, 1951, as quoted in Hossan, 2015) has been criticized for being unsuited to the demands of contemporary, variable environments, its approach is relevant to educational contexts (Schein, 1995) and organizations with hierarchical management styles (Hossan, 2015). This makes it suitable to the Trinbagonian school context, which employs top-down management practices.

2.5.2 The change process
The scholarly literature on educational change presents another perspective that complements the planned change model. Fullan (2007) discusses the capacity-focus of change, describing the development of institutional capacity for continuous improvement of learning through strategy design for each stage of the innovation. Fullan (2006, p.9) defines capacity building as “any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning.” It entails opportunities for ‘learning in context’ so that individual and collective knowledge, skills, resources and motivation are advanced. At the core of the change process is the objective of achieved learning objectives and organizational capacity, as shown in Figure 3.
Simply put, a direction of change is promoted by an agent (initiation) who next implements the change (implementation). Institutionalization refers to the implementation of the change beyond an identified time frame. Outcome refers to the achieved results based on the objectives of the initiated change and refers to student learning, attitudinal and skill improvement as well as satisfaction on the part of educational stakeholders. The bi-directional arrow suggests an iterative process in which “events at one phase can feed back to alter decisions made at previous stages” (Fullan, 2007, p.67).

2.5.3 A conceptual model of the planned change of primary Spanish
From the above-mentioned perspectives, management-led change can be seen as several interconnected stages. The conceptual model, presented in Figure 4, illustrates the change management process consistent with the literature discussed above.
The management of curriculum change revolves around student learning as well as the improved capacity by the school to resolve problems (Fullan, 2007). The stages between the initiation of the innovatory programme and its implementation must be clearly articulated by leaders and shared with stakeholders (Sirkin et al, 2005). Principals and governors, as leaders of change, are vital to ensuring that key stakeholders are fully apprised of programme goals and approaches through meetings and/or training sessions. Teachers are also important as their attitudes and competencies play a critical role in the achievement of learner outcomes. Throughout the implementation process, leadership must ensure that stakeholders are supported. This includes suitable deployment of resources as a springboard to successful implementation (Hall, 2002). The final stage in the model is reflected
in changes to practice that have been embraced by stakeholders, which eventually lead to a modified school culture as the change becomes institutionalized.

### 2.6 Early language learning research

Several studies have explored the impact of the age variable on learning another language. While it is a widely held view that early language learning lends itself to enhanced cognitive benefits, the exploration of learning outcomes of different age groups of language learners have attempted to shed light in this regard.

Of particular interest is the Barcelona Age Factor (BAF) study undertaken by Muñoz (2006) in Catalonia, Spain. Comparisons were made between early and late bilingual learners in a seven-year longitudinal study. Interestingly enough, the study showed older learners demonstrating more rapid progress than younger learners. After 726 hours of instruction, however, the performance of both age groups (students who learned English (L3) in the school setting only from 8 and 11 years respectively) was comparable on receptive and productive tasks such as aural perception, oral production and TL writing. Hence, younger learners who started at age 8 caught up with, but did not surpass, older students who started at age 11. Furthermore, the study indicated that while adequate exposure to the TL is vital for a naturalistic-type learning, younger learners showed progress when they learned implicitly while older learners’ advanced cognitive development allowed them to exploit explicit teaching processes (DeKeyser and Larson-Hall, 2005; Muñoz, 2006). The implication is that much exposure to implicit learning is necessary to derive gains in terms of early language learner outcomes (Muñoz, 2006).

Krashen et al (1979), who also reviewed the effect of age on language learning, found that, when compared with younger learners, older learners (adults and teens) demonstrated faster morphological and syntactical progress in the early stages of learning, while early language learners showed superior gains with respect to proficiency in the long term. Thus older was found to be better for rate
of acquisition, while in terms of achievement in the long term, younger was better (Krashen et al., 1979; Singleton, 2001). While Muñoz (2006) and Krashen et al (1979) do not negate gains from early language learning, their research suggests that beginning language learning early should not be considered a panacea.

Muñoz’s findings mirror those of Viakinnou-Brinson et al (2012), whose research provides support for the use of the TL as compared to the L1 in language classrooms. The study examined the effect of French-only usage and compared this with code-switching from English to French in elementary–level college French grammar classes to determine which linguistic process provided a better outcome in terms of communicative competence. The qualitative investigation was product-oriented and revealed better performances for French-only than for French with English instruction in terms of grammar performance. The results pointed to the value of using the TL-only in the achievement of improved TL communication by learners, despite students’ stated preference of learning French grammar with the help of English. Though the study was conducted with an older age group, the findings are still valuable in that they highlight the notion of TL instruction as providing superior outcomes when compared to L1 instruction.

The impact of TL input on learners’ language proficiency is also supported by Lundberg (2010), who reported on the Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) project. It was discovered that TL use helped learners’ communicative competence while teachers’ code-switching appeared to negatively impact learners’ oral communication. Given that an integral aim of language teaching should be to maximize learner use of the TL, the results of these studies should encourage teachers to model the language students are expected to acquire so that curriculum goals can be achieved.

Harris and O’Leary (2009) examined the initiative of third language instruction at the primary school level in Ireland. In a sociolinguistic context that differs from much of Europe, with an English L1 and Irish, L2, the researchers described and
evaluated the impact of the modern language initiative that saw students in the final two years of primary school receiving instruction in either French, German, Spanish or Italian. Students were given MFL instruction for 1.5 hours each week. The study’s participants were students from 22 representative schools, all teachers involved in the initiative’s implementation and school principals.

The researchers used a variety of instruments for data collection. Students completed questionnaires that examined their FL attitudes, motivation and experiences along with group and individual language tests. The results indicated significant student progress in listening comprehension and initial oral competence. More notably, students in rural and disadvantaged schools were able to match the progress achieved by other schools in FL learning. The majority of students (81%) demonstrated positive attitudes towards FL learning, indicating enjoyment of classroom interaction that promoted communicative competence involving games, songs, poems and cultural awareness activities. Most teachers (93%) recognized the achievement of personal gains from participating in the programme and were satisfied with the implementation of the MFL initiative. Many teachers (54.1%) further indicated positive changes in students’ awareness and appreciation of linguistic and cultural differences. Almost all principals (99.4%) perceived that the programme was beneficial to students in terms of heightened self-esteem, attitudes and enjoyment of language learning.

In terms of programme aims, only 42% of teachers indicated that they successfully attained the instructional objective of using as much TL as possible in the classroom. The data showed that less than half of the lesson was conducted in the TL by 37% of teachers. In addition, the allocated time of 1.5 hours was not met by 37% of teachers, who, instead, taught for periods of one-hour. In terms of student reaction, the researchers found a significant minority of students indicating challenges with the pace at which instruction was provided and in understanding certain lexical items or the language itself. In the main, the study found that MFL learning saw attitudinal, learning and cultural benefits across
school types. The results also suggest that positive gains can still be achieved even when the time for classroom instruction is reduced and the use of the target language is not maximized (the latter in direct contrast to what much of the theory suggests) during classroom interaction.

Researchers Peng and Zhang (2009) also trained their lens on the early language instructional process in the primary school setting. Their descriptive study examined teacher use of English as the target language in Chinese classrooms. Participants in the three-month study were 203 students in four classrooms under observation and 54 primary school teachers of English. The research instruments used were non-participant classroom observations with voice recordings of teacher talk, teacher and student questionnaires and teacher interviews.

The researchers observed four teachers and their fifth-grade primary classrooms, describing the amount and appropriateness of teacher TL. Classroom interactions, documented on checklists and MP3 recordings, were later analyzed. To further explore the teachers’ perspectives on English usage, semi-structured interviews were conducted. A 30-item questionnaire completed by 50 additional teachers captured data on teachers’ professional background, teaching environments, TL use and their individual perspectives. A 10-item questionnaire completed by the 203 observed pupils explored their views of their teachers’ use of English.

The results of the study revealed a lack of consistency in the amount of TL use by teachers. The maximum use of the TL by teachers was 60%, which was done periodically in short snatches. The researchers also found that teachers tended to code-switch, with TL use followed by explanations in Chinese and continued in their mother tongue. Of the 50 teachers surveyed, though most teachers (92%) recognized the value of TL use, 42% used the TL less than 60% of classroom time, 12% reported using less than 20% of the TL and 20% reported using the TL 80% of the time. The interviews further identified the teachers’ belief that too much TL use raised their students’ levels of frustration and anxiety, as their
students would not understand the instruction. The students’ feedback, however, disclosed that no student thought that teacher use of English was overwhelming. Moreover, 60% of students identified their teachers’ English use as sparse.

Though this study provides insights into the amount of TL used by teachers, it does not provide additional information on teacher competencies and the impact of teacher TL use on student performance. These are concerns that may warrant future research in this context.

Other researchers, Mestres and Lundberg (2011), examined the teaching of early MFL learners in Europe. More specifically, they looked at the teacher’s impact on language learning. In one of the countries, Sweden, students at a primary classroom were taught the MFL, English, for three years by a teacher qualified in pre-school and primary instruction as well as teaching English to young learners. During the fourth year the students moved to a new building, with a different language teacher.

The first teacher used the TL when possible and complemented this with visuals, body language and other resources. The emphasis during the first three years was on promoting meaning-making through oral communication — listening, understanding and speaking in the target language. Seating arrangements supported pair and group work. In addition, students’ receptive skills were fostered through the weekly viewing of authentic, age-appropriate English educational TV programmes. Homework was not given to students.

The researchers observed that the second teacher’s method of instruction differed from her colleague. An educational package comprising text, workbook and other materials with an emphasis on grammar exercises was the norm. Students sat in rows facing the blackboard. Classroom equipment comprised a computer for students and a teachers’ laptop. Access to a TV/DVD/video was available in a
room nearby. Weekly homework was given to students, consisting of translations into Swedish and vocabulary lists to learn and spell.

The results of the study showed a high level of student enjoyment in terms of speaking English, engaging in games and looking at the TV serials during the first three years of the MFL programme. In addition, a positive classroom climate, fostered by the first teacher’s love for the language and her child-centred teaching approach, enhanced students’ communication. The achievement of learning outcomes was evidenced by the majority of students performing well on listening and production tasks. The findings also point to the value of paired/group work in fostering negotiation of meaning and communicative competence. By contrast, in year four there was a decrease in spoken input, with students demonstrating an increase in code-switching between Swedish and English. However, these changes may have been offset by increased student engagement in computer games and chat websites during their free time.

Mestres and Lundberg (2011) also examined another MFL class in the Netherlands, which was engaged in the ‘Earlybird: English in the primary school’ initiative. Students began learning English at age 6 and continued for three years with the same teacher. The qualified primary class teacher, who was educated in a bilingual secondary school and received training in teaching English to young learners, exhibited near-native TL competence. Her enthusiasm for the language was demonstrated by an interesting variety of classroom activities and strategies that kept students on task. These activities, including singing and games, fostered students’ comprehension, TL communication and teacher-pupil interactions. The teacher provided TL input for the entire lesson, and also spoke English outside of the classroom. Students sat in groups. No homework was given and reading and writing were introduced at ages 9-10.

Very good student outcomes were indicated by listening and production tests and responses on student questionnaires, with the exception of a small group. Students
indicated that learning English was fun. The students regularly experienced success in their language learning, reflected in positive attitudes towards the FL.

From these two studies, certain factors stand out as features common to successful early language programmes. These include teacher enthusiasm, child-centred strategies, a comfortable learning environment and TL input and interaction. The study by Mestres and Lundberg (2011) thus highlights the importance of teacher attitude to the FL along with pedagogical and linguistic competence as key variables in successful early language learning.

2.7 Conditions for success

Of the several factors that impact the quality and success of foreign language learning, providing adequate language support and conditions that can maximize students’ learning capabilities are paramount. Several previous studies have pointed to the important role the teacher plays in motivating learners, infusing enthusiasm and fun into the learning process while students, at the same time, develop their language learning skills. Edelenbos et al (2006, p.80) also highlight “… the central role of the teacher in providing encouragement, input, interaction and a supportive learning environment.” This appears to be especially true in language learning school programmes with limited resources and the teacher as main provider of positive reinforcement and TL input (Moon, 2009).

Apart from the importance of the teacher to effective pedagogy (Moon, 2009), other variables must be present if success is to be realized. Girard (1996) and Hayes (2014) identify several factors, which are summarized thus:

- Effective teacher training
- Teacher TL proficiency, attitudes and beliefs
- Institutional support for FL teaching
- Adequate time for language learning
- Age-appropriate instructional approaches and educational resources
- Instruction that meets programme objectives
- Appropriate evaluation of programme effectiveness
- Programme continuity between primary and secondary school

In the opinion of this researcher, these criteria are both valid and measurable. Successful language programmes should therefore aim to meet as many of these as possible.

### 2.8 Caribbean language research

Language research with a Caribbean focus has, over the years, provided valuable insights into the linguistic diversity and practices of the region. In some countries of the Caribbean region, language studies have examined the linguistic impact of Creole, the mother tongue, and its co-existence with English as the official language. Other studies have focused on issues of language acquisition within the Caribbean’s unique socio-linguistic context. A Caribbean study conducted during the early 70s (Carrington et al, 1972), identified the differences in the linguistic backgrounds of 566 Trinidadian children exposed to languages distinct from English in the home setting. Some students (69.28%) were addressed by relatives in Hindi, French Creole, Chinese or Spanish. Hindi was the most popular language spoken at home (46.16%), followed by French Creole (20.32%), Spanish (2.2%) and Chinese (0.6%). Notwithstanding this exposure, most students reported speaking only English. The authors noted that though these languages were generally used by the elderly and were on the decline at the time of the study, the functional usage for religious and communicative purposes suggested that the linguistic diversity of students’ background should be considered in light of classroom instructional processes, as this could impact on learner acquisition of English as the national standard (Carrington et al, 1972).

Given the challenges generally encountered by learners of English as an L2, which include an intermingling of the two languages and confusion brought about by the ensuing overlap of common elements (Youssef, 2006, p.148), the
researchers suggested that teacher education programmes should familiarize teachers with the ensuing pedagogical issues of English learning and promote language-teaching methodologies that specifically cater to the multi-dialectal context. Furthermore, it was recommended that curricula and resources be tailored to reflect this fact. How this feat is to be accomplished was not addressed by the research. Continuing on this concern, however, another Caribbean linguist, Craig (1976, as cited in Youssef, 2006), advocates for the inclusion of Creole within the curriculum and the implementation of transitional bilingualism to mitigate language challenges. In a similar vein, Robertson (1996, as cited in Youssef, 2006) supports language awareness teaching beginning at the primary school level.

The viewpoint of these Caribbean linguists is congruent with the literature on authenticity in teaching, which includes the provision of culturally relevant instruction (Pierce, 2005) that supports the achievement of learner outcomes (Kreber et al, 2007). Learners’ culture is included as a medium for instruction by authentic teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Authentic teachers are those whose instructional competence reflects their understanding and acceptance of self (Kreber et al, 2010; Thompson, 2015) and who seek ways to best serve learners’ needs, validating learners’ experiences and integrating this with content delivery, thus co-constructing knowledge (Kreber et al, 2007). Consistent with this perspective is the belief that making identity central to instruction promotes learning (Baxter Magolda, 2003). Thus, to improve pedagogy, empowering learners by allowing them to maintain their cultural identity seems paramount.

Another study analyzed the conversation between an early childhood teacher and a three-year-old kindergarten student who was able to code-switch between Trinidadian Creole and English (Youssef, 2006). A marked insensitivity by the teacher to the child’s home culture and communicative practices was observed. The teacher provided individual attention to the student in the study but in the process did not valorize the child’s use of the Creole. Instead, she feigned
ignorance when the child used Creole terms and structures, did not accept his Creole answers as valid and insisted on the use of the Standard in spite of the fact that the child lacked the relevant English vocabulary. The child’s reaction reflected non-cooperation, which included strategies such as giving nonsensical answers, ignoring difficult questions, countering the teacher’s question with his own, and adopting the teacher’s strategy by persistently questioning the teacher despite her incomprehension of the child’s request. The data show the child supplying evasive responses to the teacher in a bid to empower himself in the interactions. The research provides several examples of this, including a conversation where the child, Kareem, rhymes channa (chickpeas) with Shanna, a classmate. Kareem asks the teacher about Shanna’s surname. The teacher said, “I have to look in her bag and see” (p. 162). When asked his name, Kareem cleverly maneuvers the conversation by responding, “You have to look in my bag and see” and “I not telling you because you have to look in my bag and see”, imitating the teacher’s response, thus evading the required answer.

The research identified the teacher’s ‘jaundiced attitude’ towards the Creole in her oral interactions with the student and the latter’s defensive, face-saving strategies given the devaluing of his Creole usage. This was demonstrated in instances when the teacher asked the child to describe pictures. For example, Kareem identified a kennel as ‘a cage’ and food as ‘doubles’, terms used to describe these items in Trinidadian Creole. When Kareem asked, “What is doubles?” (p. 161), the teacher professed ignorance of the term, saying, “I don’t know”. Kareem responded in turn, “Food with bake and channa, like Shanna” (p. 161). The teacher’s response thus indicated a lack of appreciation for the child’s use of the Trinidadian Creole. This reflects a failure to facilitate children’s first language alongside their development of the school language (Oliver and Philp, 2014), a type of ‘subtractive bilingualism’ which demotes the mother tongue (Baker, 2011, Trofimovich and Turuševa, 2015). As has been suggested by Cummins (2000), Oliver and Philp (2014) and Swain and Lapkin (2000), first
language usage is a natural and positive aspect of L2 learning, which was not exploited by the teacher of this study.

This study sought to sensitize teachers to interactional practices that, though well intentioned, negatively impacted on students’ sense of self as evidenced by the child participant’s defensive, face-saving techniques. The findings suggest that the denying or negating of the Creole fosters negative teaching strategies that culturally displaces and demotivates children, promoting negative learner attitudes towards language from early on (Youssef, 2006). The findings of the study further suggest a need for teachers to validate students’ language and culture as opposed to creating a sense of inferiority, identify similarities and differences between the English and Creole lexicon as opposed to making one language seem superior to the other, and educating teachers about language varieties. The researcher suggests the need to explore instructional options for bilingualism and varilingualism pertinent to the needs of individual classroom contexts.

Paugh (1999, 2005) and Garrett (2005) conducted research on language socialization practices in Dominica, where a French-lexified Creole, Patwa, is traditionally used as the oral language of rural communities. English, the official language, is used for business and educational purposes and is predominant in urban settings. Paugh’s study examined how young children were socialized through the use of Patwa. The adult villagers identified feelings of shame, ridicule and inferiority with the use of Patwa, yet acknowledged its highly expressive nature. Adults used patwa to gossip, curse and tease their peers. When Patwa was used by parents or teachers to talk to children, it indicated a serious issue, such as the need to discipline or admonish.

Video-audio recordings of six young children in the home, school, and community over a two-year period were obtained. Interviews were conducted with teachers, care-givers and Ministry of Education officials. Adults, who spoke
both languages, monitored children closely to prevent their use of Patwa. The adults thus sought to encourage the use of English as socially acceptable linguistic behaviour, and the means to educational achievement and job opportunities. Moreover, children’s use of Patwa was interpreted as indiscipline. Additionally, this language monitoring reflected adult language ideologies against the revitalization of Patwa, which is viewed as a hindrance to social mobility. In this way, prejudice against the Creole was implicitly instilled and the use of English validated. However, children used Patwa in peer play, in which they embraced adult roles, thereby enabling a sense of autonomy. As in several other Caribbean language studies, the suggestion is for positively impacting the lives of Creole users by developing language policies that acknowledge their language socialization practices.

Research in other countries has also examined the impact of the ineluctable Caribbean Creole on the acquisition of English as the required educational standard (Abd-Kadir et al, 2003; Phillips-Peters, 2008). Phillips-Peters (2008) examined some of the factors that affected the acquisition of standard English by speakers of Trinidadian Creole, taking into account the similarities and differences of the two languages. Participants in the study were third and fifth form students, whose speech and writing patterns were examined. The findings showed that Creole structures, including the use of double comparatives, multiple negatives, the absence of ‘s for possession and the use of ‘does’ as an auxiliary verb, were identified in students’ attempts at speech and writing in English. Recommendations from the study include the need for classroom instruction that employs the Creole as a strategy to validate students’ L1 and increased teacher awareness of the Creole, which would impact the choice of appropriate teaching methods and resources. The researcher thus posited that implementing these strategies would help to improve the acquisition of the target language.

Regional sociolinguistic research has also examined the impact of the Creole on foreign language instruction. One such study was conducted by Sánchez et al
(2012), who explored the impact of Jamaican Creole on foreign language learning. The authors examined the ‘Beginning Spanish’ examinations of a local university and the Caribbean O’level FL examination reports, which revealed errors related to the interference of both the Creole and English. Errors associated with the Creole, such as oral phonetic deviations, double repetition of adjectives for emphasis and the absence of adjectival phrasing for possession, were found to be more frequent than English-related mistakes such as inaccuracies in verb conjugations and inverted word order. In addition, positive transfers were discovered between the Creole and the two foreign languages. These included Creole structures that utilized double negatives, commands, reflexive pronouns and the omission of the indefinite article.

The findings of this study point to the possibilities available to FL teachers in Creole contexts for the development of strategic instructional tools based on a deeper awareness of learners’ language circumstance. The researchers recommend a comparative study of the L1 and L2 as the backdrop to more effective language teaching, including methodological choices that place special emphasis on issues of interference. Such an approach may further improved understandings of the Creole language learner and enhance student learning.

Another study was conducted in Trinidad by Yamin-Ali (2006), who investigated secondary school teachers’ FL linguistic competence. Teachers of Spanish were observed as they engaged in classroom instruction and several deficiencies were identified. Teachers made a range of grammatical, vocabulary and pronunciation errors. Yamin-Ali’s study serves to shed light on potential issues of the present enquiry. The researcher found that, as specialist teachers of Spanish, their content knowledge did not generally translate into confident, accurate TL use. Morris (2004), in a similar vein, questions whether Trinidadians can really communicate in Spanish, perhaps singling out the concern of interference from the Creole. One concern is whether expectations of generalist primary Spanish teachers to accurately and securely model Spanish for primary students are realistic, given the
problems faced by specialist secondary teachers. Should the bar be set lower, or should there be a more student-centred, teacher-facilitated constructivist approach to FL learning? The findings of this present study aim to provide much needed evidence from the primary level that describe FL instructional practice at the primary level that would lead to recommendations for the initiative’s successful implementation.

Yamin-Ali (2011) also reported on in-service teachers’ action research interventions in the Trinidadian secondary school setting, with the aim of improving students’ communicative competence in the TL of French or Spanish. The participants were 11 in-service secondary school Spanish teachers who sought to identify student challenges with FL learning, analyze these and provide strategies that deal with these concerns. Among the FL challenges identified were those that dealt with receptive and productive skills in the areas of listening comprehension—understanding questions and instructions in the TL and in terms of speaking, a general lack of self-confidence and knowledge of vocabulary. Some students avoided speaking in the TL because of difficulties they encountered in expressing themselves.

The teacher participants used several intervention tools to encourage student TL use. Some strategies used by the teachers were drama, authentic listening materials, role-play and the infusion of cultural awareness through realia, that is, real life, concrete items (Herrell and Jordan, 2012), as well as visuals and games. The results showed significant gains when students’ oral proficiency post-test scores were compared with pre-tests. These findings suggest that the use of activities in the TL that are fun and interactive can foster increased learner proficiency in the TL (Jolly, 1975). These findings also point to the need for teachers to select and implement varied fun strategies, which can serve to reduce student inhibitions while promoting TL communication.
2.9 Summary

The reviewed literature has shone the spotlight on theories of language learning as well as instructional practices in international and regional settings. These provide the context for this current study, which focuses on early language learning in a Caribbean setting. The main conclusion derived from the literature is that ELL is beneficial when critical success variables, including the effective management of curricular innovation, are met. Additionally, the tremendous impact of the mother tongue is highlighted in L2 learning in Caribbean contexts.

The theories and research, however, while valuable, do not address early FL implementation in multilingual Caribbean contexts such as the one of this study. Such studies would provide useful insights on how educational stakeholders in developing countries interpret the requirements of early FL provision and implement related curricula. As a consequence, this emphasizes the need to answer the question on how generalist primary teachers in the Trinididian context manage MFL learning experiences to accomplish learner outcomes of communicative competence. It is this central concern that this study seeks to address.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research project seeks to fulfill the study’s overarching aim of evaluating the implementation of Spanish as an MFL in the primary school context, a pioneer governmental initiative in Trinidad and Tobago. In the main, it seeks to discover how the Spanish curriculum is interpreted and delivered. The chapter begins by reiterating the study’s research objectives and questions. This is followed by a discussion on research paradigms and the design of the research. The next section includes the ethical perspective of research and in the penultimate section, a discussion of the procedures employed for the research project is presented. The chapter’s final section offers the conclusion.

3.1.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To determine how Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language is delivered at the primary school level in selected schools in Trinidad;
2. To examine the factors that impact on the implementation of the government’s primary Spanish initiative; and
3. To explore the experiences of principals, teachers, students and curriculum officers involved in the implementation of Spanish at the primary level.

3.1.2 Research questions

The following research questions, which resonate with the research objectives, were advanced:

1. How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad?
2. What are the factors that impact on the initiative's implementation?
3. How do teachers, principals and curriculum officers perceive the introduction of the primary Spanish initiative?
4. How do teachers and principals describe their experiences of implementing the primary Spanish initiative?
5. What are the students' perspectives on learning Spanish at the primary level?

3.1.3 Basis for research methodology

Research questions guide the conducting of research (Andrews, 2003; Maxwell, 2013) and for this investigation, both research objectives and questions constituted an integral basis for the selection of the study’s methodology and research instruments. The research questions required a method that ensured the enquiry would receive the best possible treatment and be dealt with in a manner fulfilling the research aims while also minimizing or eliminating possible biases during the research process. As research questions direct the method (Newman and Benz, 1998), the methodology and instruments selected were aligned with the study’s objectives and research questions. The research methods chosen in this study will thus serve to “unearth information” (Kirby et al, 2006, p.125), given the necessity in today’s world for rigorous educational research that includes methodological sophistication, a lack of political bias and enquiry that is of significant value to society (Gorard and Taylor, 2003). This researcher was thus left with several options, of which the qualitative approach, undergirded by the philosophical assumptions of interpretivism, was most appropriate for providing an in-depth understanding of the multi-layered social phenomenon of MFL instruction in the natural context of the primary classroom.

Research on teacher education conducted in Trinidad and Tobago and four other developing countries point to limited understandings about the acquisition and practice of teachers’ professional knowledge (Lewin and Stuart, 2003, p.692). Therefore in order to broaden understanding about the many layers that encompass the Spanish instructional process in the Trinidadian primary context, the research approach required multiple information sources. This study thus took the form of a case study approach with data obtained from multiple sources. These included structured classroom observations, a school questionnaire and interviews with key stakeholders.
Impacting the research process is the researcher’s orientation or worldview, an integral part of the investigative process, which simplifies the complexities of reality (Patton, 1990). The following section presents a discussion of the researcher’s worldview - “a basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p.17) along with its influence on the research design.

### 3.2 The research paradigm

Mortimore (2000, p.12) argues that the first main task of educational research is “to conceptualise, observe and systematically record events and processes to do with learning.” To systematically undertake research, the choice of methodology for the investigation must be determined. Weltanschauung, or a researcher’s worldview assumptions, impacts on the choice of research design. Informing the research design, therefore, are the researcher’s philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 2009) and corresponding interpretive framework.

Research paradigms are defined as “all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their inquiry” (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2006, p.6). A paradigm thus refers to the philosophy that undergirds research and determines the methodological approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) identify the essential components of enquiry as ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology’s focus is on gaining an understanding of reality (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Raddon, 2010; Willis, 2007) or the nature of being. Epistemology identifies valid knowledge (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008), that is, how an individual can know that things exist (Willis, 2007) and includes the relationship between the researcher and what can be known (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Guba, 1990; Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). Methodology refers to how knowledge about the research problem is obtained (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Guba, 1990). The researcher’s ontological, epistemological and methodological positions are interwoven and inform the research paradigm, which determines a study’s research approach.
The main research paradigms are positivism, postpositivism and interpretivism (Raddon, 2010; Trochim, 2006). The positivist conceptual model follows the scientific method and views objective reality as obtainable from traditional scientific methods, with hypothesis testing for validity and “verified hypotheses established as facts and laws” (Lincoln et al, 2011, p.101). The methodology is experimental, as variables could be quantified and experimental contexts manipulated (Guba, 1990; Willis, 2007). Mainly quantitative methods are used and findings are deemed true (Lincoln et al, 2011).

In many cases, the research design and methods employed reflect the researcher’s prior assumptions in terms of hypotheses and theories. The emphasis is on deductive reasoning, cause and effect and testing hypotheses. Positivists base their thinking on ontological realism, with an ‘out there’ reality driven by natural laws and mechanisms. An objectivist epistemological posture is taken, meaning that the researcher maintains a strict methodological protocol so that the research is value-free, without subjective bias. Knowledge is “conventionally summarized in the form of time- and context-free generalizations” (Guba, 1990, p.20). A core emphasis of positivism is the explanation of human behaviour (Bryman, 2008, p.15). Moreover, positivists believe that the exclusive fount of authoritative, valid knowledge is obtained through logic and our senses. Positivism is best suited to quantitative enquiry, which seeks to find out what can be clearly proven (Cohen et al, 2007). Data are numerically analyzed with conclusions statistically derived according to the scientific tradition. Moreover, the use of experiments and replication ensures a high level of reliability. This type of research is deductive, as the researcher, based on what is known and/or theoretical considerations, deduces a hypothesis that is subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman, 2008).

The positivist position, however, is inappropriate for exploring the varied meanings human beings construct of their experiences because the intricacies of individual behaviour and the obscurity of social phenomena starkly contrast with the natural world’s consistency. The challenges of the teaching-learning process
and the concerns of human interactions in educational environments, therefore, are usually ill suited to positivistic research (Cohen et al, 2007).

Post-positivism emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a reaction to positivism, challenging some of its assumptions. Post-positivism modified the core tenets of positivism (Taylor and Medina, 2013; Trochim, 2006), allowing for more interaction between researcher and research participants (Willis, 2007). The belief was that science could inquire into existing reality, which is independent of human thought. Its ontological underpinnings reveal a departure from realism to critical realism (Guba, 1990; Trochim, 2006). The philosophy of critical realism is that all enquiry into reality is imperfect (Lincoln et al, 2011; Trochim, 2006), hence the use of multiple measures and observations to closely approximate the truth of reality. Post-positivism seeks unbiased, generalizable knowledge about social patterns by affirming “universal properties/laws in relationships amongst pre-defined variables” (Taylor and Medina, 2013, para.8). Thus knowledge is attainable through “nonfalsified hypotheses that are probable facts or laws” (Lincoln et al, 2011, p.99). Objectivity is achieved when researchers shed their biases, triangulate and critique the research of others (Trochim, 2006).

The epistemological perspective of post-positivism is reflected in the use of quasi-experimental research designs (Taylor and Medina, 2013). Generally, groups that have not been randomly assigned (treatment and control groups) are selected for the testing of variables. Quasi-experiments usually seek to determine whether a programme affected participants in the way intended and follow the positivist principle of comparing mean scores. The post-positivistic approach is often adopted in schools when evaluating whether a particular intervention was effective. Pre- and post-tests are given to control and experimental groups and the data analyzed statistically.

Like Taylor and Medina (2013), this researcher believes it is important to understand others vicariously by ‘standing in their shoes’, ‘looking through their
eyes’ and ‘feeling their pleasure or pain’ (para.8). Both positivism and post-positivism postures were therefore found to be unsuitable for the purposes of this study, as ‘inter-subjective knowledge construction’ (Taylor and Medina, 2013, para.11) or shared understanding (Schwandt, 2006), an area critical to this current study, is disregarded by these epistemologies. Furthermore, imposing external, dominant theories “can marginalize or dismiss the understandings of participants in the research, and conceal or facilitate oppression or exploitation of the group studied” (Maxwell, 2013, p.53). Consequently, for this study, participants’ perspectives were prioritized.

The humanistic paradigm of interpretivism, influenced by anthropological thought about the value of understanding other cultures from the inside (Martin, 1993; Taylor and Medina, 2013), arose in the field of educational research in the late 1970s (Taylor and Medina, 2013). The non-positivist orientation of interpretivism emphasizes an “understanding of human behaviour” (Bryman, 2008, p.15). The existence of external, physical reality is accepted but the positivist notion that human behaviour can be objectively studied using the same research methods successfully used to study nonhuman phenomena in physical or natural sciences is rejected (Guba, 1990; Willis, 2007). Human behaviour is shaped by the environment, culture and the individual’s conceptions of the world. These subjective realities along with the social context are vital to good social science research (Willis, 2007).

It is through the research participants’ lived experiences that verstehen – ‘a full, rich understanding’ can be obtained (Willis, 2007, p.240). The verstehen premise supports the view that understanding human behaviour can be achieved in a manner distinct from the scientific method, since human beings act with purpose, have emotions, culture and are values-oriented, all of which can influence behaviour (Patton, 2002). The interpretivist orthodoxy adopts an exploratory research stance to discover what is taking place in a particular context as well as the distinctive participants’ perspectives. The data gathering process is guided by
the nature of the enquiry in the specific context rather than by any prior assumption of the researcher. This makes it quite appropriate for the investigation of how a new curriculum initiative is interpreted and enacted. Thus, the interpretive approach was utilized in this study.

Social constructivism, a philosophical orientation that undergirds interpretivism, holds the position that individuals have subjective understandings of their world experiences. These understandings are multiple and diverse, with the enquirer seeking to explore the complexity of participants’ perspectives and their individually constructed meanings. Its ontology is relativism, which deals with “local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities” while the researcher’s focus is as ‘facilitator of multivoice reconstruction’ (Lincoln et al, 2011, p.99). The social context is important for social constructivist researchers as they seek to interpret the conceptions the participants construct of their reality (Creswell, 2009). This type of research is inductive, with “the inquirer generating meaning from data collected in the field” (Creswell, 2009, p.9).

For this study, this researcher utilized the interpretivist paradigm, which is informed by a socially constructed view of reality (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006; Willis, 2007). First, this researcher asks what is the nature of reality? Is it absolute or shaped by the participants’ viewpoints? This researcher’s epistemological position is that the knowledge to be obtained from this present enquiry can be best known through the interpretivist method. Knowledge is not absolute, especially when dealing with human reality, but is shaped by the manner in which human beings interpret the world. In line with Geertz’s proposal, this researcher thus saw it fit to “study meaning rather than behaviour, seek understanding rather than causal laws, and reject mechanistic explanations of the natural science variety in favor of interpretive explanations” (Shankman, 1984, p.261). This research project is exploratory in nature, therefore this researcher opted for ‘detailed, microscopic descriptions’, in keeping with the view of anthropologists such as Geertz (Martin, 1993, p.270) that would provide “an empathic understanding of
human action” (Bryman, 2008, p.16). In the area of educational research, the interpretive posture can add to improved understanding of the instructional process and promote reflection on praxis (Taylor and Medina, 2013).

As a new researcher, I chose to add a distinctive perspective to the phenomenon of primary FL instruction in the context of Trinidad and Tobago. I sought to create a new bricolage, meaning an eclectic, ‘multi-perspectival’ approach embracing varied dimensions (Rogers, 2012). The results of this research, will, I hope, be my unique contribution to knowledge in this area, since human reality differs depending on individuals and their unique outlook.

In this study, the use of mixed methods facilitates the shaping of reality based on the different participants’ perspectives and/or theories, which, as Maxwell (2013) asserts, must be taken seriously. As researcher, I seek to combine the narratives of these distinct voices and fashion them into a quilt of viewpoints obtained through varied strategies and methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe et al, 2011) that should provide a unique description of the implementation of primary Spanish in Trinidad. It must be acknowledged that the role of researcher as ‘primary instrument’ in collecting and analyzing the data was influenced by her knowledge, experience and background (Litchman, 2010, p.16). Consequently, this researcher’s worldview, the interpretivist paradigm, informed and directed the methods used.

3.3 Research Design

W. Edwards Deming is credited with the statement, “In God we trust, all others (must) bring data” (Lynch and Stuckler, 2012, p.1503). This perspective points to the importance of thoughtfully designed and systematic research. This section presents the details of the study’s methodology, which is the investigation’s comprehensive design and framework and its methods, meaning, the data-collection tools (Lapan et al, 2012). Methodology has been metaphorically equated with the bridge that connects one’s philosophical standpoint (on
epistemology and ontology) and method (perspective and tool) (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011), as represented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5:** The bridge between philosophical framework and research design
(adapted from Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.7)

Together, methodology and method comprise the research design. Research designs are “plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p.3). This study’s research design was selected to answer the research questions.

The next section includes a conversation about the research design and the case study approach used to answer the research questions. Additionally, the selection and description of the study’s sample, axiological concerns (i.e. dealing with values such as ethics and aesthetics), issues of reliability and validity as well as data collection instruments are also examined.

**3.3.1 The mixed method approach**
The mixed method approach, also called “the third methodological movement” (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2011, p.285), was utilized in this study. Qualitative combined with quantitative approaches support “breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (Johnson et al, 2007, p.123). Predominantly
qualitative methods (symbolized as QUAL +quan research) were used, which places this study along the qualitative-quantitative continuum in the “qualitative dominant” genre. Qualitative dominant research acknowledges the accrued advantages of quantitative data inclusion while maintaining a ‘qualitative, constructivist, post-structuralist-critical’ interpretation of the research process (Johnson et al, 2007, p.124).

Good qualitative dominant research uses inclusive strategies such as the counting of events, known as ‘quasi-statistics’ and selecting cases according to the study’s criteria. This supports generalizations and achieves representativeness of cases. Rigour and research validity are positively affected (Seale and Silverman, 1997). Figure 6 presents a visual of the qualitative-quantitative continuum.

![Figure 6: The qualitative-quantitative continuum (Johnson et al, 2007, p.124)](image)

Combining qualitative and quantitative methods is based on methodological pragmatism, as both orientations can be compatible and used harmoniously (Al-Busaidi, 2008; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2011), furthering an all-encompassing perspective as opposed to ‘a mono-method approach’ (Denscombe, 2010, p.141). Teddlie and Tashakkori, (2011, p.286) endorse ‘methodological eclecticism’, where the most appropriate techniques from qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are chosen and integrated ‘synergistically’ for greater thoroughness.
Given that both quantitative and qualitative approaches have advantages and shortcomings (Al-Busaidi, 2008), this researcher saw the benefits of merging the two to mitigate weaknesses and provide a greater balance to afford a fuller understanding of the social phenomenon under study. The most appropriate and pragmatic tools were chosen to answer the study’s research questions, which Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011) call ‘design quality’. This researcher acknowledges her intention to maintain high standards in the research project by combining the multiple dimensions that qualitative and quantitative approaches offer.

3.3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches

Qualitative research, an immense enterprise of diverse postures and practices (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011; Seale et al, 2002), pursues the portrayal of ‘the insider’s view’ of reality (Charmaz, 2004) through “the privileging of uninterpreted experience” (St. Pierre, 2011, p.45). Generally, the questions answered by qualitative research are How? Why? And What? (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011).

An important feature of qualitative research is the fact that participants and researcher co-construct knowledge, given the unique contribution that each brings to the research project (Karnieli-Miller et al, 2009). This falls in line with what Preissle and deMarrais (2011) term “qualitative responsiveness”, which describes the interaction between researcher and participant that captures the necessary information. Here, “research problems and issues integrate participant views and meanings” (Preissle and deMarrais, 2011, p.35). The main disadvantages of qualitative research is its time-consuming and seemingly intrusive nature as well as well as the possibility of biased responses (Anderson, 2010; Creswell, 2009). Limitations also including replicating the research, generalizing and making persuasive claims based on causality (Dudwick et al, 2006). However, as Charmaz (2004) emphasizes, “to appreciate what is happening in a setting, we
need to appreciate what things mean to participants” (p.981). Such is the nature of this study, which sought to find meaning, including that which participants ascribed to their experiences.

Quantitative research deals with the structured and objective collection of data, which are analyzed and summarized numerically (Powers and Knapp, 2010). The main disadvantages of quantitative research include a disregard of the study’s context and limited exploration of individual participants’ understandings (Dudwick et al, 2006). Other disadvantages include low response rates and the possibility of socially desirable responses to structured questionnaire items, which do not allow for clarification (Sivo et al, 2006). However, for this research project, the quantitative approach, in the form of a questionnaire, was found to be advantageous because it accommodated an analysis of the phenomenon under study in terms of trends and frequencies (Al-Busaidi, 2008) and facilitated information-gathering from a wide cross-section of the primary school population in a relatively short time frame. Questionnaire responses could be quickly quantified and analyzed. This enabled the capturing of patterns in the Spanish initiative implementation that could be compared with other forms of data collected. Given these benefits, I felt that incorporating quantitative measures into my otherwise qualitative research project was warranted.

Field research was conducted to gather the data for this research project. This is an important facet of qualitative research, which can yield great dividends. Researchers are immersed in the participants’ environment, affording them opportunities to discover details that would not have been otherwise possible. Given that “what happens in a setting may be more telling than what people say about it— particularly publicly” (Spool, 2007), it is essential that researchers “go deeper into the phenomena to gain much more than current public relations rhetoric—...” (Chamanz, 2004, p.982). The qualitative aspects of the research, interviews and observations, were therefore conducted in the field, that is, the school setting, to take into consideration the participants within their contexts.
3.4 Case study research

“The distinctive need for case study research arises out of the desire to understand social phenomena” (Yin, 2014, p.4). The case study’s principal aim is the telling of stories, with the narrative its most compelling attribute (McCorcle, 1984). Schaller and Tobin (2010, p.40) further support this perspective, maintaining that in case studies, “the narrative can contribute to the creation of understanding and knowledge.”

The case study answers “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2009, p.8) and is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (Yin, 2014, p.16). Case studies are holistic inquiries (Harling, 2002) within a bounded system (Stake, 2008), well suited to describing phenomena and exploring areas within which there is a dearth of existing knowledge (Cavaye, 1996). Thus, the attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon -- a novel curriculum initiative -- that has not as yet been researched, necessitated the implementation of the case study approach.

Case studies can combine qualitative and quantitative evidence (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006; Darke et al, 1998; Yin, 2009), providing detailed, descriptive data from multiple sources (Denscombe, 2007; Willis, 2007; Harling, 2002). Case studies and statistical methods are complementary (Flyvberg, 2011), realizing greater scientific advancement together than separately (Smelser and Baltes, 2001, as quoted in Flyvberg, 2011). This allows for a multi-angled exploration so that a wide array of facets can be understood (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

Case studies “can excel in accommodating a relativist perspective—acknowledging multiple realities having multiple meanings, with findings that are observer dependent” (Yin, 2014, p.17). In a vein similar to Schaller and Tobin (2010, p.40), this study aims at “capturing, and re-creating the multiple realities
of the educational experience within the confines of quality research criteria.” Using the case study provides an opportunity for the use of mixed methods, in this case, questionnaires, interviews and observations, so that multi-layered perspectives and an array of data could be obtained. This is significant, as case studies enable researchers to collect and analyze thick data to answer the research questions. For example, through the questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations, rich information was obtained which responded to the overarching research question, ‘How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad?’

Some authors classify case studies in distinctive ways. Stake (1995) classifies case studies into three main types: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Intrinsic case studies provide a full understanding of a specific case. Instrumental case studies foster an understanding of a wider phenomenon and collective case studies involve the comparisons of several cases. Yin (2009) identifies explanatory, exploratory and descriptive case studies. Exploratory case studies inquire into distinct phenomena where there is a deficit of previous research (Streb, 2010) to discover what is taking place (Yin, 2009). Explanatory case studies explain causal relationships of phenomena, which may be useful for theory creation (Harder, 2010; Yin, 2009). Descriptive case studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the case (Yin, 2009). Because this study sought to address what is taking place in terms of primary Spanish teaching and learning and to describe the case in its ‘real-life’ context, it can be considered both exploratory and descriptive. Additionally, a deeper understanding of the particular case was required, which typifies an intrinsic case study.

According to Seawright and Gerring (2008, p.294), the task of case selection is “primordial”, with the choice usually hinging on pragmatic considerations including access, time, finances or theoretical prominence. A case may therefore be chosen either because it is typical or unique, representative of particular locales or other parameters (Soy, 1997). Seawright and Gerring (2008) point out the benefits of purposively selecting an appropriate case in keeping with the research
design. Gerring (2007) acknowledges nine while Seawright and Gerring (2008) present five options for case selection. I follow in line with Seawright & Gerring’s (2008) five options, which state, in brief, that these cases:

1. are typical, with a confirmatory purpose.
2. exemplify diverse values, with an exploratory or confirmatory purpose.
3. represent extreme or unusual values, with an exploratory or confirmatory purpose.
4. deviate from some cross-case relationship, with an exploratory or confirmatory purpose.
5. have influential configurations of the independent variables, with a confirmatory purpose. (p.297)

Of importance in the selection of a case is its alignment with the study’s purpose and its ability to provide the evidence necessary to answer the research questions (Soy, 1997). This study’s case was selected to explore the implementation of Spanish in the Trinidadian primary school. This researcher found that there was diversity in terms of school type, as the schools could be said to be broadly representative of Trinidadian primary schools that were private and denominational and urban and semi-rural. The schools could also be viewed as broadly typical of other local primary schools as they follow the MoE curriculum. This thus falls in line with the exploratory purpose of Seawright and Gerring’s (2008) proposal and their recognition that though some researchers select cases based on one criterion, others “mix and match case selection strategies” (p.306).

As such, the cases chosen, two primary schools in the southern region of Trinidad, accored with the research design as this small sample enabled the researcher to garner in-depth evidence that responded to the study’s research questions and harmonized with its purpose of examining a recent curriculum initiative that has as yet not been investigated.
The seemingly contradictory nature of the case study is welcomed by some researchers (Simons, 1996), who emphasize that there is no disjunction between each case’s uniqueness and the quest for generalization (Bassey, 1998; Simons, 1996). Simons (1996, p.237) asserts that “paradox…the point of case study”, is critical to a unified understanding, gained from uncovering the distinctive and universal of each case. By approaching the study holistically and comprehensively and embracing the paradoxes inherent in the study’s context without attempting to resolve entrenched tensions, case study researchers “live with ambiguity”, “challenge certainty”, “creatively encounter” until the point is finally reached where researchers unearth vital understandings as they ‘see anew’ (Simons, 1996, p. 238).

In a similar vein, Tsang (2014) stresses that the multiple-case design is more effective than the single case study, as it can demonstrate that “what is to be generalized is not an idiosyncratic trait of one case” (Tsang, 2014, p.378). ‘Fuzzy generalizations’ could be found in cases similar or ‘relatable’ to the case studied. ‘Fuzzy generalizations’ include statements such as, ‘in cases comparable to the case under study it may be found that a leads to b’. Alternatively, it could be said that ‘in circumstances similar to that of case B, it could be likely that a leads to b’ (Bassey, 1998). Notwithstanding, Tsang (2014) advises that generalizability may not be the outcome of every case study. Thus, though the sample size in this case study is small, this researcher contends that the in-depth study of the case may allow for relatability and/or fuzzy generalizations, to use Bassey’s (1998) terminology, in contexts similar to that of this study.

Researchers must therefore celebrate the uniqueness of the case study, which, though at times may prove inconclusive, can still be used to inform policy development (Simons, 1996). This can be achieved as the case study offers multi-layered perspectives that allow stakeholders to learn from the evidence and enhance their understanding of initiatives so that policies can ultimately be improved. Consequently, the case study was found to be suitable for the purposes
of this investigation, as it provided for depth and breadth of the case under investigation, with the findings pertinent to informing the practice of teacher education, MFL instruction and policy direction of the new Spanish initiative.

3.4.1 Criticisms of the case study approach
A primary criticism of the case study approach is the positivist-derived concern that case studies may not be generalizable or very objective (Simons, 1996). Since the case study enquires into single events, one of its challenges is that of cross-checking information. The risk of selective reporting and the issue of distortion are also areas of concern (Bell, 2005). However, generalizability of the findings from case studies is dependent on the degree of similarity of the various cases (Denscombe, 1998). Bell (2005) quotes Bassey (1981), who notes that ‘relatability’, the ability to relate one’s decision-making to that detailed in the case study, is more relevant than generalizability.

3.4.2 Advantages of the case study approach
Case studies provide several advantages. Firstly, detailed information is gathered in authentic contexts without preconceived hypotheses and goals. Thus “the understanding of complexity in particular contexts” (Simons, 1996, p.225), which is a feature of case studies, also facilitates the capturing of “nuances, patterns, and more latent elements that other research approaches might overlook” (Berg, 2007, p.284) and identifies features of processes that may be otherwise hidden in large-scale surveys (Bell, 2005). The case study’s fundamental advantage is its “depth-detail, richness, completeness and within-case variance” (Flyvbjerg 2011, p.314) achieved in this study through multiple data sources - questionnaires, interviews and observations - and participants- teachers, students, principals and curriculum officers.

Case studies facilitate researcher engagement in the learning process necessary for advanced understanding (Flyvbjerg, 2006), inform professional practice and provide the basis for policy decisions (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Suitable for
individual researchers, the in-depth exploration that case studies afford (Bell, 2005) enabled a thorough understanding, (i.e. depth) and articulating “with weight about the phenomenon at hand” (i.e. breadth) (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p.314).

3.5 Axiological Considerations

Axiology, which is derived from the Greek *axios*, meaning worthy, and *logos* or science, deals with values (Engle, 2008; Fiorelli, 2012). In essence, axiology refers to values, aesthetics and ethics (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Hiles, 2008; Litchman, 2010). Axiological considerations are an essential facet of qualitative research (Hiles, 2008) and cannot be separated from the research process (Ponterotto, 2005). Therefore concerns that include whether investigations were executed not only properly and efficiently but also with sensitivity, considerations of prudence, justice and trust, would inevitably involve the area of axiology. A sound axiological framework must therefore undergird good social science research. Consequently, this researcher attended to the axiological foundations of the research process, which incorporated the following four dimensions. These considerations, with regard to the researcher’s role in balancing values and ethics, informed the research process. They were:

- deontological concerns, which refer to the notion of duty such as ensuring fair play and transparency;
- consequential interests, which deal with benefits for individuals, organizations and/or society;
- ecological considerations, which include issues of responsibility and cultural sensitivity, and
- relational concerns, which deal with establishing and maintaining trust and respect. (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009)

These elements, often combined under the umbrella of research ethics, are discussed in the section that follows.
3.5.1 Ethical concerns
Any form of social research involving human subjects must involve the consideration of ethics, which are “a set of moral principles, rules or standards” (Litchman, 2013, p.51) that govern the researcher. Researchers must therefore adhere to ethical values as a critical aspect of research (Tillmann-Healy, 2006), ensuring that no harm is brought to the participants during the conduct of the study (Babbie, 2004). Accordingly, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the University of Leicester’s Committee for Research Ethics and permission from the local Ministry of Education and school principals. Informed consent for adult participants and parental permission for minors were obtained through the relevant consent forms. Informed consent is essential to ensure that participants’ welfare and rights are safeguarded and especially so when the research process involves minors. Parents and other participants were assured of confidentiality and adherence to the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, which demand of the researcher an ethical obligation to do good while ensuring that the participants are unharmed (Nirmalan, 2012).

This researcher thus sought to ensure that ‘no harm’ was brought to the participants, a principle achieved by:

- Obtaining ethical approval from the University of Leicester’s Committee for Research Ethics;
- Obtaining permission from the local MoE and principals of the schools under study;
- Informing participants (including parents of minors) of the study’s objectives;
- Assuring participants of anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected (Litchman, 2010);
- Obtaining signed participant consent forms thereby ensuring informed consent;
• Informing participants of their option to withdraw at any point during the research without fear of consequences;

• Obtaining official permission to video record classroom interactions. Participants were given copies of transcribed interview data to verify ‘fair representation’, i.e. that there were no “misstatements, misinterpretations or fraudulent analysis” (Litchman, 2013, p.55);

• Reducing the effects of preconceptions in the field through ‘bracketing’ (keeping at bay) opinions about the phenomenon under study (Polit and Beck, 2010; Tufford and Newman, 2012); and

• Providing assurance to participants that the researcher’s behaviour would not be ‘excessively intrusive’, i.e. imposing unnecessarily on participants’ time, space or personal lives (Lichtman, 2010, p.57).

3.6 Rigour in research

The notion of rigour in research refers to the quality of a research project, which leads to trustworthy findings (Saumure and Given, 2008). From a positivist perspective, the standards and indicators of rigorous research hinge around the core concepts of validity and reliability. Validity, which refers to the accuracy of the interpretations or inferences, is supported by the evidence obtained from research instruments (Ary et al, 2006). Validity in research also requires “that data do measure or characterize what the authors claim, and that the interpretations do follow from them” (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006, p.1). The notion of reliability refers to the consistency of results obtained under constant conditions in different experiments or trials (Gay et al, 2009). Although threats to validity and reliability cannot be completely erased, their impact can be minimized by focusing on attendant issues in research projects (Cohen et al, 2007; Seale and Silverman, 1997).

By contrast, qualitative research approaches present a different view of the concept of rigour. Divergent from the positivist notions of validity and reliability,
qualitative researchers note the need to adapt these considerations to suit qualitative studies with the concept of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) in their seminal work, emphasize the use of two major dimensions, trustworthiness and authenticity, to determine and evaluate the quality of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p.390). The quality criterion of trustworthiness is subdivided into four elements, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Authenticity also has several elements, which include educative authenticity, that which “helps members to better appreciate the perspectives of other members of their social setting” and ontological authenticity, which refers to gaining an improved understanding of the relevant social context (Bryman, 2012, p.393). Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) conceptualization of authenticity, however, has not been as widely accepted as the notion of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p.393).

3.6.1 Credibility concerns
Credibility, or the congruence of findings with reality (Merriam, 1998) serves to establish the trustworthiness of a study so that an accurate portrayal of the phenomenon being researched is presented (Shenton, 2004). The researcher must provide readers with an accurate portrayal of participants’ subjective realities and assurances in the report that the truth value of the research was established (Ary et al, 2006). This was achieved through the use of established qualitative methods that allowed for corroboration. This included adequate and appropriate sampling, triangulation of both sources and methods and verification or ‘member checks’ of data transcripts by participants (Shenton, 2004). Verbatim participant responses, which enhance readers’ understanding by illuminating the relationship between data, findings and conclusion (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006) were also presented in this study. The detailed description of the phenomenon under study and rigour in data collection (Patton, 1990) also contributed to the credibility of the study.
3.6.2 Transferability
Qualitative research entails the study of small samples in order to gain deep understandings of subjective realities that are bounded by distinct contexts. Such research produces depth rather than the breadth that is a core feature of quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). The detailed description afforded through qualitative studies can lend itself to transferability of findings, where comparisons and judgments can be made and conclusions related to other contexts or groups. Such rich description, also called descriptive adequacy, assists in determining transferability (Ary et al, 2006).

3.6.3 Dependability
The concept of dependability corresponds to reliability in the positivist tradition. To ensure that trustworthiness is achieved, there is a need for auditing of the research process. Recording the processes involved during the various stages of the study is critical to achieving dependability. This entails providing an audit trail, which allows for clarity in procedural methods (Saumure and Given, 2008) and can allow other researchers, with similar context and data to establish similar or other related findings (Ary et al, 2006). The audit trail allows for ‘auditors’ or peers to establish the appropriateness of decisions taken and practices utilized during the study. Triangulation, which involves the use of multiple data sources or multiple methods, also serves to enhance the dependability of a study.

3.6.4 Confirmability
In qualitative studies, confirmability, which parallels the objectivity sought in quantitative research, refers to whether the data and derived findings would be confirmed by other researchers in a similar setting. Social researchers often acknowledge that the potential for full objectivity is unlikely with qualitative studies (Ary et al, 2006; Bryman, 2012). Notwithstanding, it is essential that the neutrality of the research process be established, so that there is the absence of personal biases and theoretical inclinations that could influence the research or its
conclusions. This stance lends itself to the confirmability of research (Ary et al., 2006; Bryman, 2012).

Rigorous qualitative research produces authentic accounts of participants’ perspectives (Seale and Silverman, 1997). Rigour in this research project was obtained through substantial engagement in the field, documentation and detailed description of the research process and participant narratives, which made transparent the research process and established the study’s trustworthiness.

3.7 The research context
In chapter 1 the socio-economic and linguistic context within which this study was undertaken was discussed. The predominant use of the English-lexified Creole as L1 in the nation was highlighted, with English as the L2. I identified the government’s thrust to improve national competencies in Spanish for the enhancing of trade with its Latin American neighbours. Against this backdrop, the government’s initial two-pronged approach of Spanish in the primary school as a pilot project, the inclusion of Spanish training in language and pedagogy for the nation’s pre- and in-service primary teacher’s and the implications for an overburdened primary curriculum, were considered. The sociocultural norm of nominal monitoring and policy evaluation were discussed with regard to a need for empirical data on educational issues.

3.7.1 Participating Schools
At the two participating primary schools whose populations comprise Afro-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean and students of mixed heritage, Standard Two classes were the focus of observations, with a mean student age of 8 years. The participant teachers were of East Indian and Afro-mixed descent. In terms of curricular content, both schools follow the local MoE syllabi, with students aged 11+ years writing the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination for entry into secondary schools. This research project is thus a case study of Standard Two (Year Four) teaching at the primary school level.
School A is a private institution, defined as a school owned and maintained by a private individual or authority other than the government (MoE, 2005). It is an urban primary school managed by a school board and supported by a local company. The students at School A are a mainstreamed class. Co-curricular swimming classes, which are timetabled, and extra-curricular activities including music, dance, gymnastics, football, karate and Brownies, are provided for students.

School A is considered a prestige primary school with most students (approximately 75%) belonging to middle and upper income households. In terms of students’ sociolinguistic background, most, if not all students are regularly exposed to and speak English as their L1. Historically, the majority of students at this school matriculate to their secondary school of choice based on the outcome of the SEA examinations.

School’s A teaching staff comprises a principal and 25 teachers. This composition is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Staff Composition at School A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remediation Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Staff</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the teaching staff members, 7 are specialist teachers, who provide instruction in their core subject area to the entire school population. The auxiliary staff consists of 2 secretaries, 2 janitors and 1 grounds man.

The school’s management dynamic suggests that, for the teaching staff including the principal, accountability is paramount. The school sees its fundamental objective as providing a well-rounded, quality education for students. Its motto, ‘perseverance as the key to success,’ embodies the importance of determination in achievement. In its vision statement, the school identifies its dedication to instilling life-long learning and a culture of excellence among its students.

School B is a co-educational, denominational primary school situated in a village 13 kilometres from the southern city. The school is a government-assisted school, which means that it is church-owned and assisted financially by the government (MoE, 2005). The school is managed by its school board, which controls and administers all matters related to the establishment and maintenance of its school (MoE, 2005), while sharing with the government the financial costs involved in the school’s operation, with the exception of staff salaries. The staff of the school is paid by the government.

School B was founded in 1895 by a religious organization and rebuilt in 1953. Religious knowledge forms an integral part of the curriculum and staff members are usually members of the respective religious organization. The present population of the school includes 276 students and 18 members of the teaching staff. The composition of the school’s staff is shown in Table 3.
Table 3: Staff Composition at School B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The staff at the school comprises two specialist teachers in the areas of reading and computer studies. The auxiliary staff consists of a secretary, as well as a male and female janitor.

The students of school B belong to low and middle-income homes of the surrounding agriculture-based districts. At this semi-rural school, the participating students have been identified by the class teacher as a ‘remedial group’. The school is not considered a prestige primary school. The general trend is that approximately 15% of students matriculate to their secondary school of choice, while the majority of students attend the non-prestigious government secondary schools in the area.

No co- or extra-curricular activities are undertaken at School B. However, the school has as its expressed goal for students the fostering of academic improvement, as seen in its motto, ‘Aim higher’, which is prominently displayed within the school’s compound. Though there is no explicit vision statement, the school’s mission statement highlights the development of core learner competencies accompanied by a strong moral compass.
Both primary schools articulate an expressed learner-centredness, with a focus on learner benefits to be derived from persistence in academic pursuits. The similarities and differences of the participating schools contributed to a broader range of participant perspectives, reflective of the national demographics.

### 3.7.2 Gaining approval

During the month of June 2013 I approached nine primary school principals within the country’s southern region. All except two of the schools expressed reluctance to participate in the study. The stated reasons included the notion that Spanish was a non-examinable subject and the schools’ emphasis was on high exam performance or that the school lacked teachers trained to deliver the Spanish curriculum.

Initially, I had hoped to study three primary schools. However, the willingness of only two teachers and principals to participate in the study caused me to change plans and use these two schools. I met with the participating school principals and orally outlined the research, its purpose and the proposed procedures. In addition, a letter was presented to principals (See Appendix C) requesting their permission. Verbal permission was given by the school principals to conduct the research and the teachers also verbally agreed to participate during the September to December 2013 school term. This researcher indicated her intention to follow up with consent forms for all participants at the beginning of the school term, which began on September 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2013 after gaining the requisite approval from the local MoE (See Appendix D).

The researcher and prospective participating teachers met again in June 2013 to identify classes for the observation phase and to discuss the research process. As this was nearing the end of the term, class examinations were in progress. We agreed to meet again in September, before the start of the research, to synchronize schedules.
A sequence of events delayed approval from the local MoE and subsequently the start of the field research. During mid-August 2013 I submitted an official request to conduct the study, in line with directives from MoE officials. This included a letter requesting permission and a letter from the University, which supported my request. I was informed that approval would be granted within one week from the time of application. Two weeks after the visit approval had not been granted. On visiting the MoE headquarters in the capital city once more, I was told to resubmit an application to a department newly established to process such requests. I was directed to another location in the city’s centre where I submitted the required application. This was the last week of August. I was informed that the approval would take two weeks to be granted. In reality, the approval came five weeks later, in early October 2013. This thus limited the time to be spent in the field given the need to synchronize the schedules of participants and researcher and the fact that the research could not be undertaken during the last two weeks of the school term in the month of December, as this time was allocated for end-of-term examinations and other school activities.

During the month of September I kept in contact with the school principals and teachers, explaining the delay. In October, 2013, after permission from the MoE was obtained, the participants formally signaled their agreement to participate in the study by signing consent forms (see Appendices E and G).

In addition, information describing the study and its purpose was distributed to the participants (see Appendices F and G). All research procedures were approved by the University of Leicester’s Research Board and the local MoE’s Chief Education Officer. The principle of beneficence was adhered to in order to ensure that no harm was brought to the participants.

3.8 Positionality of the researcher

This researcher has been a teacher for thirty years, during which time I have taught at all levels of the local education system. I have taught at both rural and
suburban primary and secondary schools, and currently am a teacher educator at
the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). The UTT is a multi-site university,
with two campuses that focus exclusively on teacher education, one each in an
urban location in the north (Valsayn) and south (Corinth) of Trinidad.

During both pilot and main phases of this study, I wore the cap of researcher
while still functioning as a teacher educator at the UTT. As a small island
community, it was not surprising that some of the participants were known to me.
I was aware of the prospective challenges that such a situation could pose for the
research, given the possible disadvantages of participants withholding information
and/or responding in ways perceived as acceptable. I discovered that the two
teacher participants were former students of the UTT with whom I had previously
interacted within that context. This was found, however, to be advantageous as
the teacher participants appeared relaxed and readily shared their perspectives.
Though my roles as researcher and teacher educator may have appeared to
overlap, or to suggest, as Braun and Clark (2013, p.10) note, both ‘insider and
outsider positions’, the reality was, however, that prior to the fieldwork stage of
the research, I had not had any contact or experiences with the two schools under
study. This meant that in essence, I was an outsider.

I was aware of my understanding of the primary school context from the
perspective of a former teacher, which perhaps can be seen as a quasi-insider
status. This was a perspective that I ensured, through the use of bracketing, did
not colour my interpretations, as I recorded and subsequently discussed only my
observations, refrained from commenting on the merits or demerits of the lesson,
thus putting aside any preconceived notions and my role as teacher educator. To
counter any possible biases, I ensured that I shared with the participants my
interest in the research problem, the nature and aims of the study and their rights
as participants. This helped to establish and maintain rapport, which I found to be
crucial in gaining and maintaining trust and openness with the gatekeepers and
participants.
Additionally, I found that my knowledge of how the primary school system functioned served to enhance the meanings derived from the field experience, allowing for understanding of the participants’ worldview and the insights they shared. Furthermore, the fact that I was a former primary school teacher was shared with the participants, which afforded me a level of trust and access to information that may otherwise have not been gained. Thus, drawing on Dwyer and Buckle’s (2009) work, the researcher’s positionality took a dialectical turn, where the relationship between insider-outsider was not viewed as incompatible, but rather one that preserved the multilayered complexity of differences and similarities in the educational experiences of participants and researcher. This study did not seek, therefore, “to endorse the binary alternatives that unduly narrow the range of understanding and experience” (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p.60). Rather, this researcher occupied ‘the space between’ insider-outsider status, symbolized by the hyphen that bridges insider and outsider, thus resisting such a dichotomy. I endorse the view of Dwyer and Buckle (2009) who posit that:

Perhaps, as researchers, we can only ever occupy the space between. We may be closer to the insider position or closer to the outsider position, but because our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher…we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions. (p.61)

3.9 The pilot study

Pilot studies are vital to good research design and realize important functions in a study’s success, not least of which is the provision of valuable insights (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). For this study, the pilot phase of the classroom observation took place during September, 2013 at a denominational primary school located in the heart of the southern city. This school did not participate in the final study. For the observation of classroom practice, the instrument piloted was the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation schedule, Part A (Spada and Lyster, 1997) (see Appendix H). The COLT was
selected as it is well-suited to describe various communicative interactions and instructional activities in the FL classroom. The data from the COLT would provide answers to the overarching research question on how Spanish is delivered in the primary classroom in Trinidad. Several of the study’s research instruments were also ‘trialed’ to ensure their clarity and adequacy and that the information gathered reflected the stated research questions. These were the principal and teacher pre-observation interviews and questionnaire. The information thus gained was relevant to the main research question and subsidiary research questions 2, 3 and 4, the latter focused on factors that impact the initiative’s success and participants’ perception of and experiences with primary Spanish.

The pilot stage helped to identify possible logistical challenges and demonstrate whether the implementation of research schedules were feasible (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Changes to the instruments were made based on participants’ suggestions and the researcher’s review of the pilot data. These included reordering the questionnaire items so that open-ended items were listed consecutively at the end. In question 2 c, an additional option, ‘No perceived benefits’ was included. Item 5 was modified to include the option “Is it a different document?” A typographical error was also corrected in the instructions for question 10. The ensuing changes to the questionnaire thus allowed for improved coherence. The notion of using audio-recordings for classroom observation was changed to the use of video-recordings to provide greater clarity, as the audio-recording in the pilot phase was at times made indistinct by classroom noises in the school’s open-plan layout. The researcher’s familiarity with the research instruments was thus increased and items in the interview schedules and questionnaires were refined. This aided in facility of implementation in the final study and moreover, enhanced the study’s trustworthiness.

3.10 The Main Study- The Sample

Because of the small population in case study research, random sampling has been found to be problematic (Gerring, 2007). Purposive or purposeful sampling
is generally utilized. Similarly, in the field of applied linguistics, purposive sampling is more commonplace (Perry, 2011). In purposive sampling, the participants are purposely selected to permit inquiry into and deep understanding of a phenomenon. Purposive sampling has been criticized as unsuitable for large samples and its tendency towards bias in sample selection, especially in cases without well-defined selection criteria. Generalizability is limited (Tongco, 2007). Despite these demerits, these ‘information-rich cases’ reflect the qualities relevant to the investigation and illuminate the research questions (Denscombe, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Initially, nine primary schools belonging to the three primary school types in Trinidad, (namely government, private and denominational), were approached by this researcher. The rationale for selecting these schools included ease of access, as they all lay within the southern region of the country and were within a 28 kilometre-circumference of the southern city. However, of these schools, only two stated that they were a) willing to participate in the study and b) engaged in the teaching of Spanish. Thus the two principals and teachers at these schools and all students of the respective classes were appropriate research subjects, well suited to shed light on the research questions and fulfill the study’s purpose. The two participating schools, principals, teachers and all students belonging to the respective teachers’ classes were therefore selected by means of purposive sampling.

Students for focus groups and curriculum officers were also included in this study. A smaller group of students from each class was chosen for focus group interviews. Two curriculum officers from the MoE were also chosen for interviewing. Systematic sampling was used to select students for the focus group interviews and curriculum officers. In systematic sampling, a predetermined sequential procedure was utilized to identify cases that would be part of the sample (Newby, 2010). For the focus group interviews, six students (three boys and three girls) were selected from the class register. Every third name in the
listing of males and females was selected (if present) on the day carded for the student interviews. The student sample thus comprised different ages, ethnicities and an equal number of males and females, to allow for a range of interpretations and experiences. There are eight primary Spanish curriculum officers for Trinidad, with four each listed for the north and south of the country. I divided the list alphabetically into two sections for the northern and southern regions respectively. The 2nd name from each section was selected for interviewing. Thus the officers interviewed provided an overview of primary Spanish implemented in the north and south of Trinidad.

The schools’ questionnaire was distributed to primary schools in Trinidad. These schools were selected by means of systematic sampling. Of the MoE alphabetical listing of the 473 primary schools in Trinidad, each was given a number. 11% (n=52) of the primary schools on the list were contacted. The first school was chosen randomly from numbers 1 to 10 (number 9) and every 9th school selected in sequence from the listing, with the process (1 in n) repeated until the schools were identified. I contacted the schools’ principals by telephone and delivered the questionnaire to the selected schools in the south of the island. This was received by the principal or senior teacher present on the day. For schools in the northern region of the island, a colleague residing in the north of the island delivered and collected the questionnaires. Some principals completed and submitted the questionnaires on the same day. In other cases, we were told to return. In all, a total of 45 completed questionnaires were collected. This was a response rate of 86.53% - that is, 10.99% of the island’s school surveyed.

For this research project, therefore, a combination of sampling techniques was utilized, as recommended by Dawson (2009). In brief, these were purposive and systematic sampling methods.
3.11 Data Collection- Research Instruments and Procedures

The information gathering process took place during the first school term of the 2013-2014 academic year. In this section, the details about the data collection instruments and the processes followed are given.

3.11.1 Sources of data

Multiple sources of data were obtained from the field. ‘Going into the field’ allowed for direct contact with participants in their ‘naturally occurring complexity’, so that understandings could be gained of “the realities and minutiae of daily life” experienced by participants (Patton, 2002, p.48). Furthermore, the study of classroom contexts in their complexities requires a research method that matches this complexity with adequate acknowledgment of all participant perspectives expressly reflected in the data collection (Clarke, 2002). In this research project, this was achieved through multiple data sources (questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews with key participants in the curriculum initiative), which provided for triangulation, greater accuracy of the information gathered and a reduction of bias in the research (Litchman, 2006, p.13). The diversity of voices and data were juxtaposed, thus allowing for enhanced insights on the implementation of primary Spanish in Trinidad. The questionnaire was distributed prior to the qualitative research sequence, shown in Figure 7.
Figure 7: The qualitative research sequence

The qualitative research sequence began with interviews conducted with the two participating school principals to obtain their views on the introduction of primary Spanish. Interviews were then done with the teachers of the Standard Two classes. The next phase of the qualitative research process entailed classroom observations of the Spanish teaching process after which, selected students from each class were interviewed in a focus group. Video stimulated recall interviews were conducted with each class teacher and the MoE curriculum officers for Spanish were interviewed.

Figure 8 summarizes the full research process, identifying the multiple sources of data, including quantitative and qualitative approaches.
96

**Figure 8:** The research process

### 3.11.2 Schools’ questionnaire

A questionnaire, based on the NFER 2006 primary MFL survey (Wade et al, 2009) and comprising 10 items, was distributed to a sample of primary schools across Trinidad during the month of October 2013 (see Appendix J), which
allowed for a broader perspective from the different school types in both the north and south of the country. The questionnaire items sought responses that would answer research questions 1, 2 and 3 about the delivery of Spanish, variables impacting the initiative’s success and principal’s perceptions of the new initiative. Additionally, the inclusion of the questionnaire as a research instrument allowed for anonymity of responses, a wider coverage of geographical areas and perspectives and the reduction of interview bias (Phellas et al, 2011).

3.11.3 Semi-structured interviews

Rubin and Rubin (2005) note the value of qualitative interviews in deepening one’s understandings of experiences. Of the three types of interviews used in research, unstructured, structured and semi-structured, the semi-structured interview was employed in this investigation.

In unstructured interviews, there is usually no interview schedule, though the researcher has a focus based on the study’s aims, which guide the session. Interviewees articulate their thoughts to open-ended questions posed by the interviewer (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006), with questions created based on the interviewee’s responses (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). Structured interviews rigidly follow a set of predetermined questions (Mason, 2004; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009), which allows for consistency of responses. With semi-structured interviews, an interview guide or aide memoire is used (Mason, 2004; Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009) that contains open and close-ended questions. The interviewer is able to deviate from the guide, creating questions based on the interviewee’s responses (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009).

The semi-structured interview possesses several advantages. These include its ‘flexible, fluid structure’ and the development of the interview by means of the interviewee’s individual perspectives and the researcher’s interests (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006; Mason, 2004), allowing for new insights (Cohen and Crabtree,
2006). Semi-structured interviews provide an ideal foil against the rigidity of the structured interview and the unpredictable nature of the unstructured interview (Wellington, 2000).

Though the semi-structured interview has been critiqued for its principal weakness in terms of its time consuming nature and also its small numbers and lack of representativeness (Denscombe, 2010), these issues were addressed in this study by the synchronizing of interview times, adequate time-management and the use of the questionnaire for supplementary data. The semi-structured interview thus aligned well with the study’s research objectives and brought to the fore the participants’ constructions of reality.

The qualitative, face-to face semi-structured interviews, first conducted with the school principals, as previously stated, sought to examine principals’ perspectives on the Spanish initiative while exploring how their viewpoints impacted the implementation of the Spanish curriculum at their respective schools. Interviews, conducted in each principal’s office, were audio-recorded and transcribed. The principal interviews were 25 and 15 minutes at School A and B respectively.

Semi-structured pre-observation interviews were also undertaken with teachers. The interviews with teachers took place after school hours, so that both researcher and teacher could converse uninterrupted. In one of the schools, this occurred in the air-conditioned staff room, whereas at the next, there was no staff room facility and the interview was conducted in a vacant classroom. These interviews were audio-recorded. Interview transcripts were later provided to teacher and principal participants for verification and/or feedback.

Interview items were developed to gather information that emanated from the research questions. Table 4 shows the link between the interview schedule items for the principal interviews and their purpose. The interviews served to garner
Table 4: Interview schedule for principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is the socio-economic background of the student population of your school?</td>
<td>To understand the social context of the student participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What would you say is the first language of the majority of your students?</td>
<td>To understand the language(s) with which students are comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What are your views on the introduction of Spanish in the primary school?</td>
<td>To gain insights into the principals’ personal views on Spanish as a FL in their institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What are your views on the new Spanish syllabus, where Spanish is compulsory, though non-examinable?</td>
<td>To determine whether principal views converged with the MoE’s policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Has your school embraced this mandate? If yes, how? If no, why not?</td>
<td>To explore the school’s emphasis on the teaching of Spanish as a FL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What are some of the challenges you see for the implementation of Spanish?</td>
<td>To identify the challenges of primary Spanish from an administrative perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What are some of the benefits you see?</td>
<td>To discover whether administrators view the teaching-learning of Spanish as a positive influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What do you think are some of the factors needed for the effective implementation of Spanish at the primary level?</td>
<td>To discover the variables for successful initiative implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>How is this interpreted in the policy of your school?</td>
<td>To gain insights into whether principals have identified critical success factors for the initiative and if so, how they aim to achieve these in line with their individual school’s policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What is the policy of your school in terms of the teaching/ integration of Spanish?</td>
<td>To discover whether respective schools teach Spanish as a discrete subject or whether they adhere fully to the policy document, integrating Spanish with other subject areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>How do you think your students feel about learning Spanish?</td>
<td>To examine administrative knowledge of student perceptions of learning Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>How do your teachers feel about teaching Spanish?</td>
<td>To identify whether administrators are aware of the teachers’ perceptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The items in the teacher semi-structured interview schedule (pre-observation) are similarly summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5: Interview schedule for teachers: Pre-observation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Interview question</th>
<th>Purpose of interview question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To how many classes do you teach Spanish at this school?</td>
<td>To determine the function of Spanish teacher, whether as generalist or specialist at the primary level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How often do you teach Spanish to this class?</td>
<td>To identify the extent of the focus given to Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What are some of the strategies you use to teach Spanish?</td>
<td>To discover the strategies teachers favour for lesson delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What would you say is the main objective in your teaching of Spanish?</td>
<td>To determine whether teacher intentions and lesson aims translate into practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Have you encountered any challenges in teaching Spanish?</td>
<td>To find out whether obstacles are met in the teaching of Spanish (factors that impact FL delivery).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What do you do to overcome these?</td>
<td>To explore what teachers do to teach the FL effectively, in spite of possible challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Have you seen any benefits from teaching Spanish to your students?</td>
<td>To discover teacher perception of FL teaching benefits, which may impact the implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>How do your students feel about learning Spanish? Have they expressed this to you?</td>
<td>To gain insights into students’ views of learning Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Are there readily available resources for teaching Spanish/ What resources do you use?</td>
<td>To identify factors that may constrain or propel the implementation of the Spanish initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Which of these target language interactions do you foster in the Spanish classroom- oral, written, oral and written?</td>
<td>To determine the teacher’s view of the interactional focus of the primary Spanish classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>How is this done?</td>
<td>To understand the teacher’s perspective of how the delivery of Spanish is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>How do you assess students’ learning of Spanish?</td>
<td>To determine what teachers do in terms of assessment in the FL classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>What are your views on the new Spanish curriculum and how do you implement this new mandate?</td>
<td>To explore teachers’ perspective on the curriculum distributed for teacher use from September, 2013 and how this influences their instructional practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The items in the pre-observation teacher interviews served as a springboard for information gathering with respect to the class teachers’ perspectives on and
experiences with the new MFL initiative. The interview schedule was used as a guide, with the trajectory of the interview partly guided by participant responses. The findings from the pre-observation interviews are detailed in section 4.4. The semi-structured interview for principals and teachers’ pre-observation interview served to answer research questions 2, 3 and 4. These are:

2. What factors impact on the initiative's implementation?
3. How do teachers, principals and curriculum officers perceive the implementation of the primary Spanish initiative?
4. How do teachers and principals describe their experiences of implementing the primary Spanish initiative?

3.11.4 Classroom observations
Observation allows researchers to understand complex real world experiences in ways that cannot be discovered through other forms of surveys (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). Data gathered from observations allow for deeper insights into programmes and interventions than are achieved from interviews (Patton, 2002, pp.22-23). Five Spanish lessons per school were observed, with the researcher recording the interactions through the structured Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme. The COLT scheme was used for this present study as its purpose was to systematically describe the nature of interactions in the primary FL classroom. The researcher was a non-participant observer, seated at the rear of the classroom, annotating the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2008). These observations were valuable in that they captured context and process (Mulhall, 2003) with the intentions to inform and be informed about the teaching of Spanish at the primary level.

The systematic observation yielded important insights into the teaching-learning process of primary Spanish, taking account of both lesson content and interaction. The use of observations together with interviewing was beneficial to obtaining in-depth details of Spanish instruction at the primary level, as interviews and
observations in qualitative research are “mutually reinforcing qualitative techniques” (Patton, 2002, p.27).

Data about classroom instructional practice were obtained in real time through the use of the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme (Spada and Lyster, 1997). The main research question in this project explores the delivery of Spanish in the Trinidadian primary classroom. As such, this required an observation scheme that could comprehensively describe instructional and communicative activities in the FL classroom. The COLT’s systematic scheme was well suited to this objective as its categories allow for the capturing of the intricacies of classroom events and instructional activities including teacher questions, student oral interactions, lesson content, resources and the determination of the time spent on these events. The COLT scheme can be used in different L2 contexts and is valuable for determining linkages between process and product relationships in L2 settings and examining the extent to which L2 programme goals and practices are aligned (Spada and Lyster, 1997).

There are two parts, A and B, of the COLT scheme. Part A is recorded in “real” time and describes classroom interactions and activities. The time allocated for each activity is recorded so that the proportion of time spent on varied instructional events could be identified. The analysis of Part A describes the percentage of class time spent on group work, the functional aspects of language learning and the use of authentic instructional materials. Instruction that demonstrates these and similar features have been described as more communicatively oriented than those that are teacher-centred and dependent on form-focused activities (Fröhlich et al, 1985). Part B describes the oral communications between students and teacher. This section of the scheme is used in “post-hoc analyses” from transcribed data (Spada and Lyster, 1997, p.788).

The choice of using either Part A or Part B, or the entire scheme, is dependent on the objectives of the research. Moreover, the scheme may be modified by
selecting or adapting categories to suit the research’s aims (Spada and Lyster, 1997). Part A (see Appendix H) is suitable for researchers who seek to gain “a general picture of the communicative orientation of teaching in L2 classrooms at the level of pedagogic activities” while Part B is appropriate for examining “a specific feature of the linguistic interactions between students and teachers (Spada and Lyster, 1997, p.789). For the purposes of this research, Part A of the scheme, which was not modified, was utilized, as I was interested in finding out the linguistic focus of the primary Spanish classroom. Similar to Aliponga et al (2007, p.1236), I found Part A to be well suited to a “description of classroom practices for different focuses of communicative competence within activities.” Thus, only Part A was used, as the rationale was to provide a description of instruction in the two primary Spanish contexts. In Part A, the time spent on each activity was recorded, and the percentage of time calculated for the respective COLT categories. It was possible to identify the focus of the instructional activities, aided in part by the clear content subdivisions of the COLT and the practice gained from piloting this instrument.

In each school, five observations were conducted. Scheduled to occur once weekly over a five-week period, circumstances necessitated that the observations extended to an 8 week-period, from October to November 19th, 2013. This was because, on three occasions at school B (denominational), circumstances necessitated a change of plans. These involved the preparation for a school bazaar and the moving of furniture by teachers and students during the scheduled observation time. On another occasion, heavy rains flooded the school building, so the school was closed until cleanup operations were completed. On the third occasion, the class teacher was not granted the use of multimedia equipment and the computer room as requested. Consequently, these observations were rescheduled. The teacher-participants (TA; TB) are graduate generalist primary teachers of the UTT. At School A (private) the class consisted of 21 students, 11 boys and 10 girls. At School B, the class comprised 18 students, that is, 9 boys and 9 girls.
3.11.5 Video-recordings

“The qualitative methodologist must aim at capturing what actually takes place and what people actually say: the perceived facts” (Patton, 2002, p.28). The notion of gaining the perceived facts characterizes video recordings, which were found by this researcher to be an ideal means of recording interactions in the primary Spanish classroom. In each school, five class sessions of approximately 25 minutes each were video recorded. The video data collected were utilized in stimulated recall interviews with teachers at the end of the observed class sessions. Clarke (2002, p.4) emphasizes the value of video-recorded data in educational research, which allows for not only the documenting of instructional activities, but also “the memories, feelings and actions invoked” as participants reconstruct accounts based on the video evidence. Video recordings are thus useful tools for analysis, reflection and discussion, as teachers are able to look at themselves and their students as they engaged in instructional processes, identifying clearly the impact of their strategies on learners. In this study, as Cohen et al. (2007) suggest, the video-as-data was used “to make explicit” the types of learner interactions during the instructional process” (p.445) and to provide independent reliability checks by adding to observations and verification of the events from a different angle (Bowman, 1994).

During the classroom observation, the videographer and researcher were positioned ‘on the periphery’ (Creswell, 2008) at the back of the classroom to minimize distractions. As Bell (2010) recommends, the researcher and videographer did not interact with teacher or students during the class session.

Visual data collection is one of the richest methods of information gathering (Johnson and Christensen, 2008), thus the video data used in the stimulated recall interview provided the basis for discussion with the classroom teachers as to their practice. Goldman et al (2009) emphasize the utility of digital video-as-data in contributing to the science of learning as it allows for recording, annotating and reflecting. As Fitzgerald et al (2013, p.52) emphasize, video technology used in
classroom research is ideal for capturing the complexities of instructional practice as “it provides a permanent and detailed record, which can be analyzed from multiple perspectives.”

3.11.6 Stimulated recall interviews

The stimulated recall interview (SRI) is an introspective research method frequently used in the field of educational, medical and second language research (Hodgson, 2008) to study decision-making and learning processes. In the educational sphere, it helps to uncover “implicit and explicit assumptions about teachers’ cognitions” (Calderhead, 1986, p.13) that can inform and improve the teaching-learning process. The SRI involves the viewing of a previously video-recorded event by participants, who look at themselves engaged in an activity as a method of recollecting their thoughts during the video sequence (Lyle, 2003; Nguyen et al, 2013). This is an important advantage of the stimulated recall process, as the video-recorded sequence offers a type of “memory prosthesis, a crutch” that fosters participants’ discussion of what they actually did, as opposed to repeating opinions on best practice (Dempsey, 2010, p.251). During an SRI session, the video-recording is stopped at intervals and the participant allowed to reflect and comment on the shown activity. The choice of video-clips may be made by researcher, participant or both parties (Rowe, 2009). A possible limitation of the stimulated recall method is the prospect of participant anxiety. In addition, participants may introduce some ‘sanitising’ into their retrospective verbal accounts of events (Lyle, 2003). However, this likelihood was mitigated through the establishment of rapport and trust between participants and researcher. Thus greater insights into the participants’ concurrent thoughts at the time of the videoed event are gained as “the technique of SRIs brings informants a step closer to the moment they actually produce action. It gives them the chance to listen or view themselves in action, jog memories and give answers of “I did” instead of “I might have” ” (Dempsey, 2010, pp.349-350).
At the end of the classroom observations, each teacher met with the researcher for a stimulated recall interview (SRI) at a scheduled time that the teachers identified as convenient. Both teachers emphasized their unavailability at an earlier time due to examination commitments and other end-of-year school activities. For the SRI, the researcher and teacher discussed and viewed video footage of ten vignettes captured from the lessons observed, selected because of the varied communicative activities and interactions such as introduction of vocabulary, the use of worksheets, singing and games, other individual and group tasks and target language receptive and productive tasks. The researcher stopped the video at points that she had pre-determined and engaged in discussions that focused on ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions with regard to these activities. For example, the teachers were asked questions that included ‘What is the aim of this activity?’ ‘Why did you make this choice?’ as well as ‘What resources are used here?’ and ‘How were these sourced?’ (see Appendix K). In effect, the ability to view themselves teaching along with the semi-structured questions focused the themes of concern to teachers such as lesson objectives, student-teacher interactions and the rationale for particular instructional strategies. The teachers’ viewpoints were elicited on the achievement of learner outcomes and how the lessons aligned with communicative goals. The SRIs, which lasted for one and a half hours, were also audio-recorded.

The video stimulated recall interviews (VSRI) were conducted in the month of December 2013 and January 2014. The latter was due to the passing of a participating teacher’s parent during December. This change in the research plan was unforeseen and unavoidable. Nonetheless, as qualitative research is “fluid and ever-changing” (Litchman, 2006, p.9), this researcher made the necessary adjustments and rescheduled the VSRI, in keeping with the principle of beneficence.
3.11.7 Focus group interviews

Focus groups are “groups of individuals assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on the topic that is the subject of the research” (Powell et al, 1996, p.499). The homogeneous nature of focus groups gives the participants the opportunity to share their experiences in a relatively non-threatening environment, can “dilute the power imbalance between researcher and research by taking advantage of the naturally occurring peer group” and is a valuable way of eliciting student views (Barbour, 2005, p.743). Moreover, data derived from focus groups can provide unanimity of or myriad experiences on a particular topic (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) as “the group interaction may trigger thoughts and ideas among participants that do not emerge during an individual interview” (Lichtman, 2000, p.154). This method saves time (Litchman, 2014) as information is gathered from students, which could not be obtained from observation. In this way, breadth and a deeper dimension were added to the research (Bowman, 1994).

The focus group semi-structured interview was done with six pupils in each school on the last day of the classroom observation sessions so that the students could provide an overview of their Spanish learning experience. One focus group interview was conducted in each school. A semi-structured interview schedule was employed (see Appendix M). The interviews with students were undertaken to gain added insights into the students’ understandings about learning Spanish, their levels of enjoyment of the subject content and their personal assessment of their progress in the Spanish classroom. The focus group interviews sought to elucidate the data collected from observations, in a bid to reveal how students talk in their own words about the phenomenon under study (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003), thus establishing the student participant perspectives and experiences (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The interviews, which lasted for approximately 20 minutes with the Year Two students whose mean age was 8 years, were audio-recorded.
3.12 The process of data analysis

Data analysis “is about process and interpretation” (Litchman, 2006, p.160). For this study, the researcher primarily engaged in qualitative data analysis. Good qualitative data analysis, though complex, is sophisticated and goes beyond ‘mere reportage’, reflecting an amalgam of field research understanding and insightful exploration of the data’s structure (Newby, 2010). The researcher follows a process from which interpretations are made (Litchman, 2006), as data are transformed into findings (Patton, 2002). The interpretations derived from the data are termed an emic perspective (Field and Morse, 1992; Orb et al., 2000), which means that the analysis of phenomena obtained is derived from the ‘insider perspective’ or views of the participants (Lu, 2012). The emic perspective contrasts with that of the etic, the latter referring to the ‘outsider’ or non-participant perspective (Ary et al, 2006; Morris et al, 1999).

The interpretive process of qualitative data analysis has been often described as art (Finlay, 2006), craft and “a big dance” that is at times either choreographed or unrehearsed (Miller and Crabtree, 1999). Interpretation is viewed as “a complex and dynamic craft” with frequent and often numerous changes, embodied by “creative artistry” and “technical exactitude” of “the two dancers”, who are “the interpreters and the text” (Miller and Crabtree, 1999, p.128-129).

While the complexity of qualitative research hinges on “the range and variety of the data and the epistemological position adopted by researchers” (Newby, 2010, p.454), it is this diversity that makes qualitative research rich and potent with ‘meaning-making’. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) acknowledge this viewpoint, emphasizing the indispensable role of researchers involved in all aspects of the qualitative study. Drawing on Aoki’s (1996) seminal work, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) see the involvement of researcher and research participants as the third space or ‘the space between’:
The intimacy of qualitative research no longer allows us to remain true outsiders to the experience under study and, because of our role as researchers, it does not qualify us as complete insiders. We now occupy this space between, with the costs and benefits this status affords. (p.61)

In this manner, data are ultimately converted into insight, for as Creswell (2007, p.150) states, “undeniably, qualitative researchers preserve the unusual and serendipitous”.

Qualitative data analysis is an iterative process (Litchman, 2006; Miller and Crabtree, 1999; Creswell, 2007) that utilizes an inductive approach (Litchman, 2006), moving between manifest and latent analysis (Newby, 2010, p.459). Manifest refers to what is literal or present on the surface of the communication while latent refers to what is implied, or inferred meanings derived from data (Kondracki et al, 2002). The iterative process produces “an interplay of elements” through “a systematic, repetitive, and recursive process” (Bassett, 2010) with the refining of concepts and themes. The researcher moves in analytic circles, touching on aspects of the data analysis process that are interrelated. This circular movement can take place simultaneously (Creswell, 2007). This iteration is graphically detailed in Figure 9.

![Figure 9: The Data Analysis Spiral (Creswell, 2007, p.151, Figure 8.1)](image)

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In the section that follows, the process of data analysis is further detailed.

3.12.1 Questionnaire data
Questionnaire data analysis entailed the analysis of responses to both close- and open-ended items. The data were coded to facilitate analysis. Data were categorical in nature, that is, the individual codes represented the various categories responded to. These codes, used to group the data, were used to describe the context of FL teaching in the different school settings.

For the close-ended questions, the data analysis involved the use of frequency calculations, which generated descriptive statistics. Since this is a qualitative dominant study, it was unnecessary to use correlations and regressions. The data were detailed visually using tabular and chart formats and further explained through text. Narrative data were also obtained from open-ended items and written questionnaire comments, which produced single words, phrases or paragraphs (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). These responses were analyzed through the use of themes as described below for the interview data. The categorical data obtained from the close-ended questions were adequate because these were complemented by more in-depth responses obtained from interviews and open-ended questionnaire items.

3.12.2 Classroom observation data
Data obtained from classroom observations were analyzed within the COLT parameters of participant organization, content, student modality and materials. The information gathered was analyzed by calculating the percentage of instructional time spent on these categories. For each school, calculations were done for each of the five observations. Tables illustrating the average percentage of time for each parameter and related subsections by school were presented. The instructional time spent on the various language learning activities, described in terms of percentages, reflects the extent to which language instruction can be
viewed as communicatively oriented, in keeping with the research literature (Fröhlich et al, 1985).

3.12.3 Interview data

The first stage of the analysis of interview data (principal-, curriculum officer-, teacher pre-observation, focus groups and stimulated recall interviews) was the collating and transcribing of the information gathered, with pseudonyms used for the participants to preserve anonymity. The data were transcribed verbatim and the lines numbered. The transcriptions were read and re-read so that, as researcher, I would be familiarized sufficiently to obtain a comprehensive view of the data (Vaismoradi et al, 2013, p.401). Reading through the data multiple times allowed me to become immersed in the data (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

During the reading of the transcripts, I made notes in the margins with respect to broad themes and patterns that I saw emerging. Initial codes were applied to the data. The next step involved the refining of the initial codes. Manifest (explicit) and latent (underlying, implicit) themes (Klenke, 2008) were identified from the data.

The general inductive approach was used in this study. Without the restrictions imposed by structured methodologies, the general inductive approach seeks to bring to the fore dominant themes found in the raw data (Thomas, 2006, p.238). In this way I was able to reduce the raw data and identify linkages between the research objectives and emergent findings (Thomas, 2006).

The inductive approach to data analysis utilized in this study is distinct from the deductive approach. The deductive approach seeks to investigate whether the findings from the research data are in harmony with a priori theories or hypotheses (Thomas, 2006). On the other hand, thematic inductive analysis, used to analyze the data collected in this study, is a type of ‘goal-free evaluation’ (Scriven, 1991, p.56), that lends itself well to identifying and analyzing patterns
within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Thematic inductive analysis provides a good fit for research in new areas (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) and allowed for the participants’ construction of reality, the emic perspective (Field and Morse, 1992; Lu, 2012; Orb et al, 2000), to be highlighted in response to the research questions.

After the transcription and generation of initial codes, segments of data relevant to each code were arranged together. Codes are labels with assigned themes significant to a study (Newby, 2010). First cycle coding methods were used at the beginning of the data-coding phase. A word or short phrase was used to identify the units of meaning so that these could be easily categorized (DeCuir-Gunby et al, 2011; Saldaña, 2009). This allowed the data to be condensed (DeCuir-Gunby et al, 2011). Codes that are developed from existing theory are *a priori* or theory-driven. In this study, codes were generated from the data, that is, they were inductive or data-driven, as opposed to *a priori* codes (Boyatzis, 1998). This served to eliminate the issue of “intermediaries as potentially contaminating factors”, allowing the voices of previously unobtrusive participants to be heard (Boyatzis, 1998, p.30).

After taking a preliminary look at the information gathered, categories were established (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This is open coding. Next, codes were grouped under potential themes, and relevant data collated under these themes (DeCuir-Gunby et al, 1998). The themes were thus synthesized, with different threads of data integrated in a coherent manner (Sandelowski and Leeman, 2012). Cross-comparison of themes were undertaken to identify similarities in emergent themes and to verify the themes’ relevance with the extracts. Termed axial coding, concepts were ‘cross-cut’ or associated with each other. Axial coding is suitable for investigations with varied data forms (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Themes were refined to ensure coherence and distinctiveness (Braun and Clarke, 2013). For example, the various interviews were read and themes identified across interviews. An example of frequent themes across the teacher interviews were ‘target language use’ and ‘resources’, which emerged from the discussion of
classroom instruction. Thus comparisons were done across interviews to establish commonalities, ‘creating meaning in complex data’ (Thomas, 2006).

At the final stage, the data were reviewed and themes refined to ensure internal homogeneity, that is, meaningful, coherent data (Patton, 2003) and external heterogeneity - distinctive themes (Vaismoradi et al, 2013; Patton, 2003). The outcome of the inductive thematic analysis was a summary of the raw data that conveyed key themes. ‘Fuzzy’ generalizations were made that were linked to the study’s literature, which could inform both theory and practice. The participants’ perspectives were described and presented by means of verbatim extracts under the various themes, which were directly linked to the study’s research questions and the literature.

3.13 Summary
This chapter detailed the study’s research design and instruments. It also reported on the data collection and analysis process and described how ethical concerns and rigour were addressed.

The next chapter articulates the findings that emerged from the data.
Chapter Four: Findings of the Study

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is guided by the study’s research questions, and presents the findings of the questionnaire and classroom observations with the various categories derived from the interviews. As such, the main findings will be offered in a linear fashion relative to the various instruments and their chronological order as employed in this study. In so doing, the information sought by these instruments would be revealed in a manner that reduces ambiguity and increases clarity, so that full, rich verstehen about the primary Spanish initiative is made possible. The discussion that ensues from these findings will form the focus of the subsequent chapter. The linear approach will illuminate the discussion of the findings, which will be presented in light of the research questions.

These are the study’s research questions, which focused the enquiry:

1. How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad?
2. What are the factors that impact on the initiative's implementation?
3. How do teachers, principals and curriculum officers perceive the introduction of the primary Spanish initiative?
4. How do teachers and principals describe their experiences of implementing the primary Spanish initiative?
5. What are the students' perspectives on learning Spanish at the primary level?

4.2 Questionnaire data

The questionnaire survey was distributed to 10.9% (n=52) of the 473 primary schools in Trinidad and completed by each school’s administrator (identified interchangeably as principals). A response rate of 86.53% (n=45) was achieved, which is equivalent to 9.5% (n=473) of all schools. The questionnaire data provided answers to research question 1 and were summarized by means of
frequency distributions. The key quantitative findings are presented in the form of descriptive statistics.

4.2.1 Provision of primary foreign languages

The questionnaire data provided evidence on the availability of FL learning opportunities in Trinidadian primary schools, illustrated in Figure 10. The evidence from the questionnaire indicates that at the majority of schools surveyed, 76% ([n=34]) offered FL learning opportunities as compared to 24% (n=11) of the 45 schools surveyed. This seems to suggest that policy implementation is yet to take place in some schools despite the MoE prescribed curriculum that includes Spanish. The responses of schools with FL provision revealed that instruction occurred during class time.

![Figure 10: Provision of FL learning opportunities](image)

Consequently, though the expectation may be that all primary schools would offer Spanish as the main FL learning opportunity, the pattern suggests that all of the nation’s primary school students are not afforded this opportunity. If indeed this is the reality, then the MoE’s equity goal of FL entitlement for all primary school students have not been met. As such, one may conclude that the government’s
early language learning initiative needs to be expanded to ensure complete coverage.

**4.2.2 Languages offered**

School heads were asked to indicate the range of languages offered at their schools. The language opportunities identified reflect the multi-cultural, multi-religious nature of national life. These data are represented in Figure 11.

![Figure 11: Primary FL learning landscape](image)

The questionnaire responses further underscore that Spanish remains the principal foreign language offered at 26 (76%) of the 34 schools that indicated FL opportunities. Other languages taught include Arabic, 12% (n=4), Hindi, 9% (n=3) and Hindi as well as Spanish (3%). Thus 20.5% (n=7) of the responding schools that offer FLs have given priority to the teaching of Hindi and Arabic only. These alternate languages offered reflect the nation’s ethnic and religious diversity and are an integral part of language studies at Hindu (Gopeesingh, 2011, as quoted in Anon, 2011) and Islamic primary schools (Anon, n.d.; Mustapha, n.d.), which comprise 8.49% (n=47) and 3.25% (n=18) of the nation’s 553
primary schools.

One gets the impression that in some way, priority at these schools is given to FL learning, but only to those languages that enhance the schools’ religious orientation. The problem that arises is that the alignment to the national curriculum that requires the introduction of Spanish as a FL is largely ignored. The previous findings, as one will recall, indicated that some schools suffered because of an absolute failure to implement primary Spanish. Now, others appear to be suffering because, by and large, priority in language learning is given firstly to Arabic or Hindi, and in a secondary way in some cases, to Spanish. As a result, effective Spanish learning may be hindered by the privileging of religious commitments over the national vision.

This pattern is further confirmed by the following responses to the open-ended item 10 of the questionnaire that asked for comments on the primary Spanish initiative. One of the participating heads emphasized the Hindu (Maha Sabha) schools’ curricula.

“Our school is a Hindu school so it is an initiative from the Maha Sabha Board of Education.”

Similarly, another head acknowledged the language focus of Islamic schools:

“Our school is an A.S.J.A. school and Arabic is taught to all students. Each day they greet the teachers and visitors in Arabic.”

In the respective Hindu and Islamic denominational primary schools, the religious heads acknowledge that priority is given to Hindi and Arabic, more so than primary Spanish.
4.2.3 FL instructional methods

School heads at the 26 schools that reported primary Spanish learning opportunities identified the respective modes of FL provision. This is illustrated in Figure 12.

![Figure 12: Methods of FL instruction](image)

Cross-curricular integration, “an integrated, thematic approach...in which learning from different subjects is skillfully melded into...lesson plans” (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013b, p.14) was the most common means of delivery (66%) in the 26 schools with primary Spanish provision. Stand-alone lessons were employed by 19% (n=5) and a combination of stand-alone and cross-curricular lessons by 15% (n=4) of target schools. The data indicate that Spanish is delivered through two specific modes and in some cases, a combination of both. Cross-curricular integration thus appears to be a response to the 2013 primary curriculum rewrite (PCR) government directive in terms of instructional practice.
4.2.4 Time of FL introduction

Teachers trained to implement primary Spanish have been employed in schools since 2010. Additionally, in September 2013 an interim Spanish curriculum, the PCR replaced the draft Spanish curriculum of previous years. Heads were asked to report when their schools began Spanish instruction. The results are shown in Figure 13.

**Figure 13:** Time of FL introduction

The data in Figure 13 reveal that 37.7% (n=26) of the schools began Spanish instruction in the 2013 school year, 13.3 % in 2012, 2% in 2011 and 4.4 % in 2010. The trend suggests that primary Spanish instruction had a modest beginning in 2010 with only two reporting schools. In 2011, this number decreased to only one school, which suggests that there was a period of transition from one government to the next after the elections of 2010, which certainly affected the policies of the MoE. What followed in 2012 to 2013 reflects increased buy-in by schools to the primary Spanish initiative, a peak period that coincided with the introduction of the new PCR of September 2013.
4.2.5 Teacher language background

At the schools with Spanish provision, the range of academic backgrounds of the primary teachers involved in Spanish reflected a great deal of diversity. This heterogeneity is presented in Figure 14.

![Pie chart showing language background of primary Spanish teachers]

**Figure 14:** Language background of primary Spanish teachers

General information about the qualifications of teachers who implemented primary languages was obtained from the questionnaire. For the 26 schools reporting Spanish provision, thirty qualification types of those engaged in primary Spanish instruction were identified by principals. Two schools reported three types of teacher qualifications of those engaged in primary Spanish instruction. Sixteen teachers were trained at the UTT to implement primary Spanish, 68.75% of whom (n=5) had a background in languages. Spanish instruction is also provided by one teacher who received training during a MoE workshop. Though
several of the teachers at these workshops do not speak Spanish, they were given five hours of training to prepare them to deliver the Spanish curriculum (personal interview, MoE Spanish curriculum officer). Additionally, Spanish is delivered by a student teacher enrolled in the B.Ed. programme and twelve teachers, three of whom had a background in languages and nine with no qualifications in FL teaching.

The results indicate that the Spanish curriculum implementation is problematized by heterogeneity in teachers’ language qualification. For teachers with some knowledge of the Spanish language, qualifications range from a basic background to generalist training in Spanish undertaken at the local teacher education university, the UTT. The data show that language teaching undertaken with minimal or no language training occurs less often. From the data it may be inferred that all teachers at the reporting primary schools have not had specialized training in the Spanish language, even for some involved in the delivery of the primary Spanish curriculum. The data point to the fact that Spanish is delivered against a backdrop of varied teacher competencies. The Spanish initiative therefore appears to be beset by a lack of consistent standards for the qualifications of Spanish instructors.

4.2.6 Classes receiving primary Spanish entitlement

The MoE’s desire to expose all students to Spanish teaching can either be enhanced or hindered by the way it is administered at the level of the classroom. While the ideal is providing Spanish instruction to the entire school, the evidence suggests that the ideal of whole school Spanish provision does not obtain at all institutions. Figure 15 shows the number of classes receiving primary Spanish instruction by school.
The questionnaire data indicate variations in the number of classes that receive Spanish instruction across the reporting schools. In 4 (15%) of the 26 schools with Spanish provision, the entire student population is engaged in the language teaching and learning process. Seventeen schools or 65.3% (the modal score) teach infants to standard one, 1 school provides Spanish instruction to the infant classes, 2 schools provide Spanish teaching to 1 class, 1 school has Spanish instruction in 2 classes and 1 school provides Spanish to 4 classes.

Though the MoE’s focus on exposing all primary-aged students to Spanish can be seen in its primary curriculum that consists of Spanish syllabi for infants to Standard 5 (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013b), the survey response to how many classes receive Spanish instruction ranges from one class to the entire school. What tends to be the most common practice is the provision from infants to Standard One (5-7 years). The data thus suggest that the majority of schools may be in the introductory phase of primary Spanish, hence the provision firstly to the younger students.
4.2.7 Weekly Spanish instruction

The time that schools allocate to Spanish teaching shows differences in the extent of language provision for students. This is depicted in Figure 16.

![Figure 16: Time spent on FL instruction per week](image)

The data indicate that most schools spend between half to 1½ hours teaching FL. In 3 (11.5%) of the 26 schools reporting primary Spanish provision, 2 hours weekly were spent on FL instruction, 15% (n=4) spent between 60 to 75 minutes and 73% taught Spanish for 20 to 30 minutes. The trend suggests that the majority of schools devote approximately half an hour weekly to primary Spanish. It may be interpreted that because Spanish is a non-examinable subject area, it is not as highly prioritized as other subjects. This can also suggest that students are being taught in shorter periods because Spanish language instruction is at an introductory stage.

4.2.8 Absence of primary Spanish instruction

At the time of this study, all reporting schools did not meet the requirement for the introduction of primary Spanish. The reasons given by responding schools are depicted in Figure 17.
Figure 17: Reasons for non-provision of FL instruction

The responses show a combination of factors leading to the non-delivery of primary Spanish. Of these factors, the ones that are most common were the absence of a teacher and the presence of other curriculum concerns. This finding suggests that the issue of teacher proficiency is important. A pressing issue, therefore, is the need for more teachers trained to deliver primary Spanish. However, even when there are sufficient trained teachers, the initiative is hindered by deficits in resources, time, staff interest and staff perception of the subject’s importance.

These reasons were further corroborated by principal responses to the final open-ended survey question, which asked for comments on the initiative. These views are summarized in Figure 18.
Figure 18: Views on the initiative

Twenty-six principals responded to this item, 9 of whom (34.6%) felt that the initiative was a good idea. The presence of eager, responsive students was identified by 4 respondents (15%) while 17 (65%) provided multiple reasons for the non-implementation of primary Spanish. Of these 17 comments, the majority response, 58% (n=10) identified other curriculum priorities as the rationale for limited or non-implementation. These priorities can be further subdivided into a focus on the teaching of Hindi or Arabic, identified by 3 respondents (17.6%), a packed curriculum (17.6%) and a focus on examinable subjects by 4 respondents (23.5%).

Another perceived obstacle to implementation was the lack of proper teacher training resulting in proficient, confident teachers. This was indicated by 52.9% (n=9) of responses. Additionally, the introductory stage of primary Spanish was
identified by 35% (n=6) as well as the shortage of specialized Spanish teachers in
the primary school, suggested by 11.7% (n=2) of principals. Other hindrances as
identified by respondents included the lack of student readiness based on an
inability to speak and retain standard English, despite willing UTT graduates on
staff (5.8%; n=1), noise disruption due to open-plan classrooms (5.8%),
insufficient time (5.8%), graduate teachers’ lack of interest in the teaching of
Spanish (5.8%), the challenge of accuracy in pronunciation for untrained teachers
(5.8%) and insufficient resources indicated by 11.7% (n=2). These multiple
reasons indicate that there may be more factors that obstruct the implementation
of Spanish than those that enable its success.

Such responses perhaps give some credence to widely asserted attitudes that
contribute to the non-implementation of policy, which has often been viewed as
part and parcel of Caribbean and Trinidadian life. As Dumas stated in an
interview with Mohammed (2010), no one can implement policy without follow-
through like Caribbean leaders. Similarly, in the field of education, Hackett
(2004) lamented that though Trinidad and Tobago’s government has the economic
power to institute new educational policies, there is a dearth of vision and
expertise for effective management. This suggests a trend of introducing
initiatives followed by inaction, a situation evidenced in this study by a lack of
primary Spanish provision in some target schools.

The questionnaire data thus provide an overview of the nature of Spanish
instruction in Trinidadian schools. The section that follows offers the findings of
the interviews conducted prior to classroom observations with school principals
and class teachers. These data set the context for the analysis of classroom
observations, which follow in the subsequent section.

4.3 Principal Interviews

The interviews with principals revealed administrative insights on the Spanish
instructional process and also the factors that affect the initiative’s success. In
addition to this, individual views are considered about experiences with the
initiative. The analysis, which gives voice to the distinct participants by including verbatim responses, explored the following main areas:

- Students’ socio-linguistic background,
- Principals’ view of the Spanish curriculum,
- School’s de facto posture,
- Perceived challenges,
- Perceived benefits; and
- Factors impacting successful implementation.

4.3.1 Students’ sociolinguistic background

The two primary schools were found to be different in terms of the learners’ socio-economic backgrounds. At the private school (School A), students belong to the middle and upper social class with English as their mother tongue (L1). At the denominational school (School B), the students are from varying socio-economic backgrounds, especially the lower income groupings and speak Trinidadian Creole as their L1.

In response to the query about students’ socio-economic context, the principals of the respective primary schools, P.A. (private) and P.B. (denominational) stated as follows:

PA: …they are middle class and upper middle class…I would say the majority of children speak the standard English.

At school B, a different situation exists.

PB: ...the socioeconomic background of the students of this school is sort of varied, it’s mixed. You have students coming from all different sorts of background (sic)...not too rich, not too poor. You have people working in different offices and so on, you have the housewives, you have people
working at home, gardeners and so on…I would say more on the lower income.

When questioned further about their L1, he identified this as follows:

PB: Creole. Yeah.

These responses indicate a level of complexity in terms of linguistic and socioeconomic learner backgrounds. One can logically assume that this complexity may lend itself to pedagogical and linguistic challenges that will impact teacher decision-making on best practice. This demands from primary Spanish teachers, therefore, varied competencies, which many generalist teachers may lack, as revealed in data on teacher qualifications in Figure 12 above. This further supports the notion that the initiative may be affected by a socio-linguistic climate not favourable to the limited Spanish language skill set of many of the primary teachers who deliver the Spanish curriculum.

4.3.2 Views of the Spanish curriculum
Both principals said that the Spanish initiative was a good thing, expressing similar viewpoints. The principal of School A stated:

PA: I am ecstatic about the fact that we have introduced Spanish. I thought we should have done that a long time ago.

Similarly, both principals identified Trinidad and Tobago’s geographical proximity to Latin America, as support for the teaching of primary Spanish. They further added that it was a non-examinable curricular content, which meant a reduced level of stress and greater enjoyment in the learning environment.
4.3.3 Schools’ de facto posture

As often is the case, there is a difference between principle and practice of policy implementation, or in this case, policy and its actual implementation. As expected, there is greater flexibility in the private school as opposed to the denominational school. This level of flexibility is revealed in principal responses. In discussing her school’s posture on primary Spanish, Principal A stated:

PA: Our school, as I said, is a private primary school. We have autonomy as to what we can do. And we believe we must prepare our children for another, the next step in their lives….And we believe that Spanish is going to do that. It exposes them to a broader education….So I’m going to do everything that I can, because in our policy at school we are exposing our children to whatever there is out there, and if this is good for us, we will do it.

Now we are introducing two sessions per class per week. Before we had one. So, at the SEA (Secondary Entrance Assessment) level, we leave them with one. After SEA we will put in the extra time…. Even the prep class, the four year olds, they come over and tell me, ‘Buenos días’. As they learn the things, they tell me.

At school A, the principal willingly embraces and supports the Spanish curriculum as beneficial to learners. Even the secondary entrance assessment (SEA) classes are not excluded. She also expresses satisfaction with the student responses to Spanish learning.

PA: And you know, we’re trying to make sure that she has the resources that she needs. Of course there may be other things that she needs to get. Once she gives us the information, we try to get it.

That’s one thing about our school board. They believe in ensuring that the staff has the resources that they need.
This is reflective of a whole school response to primary Spanish.

At school B, while Spanish is included in the curriculum, it is selectively administered, as indicated by the following extract:

PB: All right. Well, we don’t have all the classes doing Spanish yet, all right. From before we had … two or three classes rather, doing Spanish before, right, but now, with the introduction of Spanish in the curriculum, we have the First Years, Second Years, Standard Ones, right, we are supposed to be doing Spanish (my emphasis) and we have one or two other classes doing Spanish also, right, and I think they enjoy it with each other.

The principal’s response reveals a passive acceptance of primary Spanish. Principal B’s approach seems more hesitant than that of his counterpart, suggestive of a less than total commitment to the initiative, which is ascertained from the absence of full Spanish provision against the backdrop of his admission that Spanish is ‘supposed’ to be taught. One gets the impression that there is a lack of complete principal support for the delivery of the Spanish curriculum at school B.

4.3.4 Perceived challenges

Both principals agreed that the implementation of Spanish at the primary level entailed some challenges. However, one principal saw the challenges as external to her Spanish teacher, as at her school, Spanish was delivered by a UTT B.Ed. graduate who functioned as a specialist teacher for all classes. For her, the main challenge was stakeholder reticence to embrace the inclusion of Spanish, as she explained:
PA: Ah, because some parents feel that their children, especially those at the SEA level, they see it as a kind of an intrusion. But I am not letting them get the better of what we want for the school.

The principal spoke of her staff’s response to the initiative:

PA: Well, of course, as in everything else, you would have people who felt that was taking away time, especially, in the SEA (Secondary Entrance Assessment) classes. But I have tried to say to them, well, *not have tried* (emphasis), I’ve said to them that we’ve seen the benefits of doing Spanish. It gives the students another opportunity to do something different that is not examinable, under stress-free conditions. So they are starting to buy into the fact that we are doing Spanish.

The view of some parents and staff members that Spanish instruction detracts from the time allocated to examinable subjects, is a valid concern. Nevertheless, the principal was very resourceful in challenging these objections with a workable solution.

At school B, generalist teachers deliver all core subjects to their classes. Several challenges were identified.

PB: Alright, well, throughout the school you have some teachers not fully exposed to it yet. Because you are hearing that they are supposed to introduce it throughout the school, but only on a phased basis now, but so they will have challenges where you have… some teachers, rather, not being totally exposed. Probably they have done it in secondary school as such, but say, teaching, per se, they would not have the knowledge and the skills to teach it effectively. Some of them are from the Teachers’ College, where this was not done. That would have been in the 80s and 90s.
He further elaborated:

PB: First, training. Teachers need to be trained properly, all right. Of course, they must have the different resources and so on. They must have a tape recorder. They must have a proper tape recorder, they must have the proper resources, whether it is multimedia and so on, they must have … the training and resources must go hand in hand.

All right, if you have something like an audiovisual room, as such. This is what we don’t have. We have the computer room, as such, but then you have computer classes going on and so on, but where we have the open air, one room school, sometimes it is difficult because of the flow of the noise coming from all of the classrooms in the open air, so that could be a challenge.

The school’s open plan layout, availability of resources and teacher competence were identified as major challenges. The classrooms, separated by blackboards, allow for the intrusion of sounds from neighbouring classes. Ideally, language learning should take place in a self-contained room with proper acoustics. The lack of such a facility is an obvious disadvantage, which can impede the interactions in the language classroom. The principal identified a lack of basic equipment. Furthermore, teacher proficiency or the lack thereof is also a major issue. These concerns are indicative of what may obtain in older primary school constructions and those with teachers trained more than a decade ago, before the inception of the UTT B.Ed programme.

Though Principal B is aware of challenges, he does not indicate whether he has attempted to find solutions or countermeasures to offset these. These issues are ongoing concerns that are applicable to other primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.
4.3.5 Perceived benefits

Both principals were unanimous in their view that the impact of primary Spanish was positive, as evidenced by learner outcomes. This is shown by the following statement:

PA: Wow. Yes. The children who have benefited from, I think at least two groups of children would have left who would have had Ravita’s input in the Spanish in their lives. And they’ve gone on to secondary schools and finding themselves enjoying Spanish and doing very well at it. That is the first thing. They have found themselves in secondary school, faced with Spanish now, full-blown Spanish, and able to do what they have to do very well and do it happily, not stressfully.

Though the initiative is still new, the principal expressed her firm belief that primary Spanish has positively impacted on her students’ performance in Spanish at the secondary school level. In addition, she also claimed that primary Spanish instruction also fostered a love for the language amongst the students:

PA: Oh, they love it! The students love the language. They are understanding that they can speak, well they are speaking! So just the fact that you went to the class and they can say “Good morning” to you in Spanish, and they say… I overhear them, all around the school they are saying things in Spanish. So it means that there is a huge interest.

The evidence for these claims thus seems to have been derived from principal A’s reported interactions with and observations of her pupils, both past and present.

The principal of school B expressed his view on students’ benefits thus:

PB: Yes, as I said before, if it’s something new, I feel that the children would be excited, and they would probably will be able to go to their
parents who can’t speak Spanish, and speak to them and so on, and let
them know that it’s something new that they learn, you know this kind-a-
thing, and I feel is something new. Because, going around to one or two of
the classes and listening to the teachers teaching the Spanish and so on, is
something you could see the children excited about it, is something new,
so I feel, I feel, being new, I feel the children would cling to it a little
faster than normal.

The principal therefore sees advantages not only in student enthusiasm for the
subject, but in creating linkages between school and the home, where students
share their excitement and new content knowledge with their parents.

**4.3.6 Factors impacting successful implementation**

The principals identified several factors, which they felt were essential for the
successful implementation of primary Spanish. These included, firstly,
administrator knowledge of and support for the initiative, secondly, timetabling
flexibility and thirdly, sharing the vision with competent staff members.

P.A.: Okay, I think the administration of the schools would have to
embrace it and know that many teachers have been trained at UTT, and
other places would have done Spanish. So in their staff they would have
people who can teach the language and they should work around the
timetable to factor in getting the person who is am, who has a love for the
language and who can teach it well.

So I think it has to do with embracing it. If they don’t embrace it, the
administration, they can’t infuse it because people would not get what
comes from the administration, the interest then would not spread out to
the teachers on the staff and make them feel that they can do it and do it
well. They will find all kinds of ways and means not to do it.
The principal therefore sees principal buy-in to the initiative as critical to its success. At school B, the principal lamented the lack of information disseminated to principals about the initiative. He expressed his opinion in this way:

PB: Because it’s now coming on stream, so people are still learning, right. I myself still have a lot to learn about it. So it is not fully implemented because, we went on one or two workshops and so on, but they just did things in general. So they haven’t taught principals themselves more about what they really intend to do. So I think that in the future they have to call the principals together to let us know a little more about what is going to take place. So right now we’re still ‘feeling out’ what is taking place.

This perspective suggests the need for better organization and effective planning on the part of the Ministry of Education to adequately prepare principals for the implementation of the Spanish initiative. Nevertheless, both principals were enthusiastic about the positive impact on students. One of the schools, School A, appeared to be more advanced than the other and expressed more expansive claims (e.g. with respect to the secondary school language learning experience). However, both had embraced and implemented the policy.

4.4 Teacher Pre-observation interviews
The information gathered from teachers prior to the classroom observations describes their perceptions about the implementation of Spanish. These pre-observation perspectives are presented here.

4.4.1 Teacher perceptions on implementing Spanish
Both teachers expressed their pleasure with and support for the primary Spanish initiative. The teacher (TA) at School A, the private primary school, describes her feelings in this way:

TA: I more than love Spanish, I’m enthusiastic!
A more expansive comment was shared by the teacher (TB) at School B, the denominational school:

TB: As for the mandate, I think it’s long overdue because as a second language, our children should be capable of interacting with native speakers, and that, that is not the case in most cases right now. So I like it. It’s a good…it’s a move in a good direction.

Such teacher enthusiasm and support for early FL instruction portent well for the success of the primary Spanish initiative.

4.4.2 Spanish pedagogy
The two teachers share different teaching responsibilities. The teacher at school A (TA) functions as a specialist, providing Spanish instruction to all classes. At school B, the teacher functions as a generalist, teaching all core subject areas including Spanish only to her Standard 2 class, for which she is responsible.

4.4.3 Objectives
Both teachers described the Spanish programme objectives and the strategies they used to achieve their aims. The following excerpt from teacher A identified her aims as a Spanish instructor:

TA: My main objective is for children to achieve a love for the language, and also, not only enjoy and have fun while we’re doing it, but also to help them in their long-term life, in terms of secondary education.

At the denominational school, teacher B explains her desire to foster in her students a love for Spanish and provide the foundation upon which students’ continued Spanish learning would rest. She speaks of her aims in this way:
TB: To get them to enjoy it, to let them see that’s it’s not hard. And to, even if they do not become fluent Spanish speakers, I want them to know enough to communicate with somebody that may be a native speaker from a Spanish speaking country.

Teacher B’s excerpt highlights her primary goals as promoting enjoyment of the language and facilitating acquisition of and communication in the target language (TL). These goals, as explained by both teachers, are in keeping with the Spanish curriculum objectives of promoting a love for Spanish that should translate to the secondary school setting.

4.4.4 Strategies

In order to achieve these pedagogical objectives, the teachers claimed that they utilized various strategies. These were described, for example, in this manner by Teacher A:

TA: Okay. Some strategies I use. Well, they would vary according to the level. So, my thing, how I implemented this new, and the old curriculum, first, as I was taught, you secure listening skills before the children start to write, so I did a lot of oral work, conversations with them first, and when I know that they are able to move up, we begin writing at the Grade 3 level. And, depends (sic) on the topic, if we are doing the body, for example, we will do TPR, the Total Physical Response, the movement, we’ll sing songs, we’ll have role play, dramatizations, ahm, repetition of course for the younger kids because repetition is important, ahm, what else. Sometimes I show little video clips about, when we’re dealing with the culture part of the language.

This teacher also discussed her use of student presentations:
TA: They sometimes have to research a Spanish speaking country, if it’s Christmas time, we do research a Spanish speaking country and describe how Christmas is celebrated. So they come up and do a presentation on that. Individually. And they share it to the class so that everybody would learn from it.

For these presentations, the target language is not used, as the focus of the student research projects is the disseminating of cultural information. She also claims that she uses the integrated approach of the new curriculum, which she explains in this way:

TA: I like the fact that it is an integrated approach because well, learning is not in a vacuum and you must pool together all the subjects and so on, which will make learning more meaningful for the children. Ahm, what else? Well, I now started implementing this, so….
Okay, well, before I have the class, I go around to the teachers, find out what they are doing, and if they are doing numbers, then this is what I teach them in Spanish. I teach them to say it in Spanish.

Linkages are made across the curriculum by including topics in Spanish that are being done at the same time in other subject areas.

At the denominational primary school (B), teacher B spoke of her approaches to Spanish instruction:

TB: There’s a lot of modeling because the children I got are very shy, so whatever we do, I would have to do it first for them. We use a lot of audio recordings so that they get the correct pronunciations of terms and everything, as well as pictures. It’s a lot of drawing; it’s a lot of visual aids. They do not write in Spanish at present (chuckle) but they will be able to answer certain questions.
The teacher identifies her focus on accuracy of TL input for accuracy in modelling and production. She uses visual aids to enhance meaning and oral communication is seen as critical, a productive skill further reinforced through the use of music.

TB: We sing for the set induction and we sing it very frequently because they are in love with it and they sing it every day. It is the “Buenos Días.”

(Sings) **Buenos días, buenos días, ¿Cómo estás?**

*Yo, muy bien.*

*¿Y cómo estás tú? ¿Y cómo estás tú?*

*Bien, también. Bien, también.*

They love that one.

The two teachers thus reflect on the strategies used, which are similar in terms of using activities that include music, visuals and cross-curricular integration. Differences in styles of teaching, content focus and learner age-group (i.e. classes grouped by age) and background may account for divergence in techniques such as presentations on the one hand, and a continued emphasis on meaningful communication in the target language on the other.

### 4.4.5 Target language use

Though both teachers stated their emphasis on TL production, the avenues to achieve this goal differed. At school A, Teacher A describes which of the four skills - listening, speaking, reading or writing- she focuses on:

TA: I try to get all done.

Well, not the infants and so on. For the infants and so on, we might just use worksheets if we’re doing the concept of one, we might just have worksheets and the number ‘uno’ to colour and to show ‘one’. But in terms of writing, per se, it starts from the Grade 3 level.
I introduce the words, then. In Grade 2 they might see flashcards, and so on. So they are accustomed seeing the word. And then I put the word on the white board or I prepare a vocabulary sheet and so on, or they take down the words from the board.

At school B, the teacher supplies details about her TL instructional emphasis:

TB: I would say oral and written, due to the fact that when we do something, you know, we speak yes. However, for like family, I made them draw their family. That’s the written we’re doing right now. Drawing pictures, colouring pictures, things like that, simple tasks.

While both teachers emphasize the oral use of the TL, the teacher at School A, the private school, responsible for Spanish instruction in all classes, has begun to introduce TL writing in greater detail than in school B.

4.4.6 Resources
The teachers described the availability of resources for the implementation of primary Spanish. Discussing resource allocation at School A, the teacher explains:

TA: I source my own (chuckles) resources. Some of the things I use are my own stuff, and then I have cds and stuff that I got from Ministry, well, only because we had a link with the Ministry, that’s how we got that. Well, we have projectors and so on, internet and so on, which all classes should get soon.

I use that [cd player] a lot. [We have] self- contained classrooms. Each class is one whole class. We don’t have any blackboards, anything like that. Air-conditioned classrooms, lighting, very conducive environment for learning. I have charts. I got charts from the Ministry so they are stuck up in the classrooms. I don’t have to make any charts.
This excerpt reveals that at the private primary school A resources are obtained through a combination of the teacher’s individual efforts and school provision. There are several resources allocated by the school, which include a cd player, multi-media projector, visual aids and available Internet access. The clear material support for the Spanish curriculum at school A is quite evident.

At the denominational primary school, the instructional setting and resource allocation are quite different, as the following excerpt reveals:

TB: Yes. Currently we do not have an audiovisual room per se and it’s done within the classroom and the school is very noisy. At times we would have to go outside for me to teach them a song or teach them different things. So we have to work with what we have, which is not much. So that is one of the biggest challenges.

She considers the resources that she utilizes in the classroom:

TB: I use what I have in terms of putting the song and playing it for them, we use my iPod. I have some speakers, we would use those, but that’s about it in terms of getting stuff from the school. It’s mainly what I could provide for them.

The teacher at school B thus explains that she sees no other alternative but to use her personal initiative to facilitate an effective instructional process by sourcing instructional resources. The administration has granted the use of limited resources, in this case, audio speakers only, to facilitate the Spanish instructional process. Consequently, the teacher provides her personal laptop and iPod for teaching.
4.4.7 Assessment

The teachers’ responses about the area of assessment revealed several differences in outlook. At the private school A, the teacher’s focus was on grading students’ performance, as shown by this extract:

TA: So their course work is 50 marks, which comprises of a project, attendance and then they have a mid-term. There is something called a mid-term, which, after the first two topics, in the middle of the term, they get an oral test, like a mental.

Yes. It’s things like that… tell me the number for 25. Or, ‘treinta’ is what number?

In discussing her assessment procedures for the youngest students at the infant level and Grade 1, teacher A explained:

TA: Ahm. Well, they don’t have a final thing like the older kids. But in terms of how they speak, and their worksheet and so on, I use that to give them a grade.

The teacher’s response shows her interpretation of the primary Spanish curriculum goals, which seeks to “develop basic oral/aural Spanish proficiency” and “create a greater awareness of Hispanic cultures, Spanish speaking countries and peoples in the region” (MoE, n.d., p.1), by utilizing project work and the testing of vocabulary knowledge. It thus appears that the teacher and/or the school administration have noted that the curriculum merely suggests, as opposed to mandating, no examinations. This can be seen in the Ministry’s Spanish curriculum, which states that “formative, performance based assessments are recommended without the pressures of formalized written exams” (MoE, n.d., p.1). Hence, while students do not have written examinations, at School A they are graded for their summative performance in Spanish.
The responses about assessment given by Teacher A are imprecise, emphasizing the formative rather than the summative and lacking in specific detail about the approaches used.

At school B, the teacher approaches assessment in Spanish differently. She explains her focus on oral communication:

TB: Observation and how well they use it during our day. ‘Cause as I said, we use it every day. I try to get it in wherever I can. Other than that one time, we actually have a full lesson, okay. But it is mainly through observation and how they handle the little tasks that they are given. When they draw their family, for example, it’s not that they’re writing ‘mamá, papá’. When they come up, and they point out the different members, and they use the Spanish…

The teacher’s focus on formative assessment, a continuing process of monitoring student learning (Burns, 2008), harmonizes well with the MoE curriculum goals. Notwithstanding, these responses suggest that assessment for primary Spanish is an underdeveloped area.

4.4.8 Student impact

Both teachers agreed that the introduction of Spanish at the primary school level impacted positively on the learners. The teacher at the private school emphasized the far-reaching benefits of the FL continued to the secondary school level.

TA: ... every single child that I have taught in Grade 5, the Standard 5 level, they always come back to me, to me, some of them top Spanish in their secondary school. It is a huge, a vast, vast improvement and enhance [sic] advancement for the children themselves.
The long term gains obtained from early FL learning, identified here with respect to secondary school life, harmonizes with another MoE curriculum goal, which is to “enhance the levels of achievement in Spanish at the secondary level” (MoE, n.d., p.1). The teacher also described student delight with the interactive activities, though no mention was made of communication in the target language, except for an implicit reference to singing:

TA: The little children, well, they love singing the songs, they love dancing, the infants feel the same way. These children love to dance, they love to move, they love singing. The bigger kids, they love the projects that they get to do, in terms of presentations and so on.

At the denominational school (B) the teacher saw gains in students’ ability to concentrate and better attend to tasks in all core subject areas. The teacher noted:

TB: Yes, they listen more attentively….So right now they are at the point where they listen more attentively, they’re more focused. That is across the board. Right now they are supposed to be a remedial class but I am seeing a lot of improvement in the other areas, especially with their reading.

I know it is the introduction of Spanish because from the very first week, our very first morning, that was my first unofficial lesson. Right now, since it’s not timetabled. I have inserted it in the timetable during the week. However, it’s not timetabled, so by doing it, they have been doing a little better ... at everything else.

But right now they are at a better place. Especially when they know they have to do Spanish. Everybody is sitting back and ready to go. They go around the school singing everything that I teach them (chuckles). When anybody ask [sic] them, they would say, “Miss Alongo (pseudonym
used) teaching us Spanish you know! I know you don’t know what that means, let me teach you!” And they teach others, so I’m really happy about that.

Belief in the enjoyment of Spanish and in the value of communicating in the TL is evident in these responses, as teachers report that student enthusiasm is extended and shared with others outside the specific class unit. Moreover, these teachers believe that the impact of learning Spanish clearly transcends the Spanish classroom and rebounds to the benefit of the learners. The extent to which this is true of other teachers in the island cannot be determined, but the evidence from these two case studies is generally positive.

4.4.9 Teacher views of the curriculum
How teachers viewed the Spanish curriculum was discussed. At the private school, the teacher, au courant with both curricula, explained:

TA: This new interim Spanish curriculum? Well, I like the fact that it is an integrated approach because well, learning is not in a vacuum and you must pool together all the subjects and so on, which will make learning more meaningful for the children. Ahm, what else? Well, I now started implementing this, so….

Using the old, the Draft curriculum. Well that was going well but this one is a bit tough to work with, but, ahm, well, in this one there are limited things in this interim curriculum.

Yes. Limited content. Okay. So when you finish teach something and you cover that, okay, so what am I teaching next? What am I going to do next with the children?
The integrated, thematic approach (MoE, 2013) is a form of interdisciplinary instruction using themes to link knowledge and skills (Min et al, 2012). While the teacher identified her liking for the cross-curricular approach espoused in the new curriculum, she finds the content to be limited in scope. She compares the former draft Spanish curriculum with the new interim curriculum and expresses a preference for the former.

At school B, the teacher noted that she had not reviewed the newly instituted PCR curriculum. She stated:

TB: I have a copy right now. I’m thinking that’s the old one, then. I just got a copy of the new one a few weeks ago. I have not looked over it yet, okay.

This reply indicates that although Spanish is being implemented, teacher B is slow in responding to the new curriculum. Her response suggests that the time in which the curriculum was received did not afford her the opportunity to align her teaching with the current requirements of the new curriculum. This implies that teacher B’s delivery of Spanish may have been based on her individual understanding of her students’ language learning needs, in keeping with the formerly existing Spanish curriculum.

The overall picture provided by the teacher perspective suggests that, in the main, the curriculum goals of student enjoyment, an emphasis on oral/aural communication and cross-curricular learning are well on the way to being achieved. However, the suggestion by teacher A is that the curriculum is that the content of the new curriculum is inadequate in terms of meeting teacher and student needs.
4.5 Classroom observation data

A macro-perspective of instructional interactions derived from classroom observations is provided in this section. The findings presented reveal teacher and student interactions during ten FL instructional sessions, that is, five per school. This includes a focus on teacher-fronted activities, paired, group and individual student work, instructional resources, skills practice and engagement in tasks that foster communicative language use. A description and comparison of the two instructional settings are therefore presented. Extracts from the lessons are used to illustrate the experiences of the participants involved in primary Spanish within the context of this study.

4.5.1 Observation of classroom practice

This section presents the findings of the classroom observations obtained from the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme and analyzed in line with procedures described by Fröhlich et al, (1985). The percentage of teaching time spent on key activities such as Participant Organization, Content and Student Modality etc. are indicated. This allowed for a process-product investigation (Fröhlich et al, 1985). In the process-product model of teaching, classroom instructional activities such as teacher content delivery and student tasks (process) as well as learner outcomes (product) are examined (Chatoupis and Vagenas, 2011; Gage and Needels, 1989). Consequently, an overview was obtained of many features and events of language learning contexts that reveal the extent of the communicative focus of activities affecting learners’ development of TL competence (Aliponga et al, 2007; Flyman-Mattson, 1999; McKay, 2006). For example, group work is one of the sub-categories of Participant Organization. It is argued that activities such as group work are intrinsically more communicative than others, as negotiation of meaning and TL output among students are maximized (Nunan, 2004; Savignon, 2007; Skehan, 1998; Zhang, 2010). The interactive focus of activities is thus a valuable measure of the communicative orientation of language classrooms.
Part A of the COLT (see Figure 19) describes instruction in terms of classroom activity and required coding in real time. Therefore, I used Part A during the classroom sessions and ticked the observed categories. The dominant activity during a task was given credit for the entire time that the activity continued. For example, students were engaged in group oral drills, with one student requesting information and the other four group members responding formulaically in Spanish. This individual event was recorded as a group activity. The duration of varied class activities was documented, which allowed time spent on tasks to be calculated. Part A of the COLT, which thus provided a macro-description of the learning environment, analyzed in terms of percentages of:

- Participant Organization, that is, how classroom interactions are ordered;
- Instructional content, which relates to the pedagogical focus of lessons;
- Student modality, which deals with the emphases on specific learner skills, whether productive and/or receptive; and
- Materials, which refer to the resources utilized during teaching.

The analyses are presented in the sections that follow.
4.5.2 Participant organization

Teachers’ presentation styles including the types of interactions facilitated during lessons have been found to impact on learner communicative outcomes (Clifton, 2006; Lee and Ng, 2010). Part A’s coding thus entailed calculating the percentage classroom time spent on the organization of classroom interactions. The following table presents the average percentage of time observed for the two language classrooms studied. Each class was visited on five occasions. The percentage time teachers in Schools A (Private) and B (denominational) spent interacting with the whole class or individual students (T\(\Rightarrow\)S/C) as well as when students worked in groups is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Participation organization- Percentage of time by visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Class</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T(\Rightarrow)S/C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vis.1</td>
<td>Vis.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sch.A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sch.B</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from Table 6 suggest a teacher preference at the private school (A) for the whole class approach to early language instruction. This involved exclusively teacher-fronted instruction, that is, much teacher talk as well as control and initiation of classroom interactions (Clifton, 2006; Lee and Ng, 2010) directed at the entire class or individual students. There was no opportunity provided for students to practise the TL with peers, hence the blank row under Group. The teacher at school B (denominational) incorporates both whole class and group tasks into all her Spanish lessons, so that in each session students are involved in TL meaning-making with their peers. For all visits, more than 50% of class time was spent on teacher-fronted activities. This may be interpreted to mean that the main activity in the primary Spanish classroom involves the teacher interacting with students as opposed to group work. Thus teachers appear to organize
instruction in a manner that affords them the greater measure of control of the language learning process.

While teacher-centredness has its place in classroom instruction, in FL learning contexts, learner interaction in the TL is widely viewed as essential for achieving communicative goals (Lundberg, 2010; Viakinnou-Brinson et al, 2012). Therefore, if teachers maximized communicative learner interactions, it would better promote the internalization of the FL. This study found that in both contexts, opportunities for group interactions in Spanish were less emphasized. For the category of participant organization of COLT Part A, the predominant focus of participant organization constructed by teachers, as identified in Table 6, was further subdivided. This did not include assessment procedures. The data are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7:** Participant organization- Mean percentages of observed time by class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Class</th>
<th>Teacher-Student</th>
<th>Student-Student</th>
<th>Choral</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Group/Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1 (Sch. A)</td>
<td>46.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32.77</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 (Sch. B)</td>
<td>36.04</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>31.97</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 7, there are three subdivisions of whole class activity, namely teacher-student, which signifies teacher-fronted interactions, with the teacher addressing the entire class or individual students; student-student, with students performing a major activity such as role-playing; and choral, with all students engaged together in activities such as reciting or singing. Group means groups of students engaged in identical activities; Individual refers to students engaged in a task performed on their own, such as writing in notebooks. Group/Individual refers to a main group task that involves an individual student, for example, who is engaged in a particular task relevant to the group activity. This included group tasks that
involved responding to a formulaic question that was asked by a student in the group (e.g. ¿Cuál es el número de teléfono?) and replied to by the entire group. The above data reveal that at school A (private), teaching exclusively consisted of whole-class interaction, as students responded to teacher instructions. There was no group activity for students to practise the target language meaningfully with their peers, hence the blank row under Group in Table 7. School A’s teacher interacted with the entire class, giving instructions and organizing rote drills, as well as having students work individually to write vocabulary lists.

At school B (denominational), the majority of classroom interactions for each visit involved the teacher and the entire class (a mean of 69.97%), with some group activity (mean=34.5%) as part of the learning process. Students were involved in communicating with their teacher and at other times with their peers in group tasks that afforded them the opportunity to use the TL in meaningful ways.

### 4.5.3 Instructional content

The data on the main focus of the instructional content of the two primary Spanish classes are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Content- Mean Percentages of Observed Time by School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Procedures/</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Sociolinguistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>15.12</td>
<td>84.87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>14.53</td>
<td>27.32</td>
<td>58.13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data reveal a similar amount of time spent in both classes on management, which refers to the teacher giving directives, including disciplinary and instructional-related imperatives. In school A there was a major focus on form, with the majority of the target language concentrated on vocabulary and
pronunciation, demonstrating an emphasis on rote learning as opposed to engagement in meaningful communication.

In school B the explicit language focus displays a combination of both form and function. This was representative of an emphasis on vocabulary, pronunciation and illocutionary acts of requesting and receiving information.

4.5.4 Content- Topic focus

The category of Content is further subdivided into Other Topics, which for this study was modified to identify the focus of instructional content delivery relevant to the primary school context. As such, topics of broad range, defined by Fröhlich et al (1985) as dealing with current affairs and abstract topics, were excluded, as these were not related to the primary Spanish curricular content. The content topics were classified as narrow or limited. Fröhlich et al (1985) identify narrow topics as those that relate to formulaic greetings such as “How are you?” and classroom content such as the date or easily recalled information. Limited topics are conceptually restricted with a reach just beyond the classroom environment to focus on routine social themes such as the family context, personal information and extracurricular activities (Allen et al, 1983). Information on the types of topics delivered in the observed classrooms is shown in Figure 20.

![Figure 20: Content- Topic focus](image_url)
The data show that the main topic focus of the class in school A was on limited topics. As such, one of the five classroom sessions (20%) was dedicated to a narrow topic, identifying the days of the week, ‘¿Qué día es hoy?’ and four sessions (80%) focused on topics of a limited nature such as modes of transportation, ‘El transporte’. The class teacher in school B (denominational) also combined narrow and limited topics, with more topics focused on limited content. Hence, two of the five observed sessions (40%) dealt with topics of a narrow range such as counting and stating one’s telephone number, ‘¿Cuál es tu número de teléfono?’ and 3 sessions (60%) were dedicated to limited topics such as ‘¿Cómo es la casa?’ which dealt with descriptions of homes in the community. The topic focus in school A reflects themes from the current 2013 curriculum while that of school B harmonises with the first curriculum, indicating a lack of fidelity to the new curriculum.

4.5.5 Topic control
The COLT category ‘Topic Control’ refers to who determines the instructional topic. In terms of topic control, both teachers exerted complete control over the topics/content delivered for language interaction in the classroom. Students were not involved in selecting the content area, they did not initiate interactions nor were they allowed to develop the topic. In this regard, both classes were similar.

4.5.6 Student modality
The next COLT category is ‘Student Modality’, which refers to the skill(s) involved in various activities. The identified language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing or a combination of these. From the five observed lessons in each school, the time teachers allocated to these skills is aggregated and the averages shown in Figure 21.
The data show that the main focus in the School A’s Spanish classes is on the skills of listening (28.57%) and writing (28.57%), which each account for just over a quarter of class time. This is closely followed by a combined focus on listening and speaking (17.64%) with 9.24% of time spent on reading. This indicates an emphasis on developing the receptive skill of listening and the productive writing skill.

In school B (denominational), the majority of class time (74.99%) focused on the student modalities of listening and speaking combined (34.88%) and speaking (40.11%). Much less emphasis is placed on reading - 4.65% and on writing - 2.9% of class time, the latter supplemented with other activities such as drawing and colouring (2.9%). This shows a main emphasis on the productive skill of TL speech. The evidence thus reveals a range of student modalities covered by both class teachers, with different emphases.
4.5.7 Materials

The final parameter in COLT Part A deals with instructional materials. The type of material used during instruction is classified, such as text, audio or visual and its purpose, whether pedagogic (designed for L2 instruction), non-pedagogic or ‘authentic’ (originally designated for other uses) or semi-pedagogic (authentic materials modified to suit instructional needs). The category for text was also subdivided into minimal text, referring to isolated sentences, or extended text, such as written passages, stories or dialogues (Fröhlich et al, 1985). The materials used for the five class sessions in each school are presented as a percentage of time observed in Figure 22.

![Bar chart showing percentage of time in minutes for different types of materials used in School A and School B.](image)

**Figure 22:** Type of materials used: Mean percentages of observed time over five lessons by school

The data show that the School A’s teacher’s use of materials included minimal text (22.6%) such as vocabulary lists, audio (12%), including the playing of songs, visuals (26.8%) such as pictures and a combination of minimal text and visuals (17.6%), such as charts. Visual materials were used most often at school A.
(private). At school B (denominational), the teacher provided audio (8%) by playing songs on her laptop, visuals (47%) such as flashcards, numeral charts, multimedia projector and minimal text combined with visual materials (27%) such as Power Point presentations. Though no extended text was used in both schools, the limited text used, as recommended by the MoE’s curriculum, provided support for learners’ oral communicative activities.

Figure 23: Example of a lesson’s limited text

Fröhlich et al (1985) posit that the development of learners’ TL use may be linked to their exposure to text. Hence the use of varied materials in both classes appeared to positively impact learners’ use of the TL, making language learning an interesting exercise, with meaningful content that encouraged TL output.

The resources used in the FL classroom were further classified, based on Fröhlich et al’s (1985, p.55) definition, as pedagogic (designed for FL instruction), semi-pedagogic (resources modified for L2 teaching) or non-pedagogic (materials intended for a different purpose than its use in the classroom).
Figure 24: Example of pedagogic materials used for primary Spanish

Figure 25: Example of semi-pedagogic material used for primary Spanish
The percentages were calculated from total class time observed. As instructional resources were not used for complete class sessions, percentages as shown in Table 9 do not total 100 per cent.

**Table 9:** Source of materials: Mean percentages of observed time by school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pedagogic</th>
<th>Semi-Pedagogic</th>
<th>Non-Pedagogic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table 16 show that the majority of resources used by school A’s teacher were pedagogic (72.3%), that is, designed for FL instruction with adaptations made to 8.4%. For example, Teacher A used CDs for singing activities in class, later explaining in the pre-observation interview, “I have CDs and stuffs (sic) that I got from the Ministry.” These are pedagogic materials, specifically created for L2 instruction.

**Figure 26:** Primary Spanish music resource
A different situation obtains in school B, where the majority of the learning resources were semi-pedagogic, i.e. mainly created by the teacher or altered for FL instruction. The teacher noted in the VSRI that, “Most of the stuff I use have to be made.” Examples of these resources used in the observed lessons are shown in Figures 27 to 29.

**Figure 27:** Teacher-created clock resource

**Figure 28:** Teacher-created numeral and word cards
Resources specifically intended for the L2 teaching-learning process in school A (private) contrasts with that of School B (denominational), the latter where specific ready-made L2 resources are in the main unavailable for her primary Spanish instructional needs.

The categories of Part A of the COLT scheme thus allowed for the identification of differences and similarities of the two primary FL language classrooms. These descriptive classifications provided a basis to answer research question 1, How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad? From the questionnaire and COLT observation data, there is a lack of homogeneity in the teaching of Spanish, not only in terms of teacher competence, allocation of resources and organization of participant interactions but in terms of the emphases placed on the receptive and productive skills as well as form and function. These instructional decisions
appear to be dependent on the particular teacher and the goals and aims that s/he has adopted as central to his/her instructional objectives.

4.6 Interviews

In this section, the findings from the remaining interviews, that is, student and curriculum officer and stimulated recall interviews are discussed. The transcripts of student interviews reflect their use of Trinidadian Creole.

4.6.1 Focus group interviews

Six students from each class were interviewed to obtain their views on learning Spanish. When asked to describe their thoughts about learning Spanish, the students (pseudonyms used) at the private school expressed their feelings:

Liz Ann: I find it is nice and I find Spanish is the best language to learn, like best different language to learn.
I love how to spell. I like to buy books and read them about Spanish.
I like to hear the songs in Spanish and my dad and I, we are huge fans of parang.

This excerpt not only reveals the student’s interest in Spanish as undertaken in the classroom, but also her continued exposure to the Spanish language through books and the local art form of parang music, a derivative of Venezuelan Christmas music and an integral part of the Trinbagonian culture (Allard, 2000). Another student also describes her enthusiasm for Spanish and positive language experiences.

Thea: I’ve been learning Spanish since I was in second year.
I was six years old.
I feel very excited because I think it’s a great language to learn.
I think it’s a great language to learn, because somehow, I just feel happy learning that language. I like singing along with the music. I also like listening to the words. I also like transport.

The students at school A (private) were all exposed to Spanish from the preschool level. One of the students was also engaged in learning other languages. He discusses the things he enjoys in Spanish class in this way:

Jason: Well, when I was living in Tobago, we were learning Spanish from my teacher, and every time for good morning, we used to say “Buenos días”.
I think in all, cause I’m learning Japanese, Chinese. I learned a bit of Hindi, I know English very well and I know Spanish. I think Spanish is like the second best. After Japanese.
I like listening to the music and learning new things and… yeah, like new words, new transportation, new fruits and so on.

Jason views Spanish as his second favourite subject. Another male student, Zack, stated that he likes Spanish, but it is not his favourite.

Zack: I feel good and great about it, and it’s fun, and exciting. (I like) Learning Spanish, singing and the days of the week.
I would rank it by Social Studies. (I would give it) 70 out of 100 or 75 out of 100. Math (is my favourite subject).

Of the six students interviewed, all stated that they liked Spanish. Of these, four learners identified Spanish as their favourite subject. The remaining two students responded less enthusiastically, identifying Spanish, not as their favourite, though among the subjects they liked.
At school B, the enthusiasm for the language was effusive, as the students expressed their interest in and enjoyment of Spanish. The excerpts demonstrate the student perspective, which focuses on their love for the subject and the strategies used that facilitate their learning:

Aarti: I feel excited about learning Spanish because Miss continue telling we Spanish over and over, like *cero, uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis*, and those stuff. She want use to learn Spanish and we can speak Spanish to her.

The student emphasizes the value of repetition in helping her to learn the new language and her love for the subject, a viewpoint that is echoed repeatedly.

Makaila: I feel great about Spanish because Spanish is a good thing to know.
Jada: I feel nice because you everything you get to say the Spanish words over and you have lots of chirren to help you and those sort of things.

Interaction with peers in the TL is also identified by Makaila as beneficial in aiding her language acquisition. The boys expressed their interest in the language thus:

Tyrell: I want to say that how yuh could say your other subjects in Spanish when you learn Spanish every day. And Miss taught us Spanish and stuff and you could say Miss ask us questions about how to say Mathematics and Science and stuff.
I enjoy doing time, and saying meh name in Spanish. And enjoy saying meh age in Spanish.

In his unique way, Tyrell acknowledges the benefits he has gained from the teacher’s use of the integrated thematic approach. Taylor adds his view of the new subject, stating:
Taylor: I enjoy learning to say meh name, say de time, count from one to ten and fifteen and them thing.

Though students are happy to learn the new language, the lack of adequate facilities that favour an interactive instructional environment is obvious, as Matthew reveals:

Matthew: Yesterday we went an’ learn ah new song outside with Miss laptop. I like to sing the Spanish songs and ting, and sometimes Miss does bring she computer and leh we sing new songs.

The impact of the interactive activities in the FL classroom has made an indelible, positive impact on the students, an interest in language learning that appears to have spilled over to their peers who have not been exposed to the language.

Jada: I like to sing. I like to dance. I like to say the numbers. I love to say the clock in Spanish. Chi’rren does be asking meh “What time is dat?” I does be saying, “Dat time is eight o’clock. I does be saying, ‘Son las nuev’…. Ah does tell them in Spanish, ‘Son las ocho’. Dah mean is eight o’clock and yuh ha’ to go in yuh bed. And ah does tell dem, is ‘son las nueve’. An’ Miss does be telling us is so late because the chi’rren does be coming to school late an’ we does be saying it togedder before, and we does have fun togedder.

While the overall student perspective demonstrates the fun and pleasure students have derived from the programme, it is clear that meaningful language learning is also taking place. This suggests that a love for learning Spanish as espoused in the school’s curriculum is well on the way to being achieved.
4.6.2 Stimulated recall interviews

In this section, the significant findings of the stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) are presented. Insights into and comparisons of the teachers’ perspectives with their actual practice are made based on the clear evidence provided by video extracts.

4.6.2.1 Teachers’ perceptions

Following on from the pre-observation interviews, teachers were asked during the SRIs to describe how they felt about implementing primary Spanish, given their experiences of the school term at the time. Teacher A (private) stated that she felt “Good as always”. In terms of the syllabus, she stated:

TA: New syllabus, old syllabus, I will always implement Spanish.

This teacher, who works in a context where resources and administrative support are forthcoming (as revealed by both principal and pre-observation teacher interviews along with the COLT Part A finding on instructional materials used), asserted that regardless of curricular changes, she has positive feelings about the Spanish teaching-learning process. At the denominational school (B), the teacher shared this perspective:

TB: I’m looking at the long-term gains because they’re [students] more open to Spanish. Yes, it’s challenging financially, resource wise it’s challenging also, but in the long run, it pays off in the end.

In terms of the syllabus, she expressed this view:

TB: I do not like it as much. In fact, I have not been using it exclusively. …The class that I got have (sic) no background in Spanish. They never used it before. So I couldn’t really stick to it because for Standard Twos in that curriculum it’s mainly the cultural parts of Spanish, where you look at the different customs and holidays we share and birthdays, stuff
like that. Whereas things they could use every day, they did not know. So it’s new. I think it will grow on me, I will start to use it more, but for now, I can’t use it totally because of the place they are right now.

Clearly, both teachers share similar positive feelings about the primary Spanish initiative. However, Teacher B gives a more in-depth analysis of the Spanish curriculum in view of her students’ functional needs, which align well with meaningful, real world communication, as recommended by Long (2015) and Nunan (2004). She therefore sees the syllabus as deficient in this regard.

4.6.2.2 Teacher aims
When asked to identify the aims of their FL teaching, the teachers revealed the following:

TA: …for the children to have enjoyment, fun, to acquire the language and to understand some aspects of the culture of Spanish speaking countries.

TB: …more open to using the language without any pressure, in a meaningful way.

The two teachers express a belief in the need for a low affective filter (Krashen, 1982) that promotes student learning in an enjoyable, nurturing environment. The presence or absence of the teachers’ stated emphases on intercultural understanding and/or meaning-making, as identified in these responses, can be determined by their teaching strategies.
The teachers were next shown video clips, two each from the five lessons observed, of their instructional practice. Each teacher’s approach will now be explored separately.

4.6.2.3 Teacher pedagogical focus - School A
Teacher A (private) was shown a video segment of the lesson’s beginning, when she instructed the students (in English) to count from one to thirty in Spanish. When asked about the objective of the exercise, she stated:

   TA: This is a review. They know it. So every time we review it, so even if they forget one, they will be able to pick up on it.

Some students made pronunciation errors in this rote exercise, for example saying ‘sink-oh’ for ‘cinco’ and ‘see-ace’ for ‘seis’. The teacher overlooked these errors and continued with other aspects of her lesson. Consequently, I asked about her view on error correction. The teacher acknowledged that errors should be corrected, stating:

   TA: … if they continue saying the wrong thing, they will continue saying that for the rest of their lives, so it’s good to correct it at that point in time.

Despite this claim, in the five lessons observed, teacher A did not correct students’ pronunciation mistakes.

Another video extract was shown, in which the teacher presented flash cards with pictures of different forms of transportation. The teacher stated the related Spanish terms. Students were not asked to repeat the TL pronunciation, but to make the sound of each vehicle. Discussing the aim of the exercise, the teacher explained:
TA: This is to know that the students are aware of what type of sounds we get from each type of transport, if they know a car goes a particular way, because each vehicle will have a specific sound to them. Because a motorcycle won’t sound the same way as a car, right?

In another video segment, the teacher wrote a vocabulary list on the board and asked the students to write the list in their books. In our discussion, she identified the underlying purpose of this activity as:

TA: Getting familiarized with the words, am, probably a little bit of the spelling.

A clip from another lesson was observed, in which the teacher asked the question, ¿Cómo vas a la escuela? to the entire class. Students responded with phrases such as ‘por carro’. When asked about the time of interactions she aimed to promote, she responded:

TA: At first it will be teacher-to-student interaction and then we move on to student-to-student.

Despite this assertion, in all the lessons observed, communicative interactions chiefly occurred between the teacher of the private school (A) and the whole class, also revealed by the data in Table 6.

The teacher included singing in two of the observed lessons. In one lesson, the students listened to a song on counting, ‘Contemos juntos’, to which the teacher sang along. The teacher suggested that her objective was to promote “enjoyment and fun” and “enthusiasm of the language through the teacher…singing along, the kids will also be enthusiastic about it.” In addition, she stated that she wanted the students to:
TA: Sing along and dance and do whatever they feel like, however they are comfortable with the song.

This approach was seen again in another lesson in which the teacher again used a cd player to play “Let’s sing the days of the week, _cantemos los días de la semana._” Asked to identify the aim of this activity, she responded:

TA: For students to listen to the pronunciation, get them interested in the topic and also to pick up whatever they can say, whatever they can get from the cd. This opportunity for students to ‘pick up whatever’ appeared to lack definite structure. In discussing learner behaviours, the teacher did not have a communicative aim for the task, as noted in her comments:

TA: Wow. The students were completely enjoying that song. They got off their chair (_sic_), those who didn’t want to dance, they were singing, those who didn’t want to dance, they were moving about in their chairs, talking, laughing, happy, singing, total fun and enjoyment.

When asked how this activity helped promote the objectives of the primary Spanish curriculum, the teacher contended that:

TA: Right, one of the objectives of the curriculum was to foster love and enjoyment, and it was completely acquired through the songs.

In this instance, the private school teacher demonstrates a high level of interest in making the Spanish experience fun, while lesser attention is paid to promoting meaningful TL communication. On another occasion, she pronounced the words contained on a commercially obtained chart entitled ‘_Los servidores públicos_’ and students repeated. Individual students were chosen by the teacher to display the activity of one of the listed professions, and the students then guessed by saying
the related word in Spanish. The teacher identified the aim of this activity as “reinforcing vocabulary”.

The use of the school’s wifi and an iPad provided by the private school for the class teacher was used to show a YouTube video on transportation, ‘Los medios de transporte’. The students all gathered around the teacher’s table to observe and listen to the sounds of several vehicles and their Spanish names. The teacher identified her aims as “both listening and visual” to “reinforce native pronunciation” and cater to different learning styles. The students were not asked to replicate the pronunciation. This suggests teacher valuing of input as an important aspect of language learning.

Teacher A also integrated the Spanish lessons with other subject areas, namely Art, Math and Science. For example, the concept of the water cycle was discussed in Spanish class in English and students were asked to pronounce and write the equivalent Spanish vocabulary for clouds – ‘las nubes’, sun – ‘el sol’, the river – ‘el río’ etc. They were then instructed to label in Spanish and colour the diagram of the water cycle given to student. Teacher A explained her switching from English to Spanish as follows:

TA: In terms of comprehension and in case they forget, they have the
English followed by the Spanish or the Spanish followed by the English.

At school A (private), individual seatwork, that is, tasks undertaken by students while seated at their desks, focused mainly on writing, oral drills, listening and dancing. Student production of the target language was principally through the repetition of and writing of vocabulary words. The teacher’s main consideration seems to be on fostering enjoyment as she stated during the SRI, as paired or group meaningful communication on the topics delivered was absent from her lessons. A variety of activities and resources were used, the latter provided mainly by the school. These included cds and cd player, iPad and streamed video, readymade charts, flashcards and worksheets.
4.6.2.4 Teacher pedagogical focus- School B

The first video segment focused on the beginning of a lesson, in which the teacher played a song entitled ‘Buenos días’ on her laptop. Both teacher and students sang along lustily with choreographed hand movements, including arched hand gestures to self, peers and teacher. Asked about the aim of the activity, the teacher stated:

TB: At first it was to introduce them to greeting people…So the aim was to reinforce what was taught before and to make it fun.

When asked about her reason for including hand movements, she explained:

TB: Because that’s what they love. They are very animated and I use it to keep their attention as well….They’re now learning, so we have to make it as fun as possible.

The teacher thus organizes tasks to emphasize enjoyment and reinforcement of beginning TL. This resulted in “full attendance every day,” as she highlighted.

In another video clip, the students worked in groups to write a phone number, which they identified to the rest of the class in Spanish. In another segment, the students worked with a partner to ask each other and answer to “¿Qué hora es?” In describing these interactions, the teacher identified her use of individual, pair and group activities depending on “the complexity of the task given”. She noted:

TB: I gave it to them to challenge them. They are very smart. However, it’s not only group work. Sometimes they do individual as well as pair. Pair, I mainly use that if I’m introducing something new… I will do that as a pair and then evaluate on an individual basis to see who is having trouble still and who I could help, give individual attention to.
The use of different types of activities was confirmed from viewing other lessons. For example, in another episode, the teacher walked around to each student in the group seating and asked, ¿Cuántos años tienes? She explained:

TB: For me, if you give group work, it must be evaluated somehow, even if it’s through observation. But by interacting with them, even if they ask each other the question and they are able to answer each other, I get an idea if they are learning what I taught and if I am achieving my objectives, if I should change something in the lesson to meet their needs or leave everything as is.

The teacher and interviewer looked at a clip showing students drawing in the hands on a clock with the words ‘Es la una’ underneath. The teacher explained the purpose of this activity:

TB: To see if they can make the association. As I said before, I don’t want them to learn off the different forms that were introduced. However, if they could recognize it, even in written form, in a paper or anything, they would be able to say, ‘You know what, that is one o’clock!’ And I didn’t want them to write Spanish, like I said, but I felt if I got them to write in the hands of the clock, that would show that they understood….

As can be seen, the teacher taught lessons integrated with Math and in other instances, with Art and Social Studies. She acknowledged her use of cross-curricular integration:

TB: Yes, I try to integrate it as much as possible, especially in Mathematics, we get to use it while counting. I don’t even have to tell them to use it as such, they start to count in Spanish. …especially during
subtraction or addition, wow, they use it. So I’m happy about that, they’re not afraid to use it.

Cross curricular integration was seen in two different lesson clips, in which Power Point presentations showed different types of homes and different houses with varying numbers of rooms. In one lesson students were asked by the teacher, “¿Qué es?” and in the second “¿Cuántos cuartos hay? They modeled the teacher’s responses, ”Es una casa” or “Hay ocho cuartos”, changing the number in the latter instance as was relevant. Additionally, students each held up a picture of a house on a wooden popsicle stick and in their groups, turned to a peer and said “¿Qué es? ¡Es una casa!” Groups were also given laminated pictures of cross-sections of homes. The students counted the number of rooms, and in turn, moved to the front of the class in their respective groups, showed the picture and counted and stated the number of rooms in Spanish. These activities not only fostered meaningful TL communication and were integrated with other core subject areas, but engaged students, who were excited to perform these tasks.

Questioned about the languages used in the classroom, as in another segment during which she praised and gave instructions- “Muy bien. Siéntense, por favor” and the students responded appropriately with “Gracias, profesora”, the teacher maintained that her use of both English and Spanish, as the students were beginning FL learners in this way:

TB: I switch between Spanish and English, because when I got them this term that we’re looking at, they had not done any previous work in Spanish. So I thought it would be totally unfair to immerse them all at once. So far, they have been doing well.

When asked about the source of the instructional materials, the teacher said:

TB: We are using houses on a palette stick, we made those ourselves. It was very simple. I printed it out for them, I cut it out for them to
make it a little easier, the assembly a little easier, and am, using double sided tape, we were able to make it.

Figure 30: Learner resource: ‘House on a palette stick.’

The teacher, however, acknowledged the financial costs of providing materials for her students.

TB: Truthfully, it’s challenging, because resource wise mostly everything comes from me. So if I am doing a particular topic I have to plan from way ahead of the time and get everything together and get photocopies everything, as well, has to be done elsewhere. Preparing the worksheets, those I usually do by myself because it’s hard to find things online that are exactly what we are doing at that time. So it’s challenging at times.

This excerpt provides an insight into the low level of emphasis placed on the provision of FL instructional needs at school B (denominational) while highlighting the teacher’s resourcefulness in creating worksheets and paying for other resources. However, she accedes to the initial steps her principal has taken to facilitate primary Spanish instruction. She stated:

TB: … he has been a little more giving, giving leeway to us to use some of the resources that have not been earmarked for us.
Student enjoyment of primary Spanish is highlighted, not only by their enthusiasm evident in the observed lessons, but by other outcomes noted by their teacher:

TB: I have full attendance, even if they’re sick, they come. I like it because it has boosted their confidence. So far they are the only class in the entire school that has gotten to this level, so they are proud of that. Yes, they’re very proud of that. Even though the lower classes have to do it now, you will see that they will be correcting the other students. Like for example, if they hear the infants saying ‘Buair-nos días’ or ‘Buair-nas tardes’, they will correct them. And that makes me proud, I feel that I’ve helped them in some way, so I think now it has made them more confident. Also, in their reading, they are also a remedial class by right. Yes, in their English reading. However, from having to listen closely to the different topics we had to do, whatever it was… in Spanish, they are more focused during any lesson at all being taught, which is good for me.

The students also insist on maintaining their scheduled Spanish classes:

TB: If I’m running out of time and they know for sure they will not be getting their Spanish class, it’s like a warzone: “Miss, so when are we getting Spanish?” They are very enthusiastic, their body language, they are very enthusiastic, and I am happy about that.

In addition, the teacher revealed that the students try to engage in TL communication with the principal.

TB: …ever so often he’ll walk in; they’ll ask him questions in Spanish, They’ll greet him in Spanish. They’ll ask him questions in Spanish and he’ll say, “Miss, you and these children!”
These excerpts point to the positive transfer of student learning in Spanish class to other subject areas, where the teacher identified students’ improvement in attentiveness.

At school B (denominational), language tasks involved individual, group and paired work that focused mainly on oral communication and basic visual recognition of words and phrases. Student production of the target language was fostered through meaningful interactions with class members in ways that fostered enjoyment. A variety of resources, mainly provided by the class teacher, were used. This included teacher-made charts, flashcards and worksheets. Student enthusiasm has spilled over to other persons in the school, reflecting their interest in language learning. This thus resonates well with the MoE’s underlying aim of creating a Spanish learning experience that is pleasurable (MoE, n.d.).

These examples of instructional practice reveal similarities that include cross-curricular integration, resource use that complements the delivered content, a focus on TL input and activities that foster student enjoyment. Notwithstanding, a marked difference is revealed in that teacher B provided opportunities for pair and group student interactions that promoted TL language use, which emphasized the functional aspects of the language, while teacher A did not. The evidence also shows students in school B engaged in meaning-making with their peers in Spanish. A comparison of both instructional approaches, therefore, show that teacher B’s instruction can be characterized as more communicatively oriented than that of Teacher A, congruent with the research of Fröhlich et al (1985).

4.6.3 Curriculum officer interviews
Two Spanish curriculum officers of the local MoE were interviewed. The interviews were conducted at their headquarters, the Rudrinath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre in Couva, Trinidad. The interviews sought to discover the officers’ perspectives and MoE’s stance on the primary Spanish initiative.
4.6.3.1 The Spanish curricula

The perspective of MoE officials as stakeholders engaged in planning and overseeing the primary Spanish initiative was also obtained. In discussing the difference between the first Spanish draft curriculum and the current curriculum, the MoE official stated:

CO1: That curriculum (draft) was a specialist curriculum. It could have only been taught by people who were specialist Spanish teachers. But the curriculum that has been designed in this new primary curriculum rewrite is for the generalist teacher. So that the way it is written, in addition with the support material that goes with it, it is made so that every teacher, any teacher who can read, can teach the Spanish, so it will be for a generalist teacher.

The perspective of the MoE curriculum department is that a background in Spanish language and methodology is not necessary for the implementation of Spanish at the primary level. This perspective, which seems at odds not only with the government’s collaboration with the University of Trinidad and Tobago’s B.Ed. training thrust but with the L2 research, is further discussed:

CO2: Well, we have been training teachers in implementing the integrated curriculum…. So Spanish is one of the many subjects, it has been out there being imparted to teachers, and we have shown them how teaching Spanish can be a fun thing for both them and the children, how it can be a very learning experience through play, how it could be a learning experience through Art, Drama, Dance, Music, that sort of thing. So we have had training workshops for all district…for all district areas…

In addition to the training workshops, the need for school facilities that support the curriculum’s focus was identified.
The way how (sic) the curriculum is designed, it means that the children must be engaged, be running around, jumping around, moving around. And I don’t think that our schools, many of our schools, are constructed to take that kind of interaction.

Clearly, the Spanish programme is affected by a lack of appropriate infrastructure. Many primary school buildings were designed with open floor plans over four to five decades ago and because of the physical obsolescence of the layout, the ability to utilize technology in the classroom as well as the interactions essential for language learning inclusive of listening and speaking, are hampered. This deficiency needs to be addressed to ensure the effective implementation of the Spanish curriculum.

4.6.3.2 Teacher competence
Clarifying the issue of teacher training in Spanish pedagogy, the curriculum officer articulated this viewpoint:

CO2: Yes, because their background is not a necessity for teaching Spanish. Because as I said, it’s not a grammar based subject. So any teacher who can teach, can teach Spanish in the integrated curriculum.

The curriculum officer’s response reflects the view that Spanish instruction does not require grammatical competence. This disregards the importance of teacher linguistic proficiency to effective FL instruction, signaling a lack of gravitas with which the initiative is approached. Such a malaise with roots in the governing body of education may filter throughout the system. It thus underscores the need for a more comprehensive, thoughtful approach to the initiative’s management. Despite this stance, which is a MoE position, the said curriculum officer later reveals a conflicting view, acceding that training and competence in the Spanish language is essential for an effective learning process:
CO2: …It’s not sufficient to just know the basics of Spanish. To be able to teach it well you have to be a professional at it yourself. And seeing that a graduate teacher for secondary school has three years of Spanish to be able to teach from Form 1 to Form 5, I believe to be able to teach from Infants 1 to standard 5, you should have at least two years of Spanish.

Yes. They have to be competent in the Spanish language if they are going to teach the little ones, especially. You cannot not know what you’re doing and teach someone a language, because you’ll teach them the wrong thing and when they get to secondary school and the teachers try to teach them the right thing, they will claim that this is the way Miss taught them. And they always say, ‘whatever you learn, you cannot unlearn’. So you have to have teachers knowing what they’re doing from the get-go.

The curriculum officer’s personal view, as expressed above, harmonizes with L2 research, which emphasizes the need for meaningful TL input (Krashen, 1982; White, 1987), caretaker language with ‘recasts’ (Mitchell and Myles, 2004) and contextual and extra-linguistic cues as aids to enhancing learner understanding. It is quite unlikely that an instructor who does not possess the necessary competence can fulfill these requirements, and may thus pose a threat to the achievement of the Ministry’s aim of developing learners’ ability to communicate effectively in Spanish.

4.6.3.3 Resource support
The MoE’s plan to assist teachers with the resources necessary to implement the Spanish curriculum consists of an e-resource tool kit, which minimizes the demand on the limited Spanish curriculum officers available to provide training, as this excerpt reveals:

CO1: What has happened in terms of Spanish, it is a decision that was
taken. …Rather than go around, because of the number of us who are, who have the responsibility for training, it would have had to be the curriculum officers alone, so we opted, the Spanish unit opted to go the way of an e-manual which would have included an audio tape of vocabulary that is used, to give them ideas of methods etc. to use, but because of some glitches with media and the publication of that, it would have been an e-manual on cd form, on soft copy, so that is what is the problem now with that. So even though the idea is there, we have put everything in place, but it has not been sent out there.

The effectiveness of the e-manual method to be used with ranges of teacher competence along a continuum, lies in question. This raises the question of how an e-manual can provide effective training for teachers with limited or no previous FL pedagogical or linguistic knowledge. At the time of this interview, though the new interim curriculum is being implemented, the e-manual was still unavailable to schools. As such, this situation may be a valid reason for the non-implementation of Spanish, as schools lack qualified staff and have not received the MoE resources to assist teachers without an academic background in Spanish. Thus while the initiative is on-going, the quality of the programme may be compromised because of the lack of the emphasis on teacher FL competence and the lack of dependable resource support.

4.6.3.4 Administrative attitudes

The curriculum officers, who visit schools on a regular basis, were in an ideal position to discuss the stance taken by school administrators on the implementation of Spanish.

CO1: Well, it has been a mixed reaction. I think the first thing is the fear that they do not have the manpower to deal with teaching Spanish, as I said, some of the teachers would not have done Spanish since secondary school, some of them never even did it for O’ levels.
This fear is perhaps a subset of a negative national attitude towards FL learning, as the MoE official describes it:

CO1: I see it as, in Trinidad, we don’t value languages. I don’t think we even value English. We don’t value the humanities in general, as Trinidadians. I’m not too sure about Tobagonians, but I guess from the Trinidad point of view, we don’t value the humanities. They also look at languages, the first reaction people say is, “Children, people cyah even talk English, they want to teach them Spanish!” That’s the basic kind-a thing.

By extension, administrators’ attitude towards the teaching of Spanish may hinge on the value they place on FL learning.

CO2: I have been to 15 primary schools. In most schools, in some it is not being implemented at all, Spanish is being done as advised in the curriculum. Some teachers are enjoying implementing the language, some are just giving the children lists of Spanish words to learn. Principals also are divided in attitude, some see it as a great curriculum, some see it as just more work for their teachers that the Ministry of Education sent for them. In schools where Spanish is not being done, there is a shortage of teachers in the school.

It is therefore evident that all schools have not begun implementing Spanish as is required by the MoE. This is partly based on some principals who have not pledged full support for the initiative, fear of the unknown and an undervaluing of the primary Spanish.

4.6.4 Summary

The overarching aim of this study was to discover how Spanish is delivered in the Trinidadian primary context. The findings point to the implementation of primary
Spanish in a context that includes varied principal attitudes, teacher qualifications and instructional emphases in terms of content, time and strategies and competing interests such as examinable subjects, high-stake national examinations and the prioritizing of other languages. The initiative is underscored in good measure by teacher enthusiasm for primary Spanish, albeit understood and demonstrated in different ways. The emergent key findings, as they relate to the study’s research questions and literature review, will be discussed in the chapter that follows.
Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter’s aim is to discuss the significance of the findings presented in the preceding chapter in reference to the theory, research and the study’s context. The discussion is undertaken in view of the research questions, to which responses are offered. The research questions are:

1. How is Spanish taught at the primary level in Trinidad?
2. What factors impact on the initiative's implementation?
3. How do teachers, principals and curriculum officers perceive the implementation of the primary Spanish initiative?
4. How do teachers and principals describe their experiences of implementing the primary Spanish initiative?
5. What are the students' perspectives on learning Spanish at the primary level?

Trinidad and Tobago government’s early language initiative envisioned the fulfillment of regional and national goals that would ensure primary school students’ access to Spanish instruction. In effect, the overarching goals were the development of interest and proficiency in the FL that would lead to a seamless secondary school transition (Northey et al, 2007; Valley, 2005). The subsequent training of primary teachers to meet this entitlement seemed an assurance of this objective’s realization. The discussion thus illuminates how this goal of primary Spanish instruction is being achieved.

Given the study’s relatively small sample, the research’s basic aim is to provide insights into the phenomenon of the recent introduction of this early language initiative. Consequently, this study’s recommendations and discoveries are limited and may not be widely generalizable. It is hoped that the ensuing discussion will encourage a closer look at the unique reality of early FL learning in Caribbean
contexts such as the one of this study that can serve as a point of departure for scholarly conversations on pedagogical practices and directions for policy development within the sphere of early language learning.

5.2 The teaching of primary Spanish

For research question 1, three key themes were identified. These were 1) capricious policy climate, 2) disparate levels of prioritization, and 3) medley of practice.

5.2.1 Capricious policy climate

In order to fully exploit the benefits to be gained from early language learning, an appropriate climate is essential (Knagg, 2011). As such, it is important that change initiatives such as primary Spanish be managed effectively. To some extent, this has not been the case, as demonstrated by the quantitative and qualitative findings, which revealed inconsistency in the provision of Spanish across the surveyed schools. This failure to implement the change initiative with fidelity, meaning adherence to a programme as intended by its developers (Carroll et al, 2007,) indicates a lack of clarity about the initiative. This not only reflects De Lisle et al’s (2010) findings of poor fidelity policy implementation trends locally, but is a feature of weak change management (Curran, 2010; Platz, 2014).

As early as 2004 when the conversation about primary Spanish began, there were concerns about the lack of a ‘blueprint’ for this initiative (Yamin-Ali, 2004). The objective of the government of the day was for capacity building to properly implement the ELL programme, which included teacher training at the level of the UTT. That trajectory was interrupted by a paradigm shift in 2010, with a new government that retained the macro-policy of the Spanish programme with a changed intensity of focus. Though teacher education continues at the UTT, the changed implementation strategy is in part evidenced by the curriculum officers’ articulation that teacher competence in Spanish is not a necessary element for programme effectiveness. The suggestion, therefore, that ‘any teacher who can
read’ could meet the instructional demands of primary Spanish seems reflective of policy and managerial expediency for curricular implementation despite deficits in terms of qualified Spanish teachers, which reflects the absence of performance integrity (Sirkin et al, 2005). The question then arises as to how FL oral proficiency can be achieved by students (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013a) in such circumstances which do not align with the literature that emphasizes teacher fluency and age-appropriate pedagogies as critical to ELL success (Enever, 2012). Clearly, teacher readiness to implement the change as a component of institutional capacity (Fullan, 2006, 2007) is minimized by the MoE. This lack of readiness further suggests that the initiation phase was imperfectly executed before step 2, implementation was undertaken. One must therefore concur with Youssef (2006) on the absence of a well-defined direction for the implementation of language policy locally. This signals a flaw in the management of primary Spanish, which indicates that primary Spanish is delivered amidst a capricious policy climate.

5.2.2 Disparate levels of prioritization
The study found that, on one hand, some schools have given high prioritization to the initiative, as demonstrated by 15% of reporting schools that catered for whole school Spanish teaching. This starkly contrasts with either modest or no support for primary Spanish instruction in 75% of reporting schools as shown by the questionnaire findings. This disparity in prioritizing Spanish was attested to by curriculum officers. The most significant reasons were the unavailability of competent teachers and the prioritizing of other curriculum areas. What is highlighted from this finding is the shortage of human resources to get the job of primary Spanish done in all schools. This leads to concerns about inequity and a lack of continuity, in that all students will not receive the entitlement they deserve and that, for those who do, there is no guarantee of a smooth transition across the various class levels. This state of affairs may also foster a greater emphasis on core, examinable subjects that educators may deem more important. Thus Spanish is taught amidst disparate levels of prioritization that do not easily facilitate
seamless transitions as proposed by the government. This underscores a major weakness at the initiation stage, indicated by the absence of the necessary stakeholder skillsets for full participation in the implementation phase (Cardno, 2002; Fullan, 2007).

5.2.3 Medley of practice
How teachers organize their instructional practice is an important aspect of language learners’ development and early language learning is no exception (Enever, 2012). Hence the classroom practice of teachers of primary Spanish was an important focus of this investigation.

This study’s findings have demonstrated different practices at the micro level of the school. The data from the school questionnaire and interviews showed that Spanish is predominantly taught through cross-curricular methods, as recommended by the MoE (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013a). Discrete lessons and discrete combined with cross-curricular integration were the other methods identified. During the observation lessons, similarities and differences in instruction were revealed.

An integral focus of language learning is on the interactive processes that foster TL linguistic competence (Krashen, 1982; Nunan, 2004; Swain and Lapkin, 1995). The teachers acknowledged during the interviews that a fundamental aim of their language teaching was a focus on learner TL communication. In their lesson delivery, both teachers touched on all receptive and productive language skills.

Teacher A’s principal focus was shared equally between listening and writing skills. In addition, her students were mainly engaged in individual seatwork that involved repetition of Spanish vocabulary. Written activities included vocabulary lists, fill-in the blanks and completion of worksheets. Topics were focused on form, with some linked to other subject content areas, reflecting the curriculum’s
focus on thematic integration. On average, 15% of class time was spent on procedural and disciplinary concerns. Topic content was strictly controlled by the teacher and a whole class approach to teaching was utilized at all times. A variety of resources including charts and songs were also employed.

The evidence showed a high level of student enjoyment, as demonstrated when students listened to songs, played a game and looked at a video. Apart from TL use promoted through games, singing or drills, there was no evidence of functional language use or negotiation of meaning among class participants. From the evidence, teacher A’s claim of much ‘conversational work’ has not been established. Her emphasis on memorization of vocabulary did not maximize opportunities to promote meaningful oral TL communication among students. However, she ensured that affective objectives of enjoyment and fun were achieved. While the teacher’s efforts are commendable and serve as a starting point for early language learning, consistent with Krashen’s (1982) focus on input, there was limited evidence of what Mitchell and Myles (2004) identify as student engagement in meaning-making tasks that enable the language learning process.

At school B, the teacher placed much emphasis on listening and speaking skills, spending three-quarters of classroom time in this regard. Classroom organization included whole class teacher-led interactions, which ranged between 60% to 76% of observed time, along with paired and group activities. These interactions were largely focused on learners’ functional communicative needs, as is consistent with the literature on ELL (Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Long 2015). These included asking for and giving information in Spanish. The teacher modeled the language structures and students followed, with related tasks that promoted meaningful TL communication (Hung, 2014), not only with their peers but also with the teacher (Oliver and Philp, 2014). These tasks, consistent with real world experiences (Nunan, 2004, Skehan, 1998), were accomplished using the target language. For example, students were able to respond individually and in groups to questions
such as ¿Qué hora es?, ¿Cuántos años tienes? and ¿Cuál es el número de teléfono de tu papá? The teacher moved around to each group and listened to the responses, in this way monitoring and guiding students. The teacher thus ensured linguistic accuracy brought about through task repetition (Batstone, 2012) while praising students’ efforts.

The content of some lessons was based on form, while the majority were functional ones (58%) at times integrated with other subject areas. This shows adherence to the MoE’s aim of “learning functional Spanish that supports other curricular content” (Curriculum Planning and Development Division, 2013b, p.22). Almost 15% of class time was spent on procedures and discipline, with the topic fully controlled by the teacher. The evidence showed that teacher B facilitated student use of the TL in group activities. Student enjoyment and interest were evident throughout the class sessions. This finding supports Oliver and Philp’s (2014) assertion that student engagement with the new language and peers along with scaffolding by teachers lead to positive outcomes.

The evidence supports the teacher’s claims of focusing on and reinforcing TL communication in an enjoyable way through varied means of interactions and child-centred strategies, elements common to successful early language programmes (Nikolov, 2009; Mestres and Lundberg, 2011; Wang, 2002).

Both similarities and differences in the quality of interactions fostered by the two teachers were identified, supporting the view that Spanish teaching at the primary level may be described as a medley of practice. Out of this medley of instructional practice, which may be reflective of individual attitudes, interpretations of the curriculum and distinctive linguistic and pedagogic competencies, some examples of good practice have emerged. These include an emphasis on listening, understanding and TL production, a positive classroom environment underscored by teacher enthusiasm for Spanish as well as varied, interesting student-centred classroom activities and resources that include music, games and visuals, as a
means of reinforcing communication. These teachers exemplify the notion of performance integrity of key stakeholders (Sirkin et al, 2005), demonstrating acceptance of the change through participation and implementation of the initiative (Cardno, 2002). One is left to wonder what the future of primary Spanish would be with a cadre of teachers similarly willing to implement the innovation.

5.3 Factors affecting the initiative’s implementation
Several variables can affect the implementation of new initiatives. For research question two, 1) facilitating factors and 2) factors that constrain were the emergent themes on the factors impacting on the primary Spanish initiative.

5.3.1 Facilitating factors
From the data, factors that facilitate the initiative’s effective implementation were identified. These were 1) the underlying rationale, 2) positive student attitudes and 3) principal support.

As indicated in the open-ended survey comments and by both principals interviewed, an important contributor to the efficacy of primary Spanish is the rationale underpinning the early language learning policy, seen as ‘a good idea’. This perception is based on the country’s geographical proximity to South America as well as the demands of globalization for competent language learners, as stated in the open-ended survey comments and stakeholder interviews. Clearly, when key stakeholders such as principals believe in the value of an initiative’s rationale, the vision can be transmitted to others so that the initiative’s goals can be facilitated (Cardno, 2002, Fullan, 2007). This was evidenced by principal A and teacher B, who reported allaying stakeholder concerns to press forward with primary Spanish instruction.

Students are at the core of the teaching process, and learning is the raison d’être of instruction. Student motivation plays an integral part in the achievement of
learning outcomes. The data highlight positive student attitudes to the FL as enhancing learner achievement. This claim is supported by teacher and principal reports on student enthusiasm exemplified by their out-of-class interactions in Spanish with teachers and peers. Examples were reported of students greeting and initiating conversations in Spanish with the schools’ principals and instructing their peers on the accuracy of Spanish pronunciation. These examples support Harris and O’Leary’s (2009) findings that positive student attitudes advance learning gains in terms of communication, enjoyment of language learning and improved cultural awareness. It is unsurprising therefore, that intrinsically motivated students make the task of primary Spanish instruction all the easier.

The impact of principal support for the initiative was seen as a critical success factor in managing change effectively (Fullan, 2007: Hall, 2002). Not only must principals ‘buy-in’ to the programme, this support must be shown by their strategic use of staff members qualified to teach Spanish and their management of timetabling issues so that the initiative’s goals could be accomplished in ways best suited to their school’s circumstance. This was seen by principal A’s employment of her UTT graduate teacher in the manner of a specialist teacher to provide Spanish instruction for all classes as well as ensuring adequate class time for the subject’s delivery. The use of a specialist teacher, or in this case, a teacher with the requisite competencies to teach Spanish to the whole school, has been suggested by survey comments as a factor that would advance the initiative’s success, given the data that reveal a shortage of qualified teachers to effectively deliver the primary Spanish curriculum.

Thus the acceptance of the initiative’s ‘good’ rationale by stakeholders, a student body enthusiastic about language learning and principal support, perceived as facilitating factors of the primary Spanish initiative, are important to the success of the primary Spanish programme.
5.3.2 Factors that constrain

While it is often said that change is inevitable, it seems logical to assume that for positive change to occur, there must be clear direction. From the data, several factors that constrain the initiative’s success were identified. Firstly, the issue of insufficient trained teachers to fulfill the curriculum requirements of primary Spanish is considered an obstacle to its implementation. Indeed, the notion that teachers untrained in primary Spanish pedagogy or with limited MoE workshop sessions can deliver the relevant curriculum does not seem logical. In effect this may lead to a ‘one trick pony’ syndrome with such teachers of Spanish unable to deliver content effectively outside of predefined parameters. How stakeholders view this suggestion may be inferred from the following questionnaire comment by a principal that argues against “teachers with no training or background in a foreign language simply attempting to make sense of a MoE document.” Clearly, the lack of qualified teachers can constrain the initiative’s success, because without the knowledge, proficiency and confidence, primary Spanish cannot be imparted effectively.

The questionnaire data indicate reservations to implement the Spanish initiative on the part of some schools. This is another factor that impacts on the programme’s success. Several reasons account for this reticence, including the unavailability of teachers, competing school priorities including a focus on religious languages at some denominational schools, a focus on national examinations including the high-stakes Secondary Entrance Assessment examination as well as the lack of resources and time (section 4.2.8). The languishing or non-existent support for implementing the FL programme caused by these factors constrains the implementation of primary Spanish. As may be the case in several instances, primary Spanish appears to be the sacrificial lamb in the face of these obstacles. The failure to move past the initiation/unfreeze phase in several schools is a critical change management issue that needs to be addressed if primary Spanish is to be effectively implemented and sustained.
5.4 Stakeholder perceptions on the initiative’s implementation

In answer to research question 3 on the stakeholder perceptions about the implementation of the primary Spanish programme, the themes of 1) student benefits and 2) resource needs were identified.

5.4.1 Student benefits

A very encouraging aspect of the primary Spanish initiative has been the benefits to students as identified by principals, teachers and curriculum officers. The principal and teacher at school A reported that, for two former groups of students currently in secondary schools, their performance in Spanish has been positively affected because of their early FL learning. At school B, improved listening skills, greater self-confidence and overall progress in learning across subject areas were identified as direct advantages. These stakeholders also attested to students’ oral confidence in Spanish. Such enhanced learner outcomes, consistent with the findings of ELL research (Harris and O’Leary, 2009; Mestres and Lundberg, 2011), represent the hub around which the change management of a curricular innovation must revolve (Fullan, 2006, 2007).

5.4.2 Resource needs

Appropriate and adequate resources employed by proficient teachers can positively impact the quality of the MFL learning experience. The absence and unequal distribution of resources to effectively implement the primary Spanish programme was revealed in quantitative and qualitative data. Participants reported the non-distribution of curricular documents and resources, deficiencies in terms of basic equipment, inadequate training as well as outdated school buildings that cannot easily facilitate FL interactions. This lack was observed in School B, where the teacher either purchased or used her own resources and conducted teaching activities in an open-plan classroom separated by blackboards. While the inadequate provision of resources by the school did not appear to negatively impact the teaching learning process in school B because of the teacher’s initiative in obtaining resources, the additional costs in terms of time, effort and
finances to ensure the smooth delivery of lessons were unwarranted. This leaves one to wonder how long Teacher A could maintain such effort beyond her existing responsibilities. As Sirkin et al (2005) maintain, unnecessary extra duties for employees leads to resources becoming overstretched and waning employee morale as a consequence of weak change management.

5.5 Stakeholder experiences
In answer to research question 4, the main theme that emerged when describing the implementation process was 1) mixed experiences. The views of two key stakeholders, principals and teachers, are discussed in this section.

5.5.1 Mixed experiences
From the qualitative findings, the principals and teachers considered their experiences with implementing primary Spanish as generally positive. Both principals described satisfactory experiences with the FL programme, which they felt benefitted learners in terms of enjoyment of language learning in a less stressful and non-competitive environment. Apart from these favourable experiences, there were some experiences with the implementation that were less than satisfactory. This was in terms of the scant dissemination of guidelines to principals about managing this change initiative. Principal B noted a lack of specific training for school administrators by the local MoE on the implementation of Spanish by the local MoE. This aspect of the Spanish experience, he reported, left him unsure about his role.

On the part of the teachers, both were happy with their Spanish instructional experiences, and felt that they had achieved the programme’s objectives of generating student interest in language learning and TL communication. However, teacher B described the challenges of teaching in a school with minimal resources for effective language learning. This included the school’s physical layout that was not conducive to language learning because of the noise emanating from surrounding classrooms in the open-plan setting. In addition, due
to the absence of an audiovisual room, the teacher reported having to take her students outside of the classroom so that the language interactions would be done in a quiet area. These deficits again point to weaknesses in implementing primary Spanish effectively.

5.6 Student perceptions
Data on the participating students’ perceptions on learning Spanish at the primary level is discussed under the theme of enjoyable experiences.

5.6.1 Enjoyable experiences
All students interviewed gave a very positive reflection of their primary Spanish experience. In discussing their Spanish learning, the students at school A reported enjoying the classroom activities, including pronunciation, spelling and singing. The girls claimed to take this enjoyment of Spanish outside the classroom by using the Spanish words they had learnt in class with their relatives and friends. The boys stated that they enjoyed learning Spanish, however they usually did not use the language outside of the classroom context. The students at school A had all previously been exposed to Spanish learning in the previous grades. In general, their primary Spanish experiences were described as ‘fun’ and ‘good’ and their feelings reported as ‘happy’ and ‘excited’.

At school B, the students were formally introduced to Spanish instruction three weeks before the study began. All the students were enthusiastic in their responses to Spanish learning. Spanish learning was viewed as ‘great’, with feelings described as ‘nice’, ‘good’, ‘great’ and ‘happy; enjoying it’. The students at school B all claimed to use Spanish with their relatives and friends at home and school. They expressed their joy at the functional use of Spanish, which they identified as being able to count, say their names, age and time in Spanish. They also identified their pleasure in singing the songs played “outside with Miss laptop” and dancing. A high level of enjoyment of Spanish evidenced by these students is perhaps best encapsulated by this statement about the learning
experience: “I love it. I want to carry it home, practise it every night, I want to say it in my dreams.” Clearly, the student perspective on learning primary Spanish demonstrates a high level of enjoyment.

5.7 Summary
This chapter presented and discussed the findings related to how Spanish is implemented in primary schools in Trinidad and within two specific primary classrooms. Though full Spanish provision is not available in many schools, the findings point to enhanced learner outcomes as a positive aspect of the initiative’s implementation.

The chapter that follows includes a summary of this study as well as its conclusions, implications and limitations.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the study. The study’s contribution to existing knowledge is discussed as well as the main conclusions emanating from the findings. In addition, the implications and recommendations arising out of the findings are considered. The study’s limitations are examined in light of the case study approach employed. Areas for future research are further explored.

6.2 Overview of the study

This study’s overarching objective was to determine how Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) is delivered at the primary school level in Trinidad. The introduction of Spanish for young learners in the republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a new experience for educational stakeholders engaged in the teaching-learning process in the context of the primary school. This policy initiative has brought with it changes in the teacher education curriculum at the UTT, so that Spanish language and pedagogy is now included as a compulsory component for teacher trainees who specialize in primary school training. Currently, teachers are providing Spanish instruction at the primary school level. This study thus explored how early FL teaching and learning is conceptualized and practised in Trinidadian schools.

This study’s main focus was on two primary school contexts in Trinidad. The participating private and denominational primary schools are quite likely comparable to other similar school types throughout the country. In order to garner rich understandings about the implementation of this new primary Spanish policy, the case study approach, utilizing qualitative-dominant methods, was adopted.

A questionnaire that provided quantitative background data on the current status of Spanish instruction in Trinididian primary schools was one of the
methodological tools employed for this research project. In addition, an array of perspectives from key stakeholders of the initiative was obtained through qualitative means. These comprised semi-structured stakeholder interviews (for principals, teachers and curriculum officers), classroom observations, student focus group interviews and video-stimulated recall teacher interviews. Despite the small-scale nature of the research study, the range of data obtained afforded an overview of the introduction of primary Spanish, thought-provoking insights on the extent of the programme’s coherence as well as providing data triangulation that enhanced the study’s trustworthiness.

6.3 The study’s contributions
This study has contributed to existing knowledge by describing the interpretation, delivery and perceptions surrounding an early foreign language-learning programme in a Caribbean context. While the study is limited to a Caribbean setting, the findings may have a more generalized application and thus extrapolated to other contexts. This study has contributed in some of the following aspects. For instance, it has added to the growing understanding of early language instruction by highlighting conditions that promote language learning in general. One of the areas that the study addresses is the affective dimension of language learning. The study demonstrates that the affective domain is very influential in the achievement of learning outcomes. The study also adds to current understandings by identifying some of the possible obstacles to effective language implementation. These include a need for clear guidance at the policy level and also at the level of the school. One of the problems that derive from the absence of clear guidance is the danger of uneven implementation, where some students benefit and others do not. The study thus identifies equity concerns in language policy implementation. The study further contributes to our knowledge by identifying the importance of resource readiness and capacity building to meet the scope of language initiative implementation. In addition, the study highlights the essential role that school management support can play in effective initiative implementation.
This study also addressed the gap in the literature on how an educational MFL policy and the related curriculum are translated into instructional reality in the Trinidadian primary school setting. Previous local research on FL instruction has largely centred on the secondary and tertiary educational levels (Yamin-Ali, 2006; 2011). This study has generated new knowledge about how Spanish is delivered at the primary school level that will be of relevance to developing nations that pursue similar goals.

The findings of this study can inform on issues of early language learning from the perspectives of key stakeholders, thus contributing to the corpus of literature on FL instruction. In addition, the new understandings gained from the study can contribute to more informed conversations about new directions for FL policy implementation. Finally, the study is valuable to stakeholders in education, inclusive of the participants, as evidence to support the interpretations and practice of early language teaching locally, regionally and internationally.

### 6.4 Conclusions and implications of the study

Out of this current study have arisen conclusions on and implications for early language pedagogy in Trinidadian primary schools and language policy direction. These conclusions and implications have been informed by the related literature and key findings from the questionnaire, stakeholder interviews and classroom observations.

The main conclusion that emerged from the findings is that the provision of Spanish across the nation’s schools is fragmentary, highlighting several concerns. A major issue is the management of the initiative, which demonstrates a lack of adequate communication between all levels of personnel. There is little evidence of regular efforts by the MoE to support school administrators by providing on-going training for the implementation of primary Spanish. One workshop at the beginning of the school term when the Spanish curriculum has already been disseminated for implementation and that has left principal B ‘unsure’ about what
is taking place, is obviously inadequate and ineffective. The role of the Spanish curriculum officers therefore comes into focus, emphasizing the need for appropriate, research-driven guidance and training of principals in managing the Spanish innovation as well as teachers who must implement primary Spanish in the classrooms. Effective change management at the micro-level must be instituted to bridge the gaps caused by reticence to implement the initiative so that all principals would buy-in to primary Spanish and promote involvement and participation among staff.

This study’s findings also lead to the conclusion that a significant weakness in managing primary Spanish lies in the inadequate resourcing that undermines its implementation. Such inadequacies include deficits in instructional materials, for example, the absence of appropriate textbooks and equitable distribution of resources to all schools. Additionally, many school buildings are antiquated in their open-layout structure, the latter not conducive to interactive FL activities. This places an extra burden on teachers, who may compensate by moving students to quiet areas, for example outdoors, as in the case of Teacher B, or, as the questionnaire data indicate, shunning the teaching of Spanish in its entirety.

Insufficient resources also extend to teacher shortages in terms of qualifications or willingness to implement Spanish, a critical factor that limits the quality of the educational experience. This often results in an untaught Spanish curriculum for some schools or inadequacies in content or pedagogy. This clearly indicates a major barrier to provision for all students.

The implementation of primary Spanish does, however, have a positive side. The initiative demonstrated by principals who effectively manage the change to ensure understanding and acceptance by all stakeholders, as demonstrated by principal A and the 15% of schools that have fully implemented this initiative, provides a glimmer of hope for the initiative’s sustainability. In addition, the role of generalist teachers whose Spanish pedagogy demonstrates the use of age-
appropriate methods, also heralds a positive future for the Spanish initiative. Similarly, the eagerness of the young students to learn Spanish and the positive cognitive and affective learning outcomes reported also point to the potential that can be harnessed. The students’ interest in Spanish, good initial TL production and the fact that, regardless of the physical school circumstances, language learning was enjoyed, indicate that the foundation for language learning at secondary level (Curriculum Development and Planning Division, 2013a) is being laid. What is evident, therefore, is that young learners’ motivation and positive attitudes towards FL learning is an important factor that should be capitalized on for the sustainability of the primary Spanish initiative.

6.5 The way forward: Recommendations
An important recommendation for the way forward is the inclusion of specialized Spanish teachers in the primary school. In each school, a trained teacher delivering Spanish to all classes can alleviate the demand for more Spanish teachers while responding to the problem of graduate teachers who may not have the necessary confidence or skillsets to deliver the Spanish curriculum.

This practice will fall in line with what currently obtains in the nation’s primary school system, where teachers with competencies in areas such as music, physical education and information technology function as specialists. As such, the current concerns raised about teacher linguistic proficiency and the negative learner outcomes that may arise from the unrealistic expectation that teachers lacking qualifications in FL pedagogy or those with limited workshop training deliver the primary Spanish curriculum, can be mitigated. This will allow for the building of institutional capacity through an adequate supply of human resources (Fullan, 2007) sufficiently proficient in FL teaching that will lend support to the Spanish initiative.

The above position brings into focus the issue of teacher training. It may be reasonable to assume that some teacher trainees, many of whom entered the UTT
without any previous FL background as indicated by the questionnaire data, may not have the aptitude or desire for FL teaching, which is now a requisite part of primary teacher training. This suggests a need to review the selection process for the training of teachers to deliver the primary Spanish curriculum.

Additionally, to fully maximize the benefits of primary Spanish, the MoE must provide clear policy direction for key stakeholders in education. Communication between MoE officials and school principals must be improved to include ongoing evaluations, so that feedback about programme impact can be obtained as well as interventions developed as necessary. Moreover, the primary Spanish initiative must be adequately supported by sufficient and appropriate instructional resources including comfortable classroom environments if there is to be a more positive impact on learner outcomes.

6.6 Limitations
There were several limitations to this study. First, the sample of participating schools for the qualitative aspects of the research was limited to the south of Trinidad. As such, the data largely reflected the views of key stakeholders from the southern educational sector. As the qualitative data focused in the main on participants from this region, the opinions expressed may not be representative of the general population. Nevertheless, the findings may be of national relevance. Consequently from the findings, fuzzy generalizations (Bassey, 1978) in cases comparable to that of this study were obtained, as opposed to statements of generalizability.

Due to the study’s constraints, information from a third primary school type was not garnered. The absence of data in this regard is therefore an important limitation of this research.

The study’s questionnaire sought to provide an overview of schools’ progress towards achieving primary Spanish entitlement. This was distributed to 10.9% of
primary schools in Trinidad in order to capture a wider cross-section of perspectives about the initiative’s implementation. While this researcher would claim the study to be trustworthy, a larger sample may have yielded more relatable results. As such, general as opposed to specific information was obtained about implementation patterns with regard to the Spanish initiative.

6.7 Recommendations for future research

This study provided an in-depth exploration of the primary Spanish classroom in two different school types (private and denominational) in Trinidad. It will be instructive to discover how Spanish is delivered in the three primary school types and different regions of Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, it will be valuable to study the long-term impact in due course of early language learning on student communicative competence, as this study did not extend to measuring learner TL proficiency.

The teachers involved in the study were graduate B.Ed. teachers of Spanish. Given the findings of this study that there is substantial variation in the qualifications of teachers who deliver Spanish at the primary school level in the country, future research may seek to examine how differently qualified teachers interpret and enact the Spanish teaching learning process. Furthermore, this study did not address parental views on the primary Spanish programme. Further research that explores the parental perspective on the impact of this initiative on the students, who are the main ‘clients’ of the teaching-learning process, as well as teacher educators involved in primary Spanish training, is recommended. This will provide for added dimensions that can provide a fuller overview of the initiative’s implementation.

Finally, it is suggested that more mixed methods and alternate paradigm research on primary Spanish that includes the voices of key stakeholders in education including curriculum planners be conducted and replicated so that further insights
can be attained about early language learning instructional practices and policy development not only regionally, but in other diverse contexts.

### 6.8 Final thoughts

This study demonstrated how the teaching of Spanish in the primary setting was undertaken in two distinct school types in Trinidad, from which interesting insights into early language teaching and learning were gained. This study has concluded that primary Spanish, though implemented unevenly, can benefit students in terms of communication in the target language and attitude to language learning. This study concurs with the findings of other research that show the role of enjoyable classroom interactions in fostering positive student attitudes towards language learning (Harris and O’Leary, 2009) and the importance of the teacher in providing encouragement, input, interaction and a supportive learning environment that fosters student comprehension and communication (Harris and O’Leary, 2009; Mestres and Lundberg, 2011; Wang, 2002). Recognizing the importance of these variables and embracing early language learning comprise a firm foundation for implementing a successful language initiative. It is concluded that the introduction of the primary Spanish initiative is a step in the right direction that, if implemented evenly by enthused, competent teachers, will positively impact the quality of language learning for primary students. What remains to be seen in due course is whether the challenges faced by key stakeholders in implementing the primary Spanish initiative would be overcome, the initiative implementation process find a smooth resolution or remain an area undermined by competing school priorities and superficial policy directives. It is evident that the early language initiative has begun to positively impact learner outcomes and attitudes to language learning at the primary level. Nevertheless, time will determine whether this novel initiative will be implemented successfully and sustained across all schools.

Notwithstanding the positive findings of this study, there is a need for governmental action through the MoE to take the necessary steps to provide clear
guidance and management support, thus improving the Spanish initiative’s policy climate, which in several ways reflects institutional caprice. It is thus this researcher’s position that the findings of this study have been able to provide answers to the research questions, allowing for a deeper understanding of the primary Spanish initiative in Trinidad. These said understandings, revealed by the varied participant perspectives, can provide a springboard for discussion on early foreign language learning programmes. In this way, it is hoped that strategic and sustainable early language learning initiatives, applicable in a variety of contexts, can be achieved. Finally, notwithstanding limitations, it is hoped that this study will challenge those who contend that learning a foreign language may not be easily achievable for early language learners inclusive of those who ‘cyah talk English’, by considering the learner benefits attained, the impact of which may be far-reaching and must not be underestimated.
Appendix A
Extracts from Draft Primary Spanish Curriculum

Syllabus Overview

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

Our geographical location, gateway to the Spanish-speaking Americas, and current regional and international economic trends and their implications for Trinidad and Tobago, create an imperative for strengthening and deepening the national capability in Spanish at all levels and has given rise to the declaration of Spanish as the First Foreign language of Trinidad and Tobago.

Research and experience have shown that the infant years are the most opportune time to begin the learning of a foreign language and to develop an appreciation of and openness to other peoples and cultures. Beginning to speak a language at this level makes possible the acquisition of native-like pronunciation and fluency, supports the learning of the native-language and engenders confidence and willingness to use the language. Accordingly, with a view to laying the foundation for the establishment of Spanish as the First Foreign Language of Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Education has mandated the introduction of Spanish at primary school level.

PROGRAMME GOALS

It is expected that the introduction of this programme of instruction will:

- Develop basic oral/nasal Spanish proficiency among primary-age students
- Create a greater awareness of Hispanic cultures, Spanish-speaking countries and peoples in the region
- Reinforce and increase knowledge of other subject areas through context-based Spanish language instruction (e.g. Social Studies, English)
- Foster a love for foreign language study in all students
- Enhance the levels of achievement in Spanish at the secondary level
SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Attainment of the goals stipulated above will be demonstrated by the students' ability to:

- Ask for and give basic autobiographical information about themselves and others
- Identify and describe in simple terms familiar objects common to their home and school environment
- Express agreement and disagreement
- State likes and dislikes
- Ask for and give basic information about routine school and leisure activities
- Ask for and give basic information about selected aspects of local and Hispanic culture

SYLLABUS DESIGN AND INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The design of the syllabus is guided by the following principles:

1. Spanish learned at the primary level must anticipate and complement the secondary level Spanish curriculum
2. Content and instructional activities must be consistent with the cognitive and affective developmental patterns, learning styles, and interests of primary age children
3. The development of cultural awareness is as important a goal as the development of linguistic proficiency

Complementing the Secondary Level Spanish Curriculum

The syllabus has a cyclical-thematic structure which is intended to provide ongoing reinforcement of key concepts and structures across the various levels of instruction. The primary focus, especially at the lower levels, is on developing oral skills, acquiring core vocabulary, and ensuring that students view learning Spanish as an enjoyable, “fun” activity, and not as an additional “examination” burden. Building intrinsic motivation for language learning at this level is critical. Students must be able to draw upon the positive experiences of learning Spanish at the primary level and embrace the challenge of mastering more difficult syntactic patterns at the higher levels of instruction. Developing a strong capability in oral communication at primary level, a major goal of this syllabus, will
enable secondary level Spanish teachers to devote more instructional time to increasingly complex grammatical structures, the mastery of which is required to attain the higher levels of proficiency targeted in the for the secondary school graduate.

Types of Learning Activities
Instructors are encouraged to make extensive use of games, songs, flashcards and other interactive learning resources with high mnemonic value to aid the learning process. The lexical scope of instruction can be expanded by contextualizing the vocabulary presented to reflect the realities of the specific communities within which the language will be taught, as it is a well-known principle of language learning that meaningfulness aids acquisition. Teachers are asked to note in this regard that while the syllabus contains comprehensive vocabulary lists in certain thematic areas, students are not required to learn all the items, but only those which apply to their personal situation. Additionally, many of the in-class activities are designed to give students an immediate sense of accomplishment in the language, and thus lend themselves naturally to formative evaluation exercises.

Teaching of Culture
With respect to the teaching of Hispanic culture at the primary level, the intent is to increase students’ awareness of Spanish-speaking countries especially those in Latin America and the Caribbean. Students should also be made aware of the legacy of Spanish culture and tradition in the development of their own nation. Such goals dictate that teachers focus not only on language-specific culture items such as the “piñata,” but also on more general knowledge. As such, it is expected that much of the teaching of cultural appreciation at the primary level will be conducted in the first language.

Summary
The themes, functional objectives and structures presented in this document are meant to be incorporated into the Primary curriculum, beginning at the Infants Level and sequentially developed across levels, under the tutelage of a trained and qualified teacher. The syllabus content and teaching/learning activities are not prescriptive, but are rather intended as samples, and where relevant and applicable, to serve as the basis for further development depending on the learning styles and aptitude of students. What is of primary importance is the need to ensure that the primary school syllabus be effective, not only with a focus on oral communication, but with the underlying purpose of making the learning of Spanish a pleasurable experience for all children, and in the process, increase their desire to further their study of Spanish.
### Functional-Notional Overview

**Infants – Post Primary Syllabus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>KEY FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>KEY NOTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants Year I</td>
<td>Exchanging greetings and other social courtesies</td>
<td>Numbers, 1-10, the Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants Year II</td>
<td>Identifying self and others</td>
<td>Numbers 1-20, Colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I</td>
<td>Identifying objects</td>
<td>Colours, Shape, Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard II</td>
<td>Describing people and things</td>
<td>Personal and Physical Qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III</td>
<td>Talking about leisure and school activities</td>
<td>Time (Days, Months, Hours) Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV</td>
<td>Describing places</td>
<td>Distance, Relative location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard V</td>
<td>Integration of all functions and notions Infants to Standard IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Primary</td>
<td>Excerpts from above integrated into situational dialogues</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEMES</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>STRUCTURES</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ¿Quién soy yo?</td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td>Buenos días</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• express greetings and farewells</td>
<td>Buenos buenas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• express basic courtesies</td>
<td>buenas noches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify self as boy/girl</td>
<td>Hola</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• state names</td>
<td>Adiós, Chao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• agree and disagree using “si” and “no”</td>
<td>Por favor, Gracias, Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEMES</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>STRUCTURES</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. La Familia</td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify the immediate members of their family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Count from 1-10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State the number of brothers and/or sisters they have</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CULTURE

1. Spanish terms of affection "couple" and "papa".
2. La bendición
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>STRUCTURES</th>
<th>RELATED VOCABULARY</th>
<th>SAMPLE ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3. Mis Amigos y yo | Students will be able to:  
  - greet friends  
  - say hello  
  - identify friends by name  
  - express affection for friends | ¡Hola!  
  ¡Buenos días!  
  Amigo/amiga  
  ¡Hola!  
  ¡Buenos días!  
  Amigo/amiga  
  ¡Hola!  
  ¡Buenos días!  
  Amigo/amiga  
  Hasta mañana | Drawing and labeling friends  
  CULTURE  
  1. El abrazo (Reinforcement) | Pictures, Drawings, Toys (dolls etc.) |                                     |
| 4. La Casa    | Students will be able to:  
  - identify a house  
  - say how many rooms are in a house  
  ¡Qué es?  
  ¡Había en la casa | ¡Qué es?  
  ¡Había en la casa |  
  un cuarto  
  Hay ... cuartos en mi casa |  
  1. Select a "casa" from among a series of different objects  
  2. Students draw their own "casa"  
  3. Students connect a dot-to-dot to draw a "casa" | Pictures of drawings of houses (frontal and aerial view)  
  Workbooks  
  Flashcards  
  Letter cards |
### STANDARd II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>STRUCTURES</th>
<th>RELATED VOCABULARY</th>
<th>SAMPLE ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ¿Quién soy yo?</td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td>Test/Question</td>
<td>Un gato</td>
<td>1. Guess - Show and Tell</td>
<td>Rada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Talk about ownership of personal items, pets, family members, items of clothing</td>
<td>1st person singular</td>
<td>Un perro</td>
<td>2. Modelling clay</td>
<td>Drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State which objects they like</td>
<td>Toño</td>
<td>Un pijama</td>
<td>3. Pictures, etc.</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Express desire for a particular item</td>
<td>Qüero</td>
<td>Juego de video</td>
<td>4. Draw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Computadora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mama/papi</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hermano/hermana</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Libro</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cuaderno/boligrafí</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lápiz/ingrid/bolao</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Falsa/carrina</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pantalones</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: At activity based on the game Show and Tell
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>STRUCTURES</th>
<th>RELATED VOCABULARY</th>
<th>SAMPLE ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. La Familia</td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td>3rd person plural of verbs that relate to activities of individuals and groups</td>
<td>Hijo, hija, primo, prima</td>
<td>1. Students draw and label a simple family tree and present same to classmates</td>
<td>Family Photos, Drawn paper, Crayons, Markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationships</td>
<td>• Describe family relationships in Spanish</td>
<td>¿Dónde vives tu ...?</td>
<td>Padres, esposa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Say where extended family members live</td>
<td>¿Dónde viven tus ...?</td>
<td>Abuela, abuelo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give a simple description of family members</td>
<td>Mi ... vive en ...</td>
<td>tío/a, primo/a, primo/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mis ... viven en ...</td>
<td>grandpa/grandma/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>¿Cómo es tu ...?</td>
<td>familia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mi ... es</td>
<td>amigo/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEMES</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>STRUCTURES</td>
<td>RELATED VOCABULARY</td>
<td>SAMPLE ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mis amigos y yo</td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ask about and describe items (pets, clothing, toys, etc.) owned by their friends</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give a simple description of their friends</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¿Qué tienes...?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Un gato</td>
<td>1. Using pictures, drawings, or an album with friends to make comparatives</td>
<td>Drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yo tengo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Un perro</td>
<td>2. Making labels and assigning to different students</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mi amigo tiene...</td>
<td></td>
<td>Juego computadora</td>
<td></td>
<td>Photo Album</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1º Person Plural of</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hermano/ Hermana</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bristol Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1º Person Plural of</td>
<td></td>
<td>Libro/carpeta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tener</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cuaderno/bolígrafo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Scissors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tornos de bras</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lápiz/ papel/piza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Falda/pantalón</td>
<td></td>
<td>Faja/ vincha</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Almohada</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mantón</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aho/ bolsa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ah/ bolso</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda / foso</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lind/ ins/ ins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¿Cómo es?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Es...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEMES</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>STRUCTURES</td>
<td>RELATED VOCABULARY</td>
<td>SAMPLE ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mi patria</td>
<td>Duties of a citizen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Pictures showing duties of a citizen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td>Debo cuidar...</td>
<td>Libros</td>
<td>2. Ways of caring for property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe in Spanish the duties of a good citizen relating to care of property</td>
<td>...ma/ina</td>
<td>Manada</td>
<td>3. Skits</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Casa</td>
<td></td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>Patio</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>Escuela</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Nuestra país</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Encuentro</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Students collect pictures of different types of</td>
<td>Encyclopedias, magazines, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
<td>Primary context in</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>national dress in Spanish speaking countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate awareness of different aspects of culture (e.g., family life, national</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2. Teacher tells English version of Hispanic folklore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>costume, etc) in selected countries in Latin America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. End of term display of all drawings, charts, ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>models, etc., completed over the term and concert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Extracts from 2013 Revised Primary Spanish Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountable</th>
<th>We explain to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago the outcomes of our students and our use of funding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformative Leadership</td>
<td>We believe that people with vision and passion can achieve great things. We therefore empower and inspire our staff and stakeholders to create positive and lasting changes in the education system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>We are committed to meeting our own quality standards that are driven by the requirements of our customers. Each of us takes charge to ensure that these standards are implemented in our individual areas of authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Empowerment</td>
<td>We create the environment for excellence in teaching practice that improves the learning of all students, deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Guiding Principles of the Ministry of Education

THE NEW PRIMARY CURRICULUM

The new Primary curriculum envisages preparing our children with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to optimize their own development and ultimately to constitute a caring, respectful and socially conscious citizenry which will competently lead our country into the world stage. The Curriculum focuses on nine (9) subject areas: Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, Agricultural Science, Spanish and Values, Character and Citizenship Education. Health and Family Life Education outcomes are distributed and supported by all subjects.

By crafting a new national primary curriculum and addressing the learning needs of all young people through a new approach to teaching and learning, Trinidad and Tobago has established a strong foundation for the desired educational outcomes for our students. The Vision and Mission of the Ministry of Education which seeks to recognize, value and nurture individual abilities and talents requires an integrated, appropriate and relevant twenty-first century set of learning experiences at the heart of the curriculum. This overarching vision and mission remain central to all curriculum design, development and implementation initiatives, and will guide pre-service and in-service
teacher education and training activities that are an essential part of the
total education development, innovation and transformation process.

The world is rapidly changing and knowledge, skills, and values are
being demanded of citizens, even while the education struggles to
catch up with yesterday's requirements. In the vision, mission and
principles statements, it is very clear that the Ministry of Education
wants to develop an education for the twenty-first century, charting the
way for education and the nation to keep pace and move to the front of
the international arena. Following on this understanding, the new
curriculum has been developed as a flexible tool that focuses on the
development of twenty-first century skills in learners. The curriculum
itself, while providing abundant and detailed guidance to teachers, can
be adapted and shaped to individual contexts. Curriculum adaptation is
an essential aspect of curriculum implementation that is required to
meet the rapidly changing and diverse needs of all learners, so enabling
teaching and learning to continue to be relevant and current.

The new primary curriculum is characterised by the following:

- An integrated, thematic approach to teaching and learning in
  which learning from different subjects is skillfully melded into
  thematic units and learning/lesson plans. There is a focus on
  core content, building critical skills and cultivating desirable
dispositions in students, rather than rote learning of content and
  regurgitation on paper and pencil tests. This facilitates a
  smooth transition from ECCE into Infants and makes for a
  pleasurable learning experience for the child, and more
  effective delivery and retention of content.

- Literacy and Numeracy, significant foundational areas, are
  built in in all subject areas
- Continuous Assessment is promoted with conscious attention
  to Assessment for Learning which uses a wide range of
  classroom assessments to provide feedback and improve
  student performance
- Differentiated Instruction is supported to enable teachers to use
  a variety of teaching methods and cater to the learning needs
  of a range of students
- Infusion and use of Information and Communication
  Technologies, an indispensable twenty-first competence for
  students, is built in to all areas
- Focused teaching of Visual and Performing Arts and Physical
  Education ensures that all children's talents and sensibilities
  are awakened and developed.
- The introduction of foreign language awareness in a Spanish
  programme which follows a Foreign Language Exploratory
  model is present. This focuses largely on oral Spanish, its
  attendant cultures and exploration of other language
  experiences in the child's immediate environment.
- A focus on Values, Character and Citizenship is a vital
  component towards building a strong, tolerant and
  conscientious citizenry.

As noted, the designed learning experiences outlined in the new
curriculum are student-centred, inclusive and capable of guiding
implementation of a high-quality, engaging, innovative teaching and
learning process that satisfies the learning needs of all twenty-first
century young citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean region
and the globally interdependent and connected world.
Clearly, students will experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them in a variety of ways that are particularly relevant to their social, political, and economic growth and development in the information age of the twenty-first century. This primary curriculum seeks to expose and fulfill the potential of each child and to affirm the unique identity and character of the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

COMPONENTS OF THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

The new primary curriculum comprises three documents that are intended to provide necessary information and support to our public.

**Curriculum Guides** in 9 subject areas are provided. These specify what is to be learnt by students in an ordered, developmentally appropriate sequence in the form of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are further categorized as related to the acquisition of Content, or the development of Skills or Dispositions. Further guidance is provided in an Elaboration statement to specify the breadth and depth of what is to be taught and assessed, so that there is a standardized approach to teaching and assessment across the country.

For Teachers' use, a **Teacher's Guide** has been developed. This document provides an overview of the pedagogical practices embraced by the new curriculum, summary descriptions of the themes selected as the vehicle for the teaching and learning material as well as the 5 considerations that are infused throughout the curriculum: Literacy, Numeracy, Assessment for Learning, Differentiated Instruction and Infusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

For further support of teachers, an **Instructional Toolkit** has been developed. Within this document, detailed plans of work, samples of activities and rubrics for implementation by teachers are provided. Thematic Unit plans which bring to outcomes from several subjects as well as Learning or Lesson Plans, together with sample activities and rubrics are provided. Learning plans that suggest interesting methods for teachers to address core subject-specific concepts and skills are also included. At the initial stages of implementation of this curriculum that seeks to transform teaching and learning, abundant samples are provided for teachers. These may be implemented directly or may serve as guides for teachers' development of their own thematic units and lessons. As implementation takes place, opportunities will be provided for teachers to provide their own creative and original approaches to these themes and topics within the toolkit.
TIMETABLE

Within the framework of the new primary curriculum, there are some important notions about the new primary timetable which ought to be specified. These are that:

- 9 subject areas are represented (Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts; Physical Education, Agricultural Science, Values, Character and Citizenship Education and Spanish). HFLE and ICT are infused throughout the subjects.
- 50% of the time is dedicated to ELA and Mathematics, which include Literacy and Numeracy components and are considered to be priority at the lower primary. The other 50% of the time is to be dedicated to the other 7 subjects. The curriculum documents reflect that balance, so that as outcomes specified for each year level are covered, the balance of time for subjects is maintained.
- A combination of Thematic Units which combine several subject areas and subject specific core skills are to be taught (as in the Instructional Toolkit). Core skills may be done in preparation for a theme, during a theme or following a theme.
- The timetable is flexible and will be detailed on a weekly basis as teacher’s plan for the week is developed. The teacher selects which core skill lessons and which thematic lessons are to be taught each week and presents this in the weekly forecast and evaluation plan.
- In any given week, core skills for any or all subject areas may be taught. One possible illustration of what this may look like is given below:
Subject Rationale

What is Learning Languages About?

Languages are inseparably linked to the social and cultural contexts in which they are used. Languages and cultures play a key role in developing our personal, group, national, and human identities. Every language has its own ways of expressing meanings; each has intrinsic value and special significance for its users.

Why Study Another Language?

Languages link people locally and globally. They are spoken in the community, used internationally, and play a role in shaping the world. Oral, written, and visual forms of language link us to the past and give us access to new and different streams of thought and to beliefs and cultural practices.

In addition to being one of the most sought-after skills of the 21st century, by learning an additional language and its related culture(s), students come to appreciate that languages and cultures are closely related. Learning a new language extends students' linguistic and cultural understanding and the ability to interact appropriately with other speakers. Interaction in a new language, whether face to face or technologically facilitated, introduces them to new ways of thinking about, questioning, and interpreting the world and their place in it. Through such interaction, students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that equip them for living in a world of diverse peoples, languages, and cultures. It increases their understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s).

It is imperative that the child of the 21st century be equipped with the skills necessary to function in a global environment; one such skill is the ability to communicate in more than one language. Spanish, therefore, earns its place in the national curriculum of Trinidad and Tobago. Not only is Spanish the fastest growing language in the western hemisphere, but this language also has a strong historical and cultural presence in our nation.

An early introduction to a second language lays a foundation for foreign language proficiency at a later stage and complements skill development in other areas of study. Learning another language
promotes competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and fosters the development of higher order thinking skills.

**How is Spanish Structured?**

This Spanish primary programme is based on a Foreign Language Exploratory (FLEX) model. Beyond learning functional Spanish that supports other curricular content, it involves the inclusion of the myriad of language and language-related experiences in the world of the child. There is a rich amalgam of languages in the everyday experiences of the students of our country. A main objective of foreign language study at this level includes awakening in the child an awareness of and appreciation of the richness of language exploration - the origin and meaning of his/her name, places in the community and country, foods, culturally related references etc. Embedded within this notion is a respect for diversity and critical thinking through probing beneath the surface to seek deeper meaning.

Within any programme of language study, students learn about culture and the interrelationship between culture and language. They grow in confidence as they learn to recognize different elements of the belief systems of speakers of the target language. They become increasingly aware of the ways in which these systems are expressed through language and cultural practices. As they compare and contrast different beliefs and cultural practices, including their own, they understand more about themselves and become more understanding of others.

The Spanish program at the primary level is designed to create enthusiasm, excitement and love for language study among learners. Students are introduced to Spanish through stories, games, interactive instruction, cultural activities, and music. The focus of the program is primarily, but not exclusively, on spoken language. Students engage in using Spanish in contexts that relate to their lives, and help them to develop awareness of how language affects culture and vice versa.
Primary School Curriculum

Spanish

Infants 1
## SPANISH: INFANTS 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT/SKILLS</th>
<th>DISPOSITIONS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ELABORATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1. Say hello and goodbye in Spanish (hola, adiós)</td>
<td>1.2.1. Be willing to socialise with others. 1.2.2. Be aware and appreciative of different cultural traditions used in greeting others.</td>
<td>1. Display courtesy, appreciation and enthusiasm as they interact with others of different cultures in varied social settings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.1.2. Give examples of different ways of greeting others. | | | • Say hello and go others in Spanish  
• Demonstrate awa different cultural greeting others. [ | |
| 2.1.1. Introduce themselves to others in Spanish (Hola, soy ____; Hola, me llamo...) | 2.2.1. Be willing to socialise with others. 2.2.2. Be interested in exploration of the origin of names. 2.2.3. Appreciate their first names by knowing the origins. | 2. Communicate basic biographical information in Spanish when introducing self. |
| 2.1.2. State the origin of their first names and those of others. | | | • Introduce self by I am...' or 'Hello is...' in Spanish  
• State the origin of first name and those of classmates. [2.1.1]  
• Demonstrate pride the origin of his/ [2.1.2] |
<p>| 3.1.1. Name family members in Spanish. (padre, madre, hermano, hermana, tío, tía, abuelo, abuela) | 3.2.1. Be aware and appreciative of different types of families. | 3. Recall the Spanish words for selected English words. |
| | | | • Recite and recall word names for family members. (daddy, brother, sister, grandfather, grandma [3.1.1] |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT/SKILLS</th>
<th>DISPOSITIONS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ELABORATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1. Identify the language of origin of place names in Trinidad and Tobago, (Amerindian Spanish, African, French, Dutch, English, Hindi, Arabic)</td>
<td>1.2.1. Be aware that different languages were spoken in their country.</td>
<td>1. Recognize and appreciate the existence of other languages and cultures in their country.</td>
<td>• Identify Spanish and other languages that were brought to their country by the people of the past. [1.1.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2. Recognize signs written in Spanish.</td>
<td>1.2.2. Be positive in their attitudes towards cultural differences in the country.</td>
<td>1.2.3. Appreciate that Spanish language is important to contemporary Trinidad and Tobago.</td>
<td>• Identify and categorize names of places in their country according to their language of origin. [1.1.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3. State the four cardinal points in Spanish. (norte, sur, este, oeste)</td>
<td>1.2.4. Engage in exploration of language through comparing words of different languages.</td>
<td>2. Read and recall the Spanish words for selected English.</td>
<td>• Recognize Spanish language when seen on public signs. (road/street signs, signs on buildings) [1.1.2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1. Identify in Spanish elements of a simplified water cycle.</td>
<td>2.2.1. Appreciate the importance of water to life.</td>
<td>1. Recite the Spanish word names for basic elements of</td>
<td>• Point 'Tum in the direction and say the Spanish word for east, west, north and south. [1.1.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENT/SKILLS</td>
<td>DISPOSITIONS</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>ELABORATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(el sol, el agua, el océano, el río, la nube, la lluvia, la tierra)</td>
<td>2.2.2. Engage in exploration of language through comparing words of different languages.</td>
<td>words/phrases.</td>
<td>the water cycle. (sun, water, ocean, river, cloud, rain, earth) [2.1.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2. State the months of the year in Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Give three (3) reasons why water is important to life. [2.1.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Qué mes es? (enero, febrero, marzo, abril, mayo, junio, julio, agosto, septiembre, octubre, noviembre, diciembre)</td>
<td>2.2.3. Engage in exploration of language through comparing words of different languages.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sequentially recite the Spanish names for the months of the year. [2.1.2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3. State the month of their birthday in Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿En qué mes es tu cumpleaños? (Mi cumpleaños es en ____.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Orally identify the month of their birthday in Spanish. [2.1.3]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | | | My birthday is in ____.
<table>
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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ELABORATIONS</th>
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<td>3.1.1. Recognize the Spanish word names for the numbers 1 to 10. <em>(uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez)</em></td>
<td>3.2.1. Engage in exploration of language through comparing words of different languages.</td>
<td>3. Make comparisons between the currency of their country and other countries.</td>
<td>• Read aloud the word names 1-10 in Spanish. [3.1.1]</td>
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<td>3.1.2. Recognize that different languages are used on product labels.</td>
<td>3.2.2. Acknowledge that Spanish language is part of contemporary Trinidad and Tobago.</td>
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<td>• Recognize the wording of some product labels as bilingual in Spanish or another for English or other languages. [3.1.2]</td>
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<td>3.1.3. Distinguish between the currency of Trinidad and Tobago and those of selected Spanish-speaking countries. <em>(Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, Mexico, Spain)</em></td>
<td>3.2.3. Be aware that different countries use different currencies.</td>
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<td>• Display appreciation for languages as means of communication. [3.1.2]</td>
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<td>• Make 3-4 comparative statements about the coin bills of their country and another for a Spanish-speaking country, e.g., Venezuela. [3.1.3]</td>
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| | | | • Identify the currency of selected Spanish-speaking countries.
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<td>- State that different countries use different currencies. [3.1.3]</td>
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Appendix C

Request for permission: School Principal

176 Southern Main Road,
Dow Village,
South Oropouche,
28th May, 2013.

The School Principal,
_______________________
_______________________,

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter requests permission to conduct a study in your school during the months of September to December, 2013. I am a student at the University of Leicester, England, where I am pursuing an Ed.D. with a specialism in Applied Linguistics and TESOL. The focus of my research is the implementation of Spanish at the primary school level. The study is entitled: The teaching of Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) in Trinidad: A case study of the Spanish initiative implementation in the primary classroom.

This small-scale research requires that I observe and video-tape the teaching-learning process in the primary Spanish classroom. The video-recording undertaken is to facilitate an examination of the Spanish instructional process and will be used with teachers during the interview process. I also wish to interview the class teacher, administrator and six students for a focus group. I can be further contacted at 796-8254, 299-4987 or at dwp6@le.ac.uk. I thank you for your kind consideration in this regard.

Sincerely,
---------------------------
Desrian Wilson Paul, EdD student, The University of Leicester.
Appendix D

Letter of permission to conduct research- Ministry of Education

October 9th 2013

Ms. Desrian Wilson-Paul
176 Southern Main Road
Dow Village
South Oropouche

Dear Ms. Wilson-Paul

Your request to conduct research on, "The Teaching of Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) in Trinidad: A case study of the Spanish initiative implementation in the primary classroom." has been approved.

Attached is a letter of confidentiality, which is to be completed by the person conducting research through the Ministry and returned to the Educational Planning Division of the Ministry of Education.

Yours Respectfully,

Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons
Director, Educational Planning Division
Ministry of Education
Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of a small-scale investigation, I would like to find out your son or daughter’s views on the teaching/learning of Spanish in his/her class.

Any views expressed would be given in confidence, and any quotes used would be anonymised and used solely to help myself and colleagues improve practice.

It is important to note that your son or daughter can withdraw from the research at any time.

If you are willing for your son or daughter to take part in this research, would you please sign below. If you would like to ask any questions concerning this process, please feel free to contact me at dwp6@le.ac.uk or 299-4987.

Parent Signature: Date:

Print name:

Student signature: Date:

Print name:
Appendix F

Participant information sheet for parents/guardians

Research Project Title: The teaching of Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) in Trinidad: A case study of the Spanish initiative implementation in the primary classroom.

Name of Researcher: Desrian Wilson Paul

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am conducting research on the implementation of Spanish at the primary school level in the South of Trinidad. A fundamental aim of this study is to shed light on how Spanish is being implemented at the primary school level. The study thus aims to describe the early teaching of Spanish in the context of the Trinidadian primary classroom, and to gain greater insights into this new governmental initiative.

I have discussed my research project with your child’s school principal. I have also received written approval from the Ministry of Education, Port of Spain and ethical approval from the University of Leicester, England, to conduct the research. The research methods used will be video-recordings and observation of five (5) class sessions and a focus group interview of a small sample of students. Your child’s participation is valuable as there have been few previous studies carried out in this area in Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean. This study will be undertaken during the September to December 2013 school term, and proposes to contribute to the growing body of research in the area of early foreign language learning and teaching. The findings of this research can be used to inform policy and practice.

I am requesting that your child participate in this study. Please complete the accompanying consent form to signal your agreement for your child’s participation. Your child’s identity will be anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used and the findings reported in a manner consistent with confidentiality and anonymity.

Your child’s participation is voluntary: Your child may withdraw from the study at any time without giving any explanation. The information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Your child’s name will not be associated with any report, publication or summaries derived from this data.

For any questions regarding this research, I can be contacted at dwp6@le.ac.uk or 299-4987. If you are interested in receiving the results of this study after I have completed the analysis and write-up, I will be happy to share it with you. Please keep my contact information handy so that you can request the results.

Thank you for your participation.
Appendix G

Participant information sheet and consent form

Research Project Title: The teaching of Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) in Trinidad: A case study of the Spanish initiative implementation in the primary classroom.

Name of Researcher: Desrian Wilson Paul

Dear Prospective Participant,

I am conducting research on the implementation of Spanish at the primary school level in the Southeastern educational district of Trinidad. A fundamental aim of this study is to shed light on the implementation of Spanish at the primary school level. The study thus aims to describe the early teaching of Spanish in the context of the Trinidadian primary classroom, and to gain greater insights into this new governmental initiative.

You are invited to participate in this research that investigates the teaching of Spanish at the primary level in Trinidad. Your participation is valuable as there have been few previous studies carried out in this area in Trinidad and Tobago and in other Caribbean areas. This study will be undertaken during the September to December, 2013 school term. The study proposes to contribute to the growing body of research in the area of early foreign language learning and teaching, with its findings used to inform policy and practice in the sphere of Modern Foreign Language education.

I am requesting your participation in this study. The data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this research. Additionally, pseudonyms will be used and the data presented in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Your participation is voluntary: You may withdraw from the study at any time without giving any explanation. Please note that the information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be associated with any report, publication or summaries derived from this data. To signal your agreement to participate in the research, please complete and sign the accompanying portion of this form below.

For any questions regarding this research, I can be contacted at dwp6@le.ac.uk or 299-4987. If you are interested in receiving the results of this study after I have completed the analysis and write-up, I will be happy to share it with you. Please keep my contact information handy so that you can request the results.

Thank you!

Signed Consent

______________________________________________
I agree to participate in the research study as detailed above.
Name_________________________ Signature_________________________
Date__________________________

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## Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT): Part A

### Table of Contents

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### Notes

- **SCHOOL**: 
- **TEACHER**: 
- **SUBJECT**: 
- **DATE**: 
- **OBSERVER**: 

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**233**
Appendix I - Sample of Completed COLT Part A

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Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT): Part A

SCHOOL: [Name]  
TEACHER: [Name]  
GRADE: [Grade]  
LESSON: [Lesson]  
DATE: [Date]  
OBSERVER: [Observer]  

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Appendix J- School Questionnaire

School Questionnaire (Adapted from NFER: 2006 Primary MFL Survey)

A. Foreign Language Provision

1. Does your school provide the opportunity for students to learn a foreign language?
(Please tick one in each column)
Yes ☐ No ☐
If you ticked No, please go on to question 2.

If yes, is this undertaken
   a) during class time? Yes ☐ No ☐
   b) as a co-curricular activity, such as in clubs? Yes ☐ No ☐
If you ticked YES, please go to question 3 on next page.

Questions for schools with no foreign language instruction.
Please complete questions 2a to 2c.

2a. As far as you are aware, has there been any foreign language teaching in your school at any time during the past nine (9) years? (please tick one below)
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don’t know ☐
If Yes, the foreign language was taught …
   To the entire school ☐
   To most classes ☐
   To a few classes ☐
   To one class ☐

2b. If Yes, which foreign languages were offered? (please tick all that apply)
1. Arabic ☐
2. Hindi ☐
3. Spanish ☐
4. Other ☐
If other, please specify __________________________

2c. If No, what was/were the main reason(s) the school did not offer languages? (Please tick all that apply)
   There were no teachers trained to teach languages ☐
   Other curriculum priorities ☐
   Lack of resources ☐
   Lack of time ☐
   School/staff were not convinced of benefits for students in this school ☐
   No perceived benefits ☐
   Other ☐ (please list other reason(s) below)

Please go on to Question 10.
Questions for schools with Foreign Language Provision:
Please complete this section if you ticked yes to question 1.

3. When did your school introduce foreign languages?

This year (2012/2013) ☐ Other year ☐  ----------------------
Last year (2011/2012) ☐ Don’t know ☐

4. Which foreign language(s) are currently offered at your school?

- Arabic ☐
- Hindi ☐
- Spanish ☐
- Other ☐ (Please specify) __________

5. Does your school have a written policy on foreign language instruction?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, is it…
- a Ministry of Education document? ☐
- a document created by your institution? ☐
- a combination of both of the above? ☐
- a different document? ☐

This document is called__________________________

6. Who currently provides foreign language instruction at your school?

- Primary class teacher with background in languages ☐
- Primary class teacher trained at the UTT to implement primary Spanish ☐
- Primary class teacher with background in languages, trained at the UTT to implement primary Spanish ☐
- External resource person ☐
- Parent/Volunteer ☐
- Teacher from a secondary school ☐
- Native speaker from the community ☐
- Other ☐ Please specify ______________

7. How is foreign language provided?

- Embedded across the curriculum ☐
- In discrete lessons ☐
- In both discrete and cross-curricular lessons ☐
- Focused activities: special language week or day ☐

Co-Curricular
- Lunch time or after school activities ☐

8. Approximately how many classes receive foreign language instruction? __________

9. Approximately how much time is spent on foreign language teaching per week? _____

________________________________________
10. Please use the space below to add any further comments about the initiative to teach a foreign language (Spanish) at the primary level in Trinidad.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. All data will be kept secure and confidential and not shared with any third party.
Appendix K

Video Stimulated Recall Interview Schedule

1. What were the aims of this activity?
2. What type(s) of interaction(s) are you and/or the students engaged in?
3. What resources did you use here?
4. How were these sourced? /Were these original creations?
5. What language(s) is used here?
6. Why did you make this choice?
7. What is the strategy used here/type of interaction you are aiming for here?
8. What is the objective of this strategy/interaction?
9. Do you think this was achieved? If so, why?
10. In your opinion, how did this activity/lesson align with communicative goals?
11. How did your students feel about the activity/lesson?
12. How was this expressed/articulated?
13. How would you describe your feelings on implementing Spanish in the primary classroom?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you!
Appendix L

Curriculum officer semi-structured interview schedule

1. What are the benefits from a ministerial perspective of teaching Spanish as a MFL at the primary level?

2. Thus far, what has been the MoE's role in facilitating the implementation of Spanish at the primary level (a. previous to the Sept 2013 Primary Curriculum Reform (PCR)? ... b. with respect to the new, integrated Spanish curriculum (re: PCR, Sept. 2013)?

3. What role have you played in the implementation of Spanish at the primary level?

What have you learned from this?

4. How do you think principals have responded to this implementation?

5. How have teachers responded, in your view, to the implementation of Spanish at the primary level?

5. How do you think/see this policy will develop/developing?

6. Do you think there is anything further that is needed for the effective implementation of Spanish at the primary level?

7. What plans are in place for the evaluation of this important initiative?
Appendix M

Student Focus Group Interview Schedule

1. How long have you been learning Spanish?
2. Where have you learnt Spanish?
3. How do you feel about learning Spanish?
4. What do you like doing in Spanish class?
5. Is there anything you do not like to do in Spanish class?
6. Do you use Spanish outside the classroom?
   (If yes) Could you give some examples?
7. If you had to rate Spanish out of all the subjects, how would you rate it?
Appendix N
Sample Principal Interview Transcript-School B

Researcher: Could you tell me what is the socioeconomic background of the majority of students of this school?

Principal: Alright, the socioeconomic background of the students of this school is sort of varied, it’s mixed. You have students coming from all different types of background, you have, it is sort of medium…not too rich, not too poor. You have people working in different offices and so on, you have the housewives, you have people working at home, gardeners and so on, so it is sort of mixed. But I would say more on the lower income.

Researcher: And the first language? Would you say the first language is the Creole or Standard English? What do you think?

Principal: Creole. Yeah.

Researcher: What, in your view, do you think about the introduction of Spanish in the primary school?

Principal: Oh, I think that it’s great. Because, it’s something new, so children always cling to something that is new. You know, it come(sic) like a new language, it’s something that is new and it’s something that is exciting for them. So I think that it’s really great.

Researcher: Okay.

Principal: So I think it’s something they will benefit.

Researcher: Okay. And what do you think about the new Spanish syllabus, where Spanish is said to be compulsory now with this interim curriculum but it is not examinable.

Principal: Alright. Not compulsory?

Researcher: It is compulsory but not examinable.

Principal: Alright. Because, you see English language in itself has so much to deal with, and that is examinable. So I don’t mind not being examinable, right. Making it compulsory, yes, because we have so many of our countries close by with Spanish speaking people and so on, right, so it is good for even the youths, the children and all, to know, to be able to speak Spanish, alright, so it’s not a bad idea, not being examinable. I don’t see a problem with it.
Researcher: Okay. And what about your school? Has your school embraced this by introducing Spanish into all of the classes?

Principal: Alright. Well we don’t have all the classes doing Spanish yet, alright. From before we had two or two children doing, two or three children, two or three classes rather, doing Spanish before, right, but now, with the introduction of Spanish in the curriculum, we have the First Years, Second Years, Standard Ones, right, we are supposed to be doing Spanish and we have one or two other classes doing Spanish also, right, and I think they enjoy it with each other.

Researcher: Okay. And what are some of the challenges, if you think there are any, for implementing Spanish throughout the schools?

Principal: Alright, well, throughout the school you have some teachers not fully exposed to it yet. Because you are hearing that they are supposed to introduce it throughout the school, but only on a phased basis now, but so they will have challenges where you have some children, some teachers, rather, not being totally exposed. Probably they have done it in secondary school as such, but say, teaching, per se, they would not have the knowledge and the skills to teach it effectively.

Researcher: They have not been trained?

Principal: They have not been trained to teach Spanish, so there is where they would have that particular problem.

Researcher: So not all of the teachers on your staff have been trained at the UTT?

Principal: No.

Researcher: Some of them are from the Teachers’ college, where this was not done. That would have been in the 80s and 90s.

Principal: Correct.

Researcher: Right. Okay. Do you think there are any benefits to implementing Spanish from the children who are doing it with the teachers?

Principal: Yes, as I said before, if it’s something new, I feel that the children would be excited, and they would probably will be able to go to their parents who can’t speak Spanish, and speak to them and so on, and let them know that it’s something new that they learn, you know this kind-a thing, and I feel is(sic) something new. Because, going around to one or two of the classes and listening to the teachers teaching the Spanish and so on, is something you
could see the children excited about it, is something new, so I feel, I feel, being new, I feel the children would cling to it a little faster than normal.

Researcher: So in other words, it makes them excited about learning.

Principal: Learning, yes.

Researcher: And what do you think is needed for Spanish to be implemented throughout the school effectively?

Principal: All right. First, training. Teachers need to be trained properly, all right. Of course, they must have the different resources and so on. They must have a tape recorder. They must have a proper tape recorder, they must have the proper resources, whether it is multimedia and so on, they must have ...the training and resources must go hand and hand.

Researcher: And what about the building of the school, because I notice your school, the building, the classrooms are separated by blackboards.

Principal: Yeah. All right, if you have something like an audiovisual room, as such. This is what we don’t have. We have the computer room, as such, but then you have computer classes going on and so on, but where we have the open air, one room school, sometimes it is difficult because of the flow of the noise coming from all of the classrooms in the open air, so that could be a challenge.

Researcher: All right.

Researcher: Does your school have any policy, have you interpreted this new Spanish initiative in any specific policy in your school?

Principal: Not quite yet. Because it's now coming on stream, so people are still learning, right. I myself still have a lot to learn about it. So it is not fully implemented because, we went on one or two workshops and so on, but they just did things in general. So they haven’t taught principals themselves, more about what they really intend to do. So I think that in the future they have to call the principals together to let us know a little more about what is going to take place. So right now we’re still feeling out what is taking place.

Researcher: Okay. And finally, Sir, how do your teachers feel about teaching Spanish?

Principal: Those who are doing it now, I can’t say a hundred percent of those are doing it now. But I can say, let's say, probably 50% to 60 % of those who doing it now, seem to be comfortable and they quite enjoy what they’re doing. Right. But those who probably, those you have again, those might have
a little challenge with hiccups here and there. Yes they might overcome it after a while, and it might fall on stream, they might get accustomed to it after a while.

Researcher: Okay. So what do you think might be some of the hiccups that you mentioned? Do you think pronunciation, they might have issues with that, or some other aspect of the language?

Principal: Of course, as you see, it’s another language, so you must be able to speak it properly, that’s one, getting through to the children, two, you know, again, the different methods you have to use. And then I think if it’s something that you like it, too, it might, you might be able to put it across in a better way. It’s something you must have a love for, I think. If you have a love for anything at all, you might be able to get through with it easier than somebody who might be doing it for doing it sake.

Researcher: That’s true.

Principal: So it’s something I feel teachers need to get a little more involved in getting across to their children and so on.

Researcher: Great. Thank you very much Mr. Tillman (pseudonym)

Principal: You’re welcome.
Appendix O
Sample Pre-Observation Teacher Interview Transcript

Transcript of Pre-Observation Teacher Interview: II
Primary School A.
Teacher- Ms. Ravita (pseudonym)
Class- Standard 2
No. of Students- 25

Age- 25
Qualifications: B.Ed from the U.T.T., a DELE diploma (Spain), a distinction in Spanish at O’levels.
Employment history as teacher- 2 1/2 years (Since 2011).
Employed as Teacher of Spanish (only) to all classes.

Researcher: How do you feel about Spanish? Do you love Spanish?
Teacher: Yes! Of course! I more that love Spanish, I’m enthusiastic!

Researcher: So how many classes do you teach Spanish to at this school?
Teacher: At this school I teach, it’s 26 sessions for the week, and 5, and about 10 levels, different levels.

Researcher: What do you mean by levels?
Teacher: I mean Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, then we have the infant department, then we have the preps, which are children from about 3, 4 years old.

Researcher: So you teach Spanish to the kindergarten, the Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE).
Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: I see. I was not aware of that. And how often do you teach Spanish to each class?
Teacher: Each class. From the kindergarten to grade 2, they get it twice a week. And from Grade 3, 4 and 5, once for the week.
Researcher: And how long do these sessions last?

Teacher: The bigger kids, they get 45 minutes, and the smaller ones, 20 to 30 minutes.

Researcher: Okay. What are some of the strategies you use to teach Spanish to the different children?

Teacher: Okay. Some strategies I use. Well, they would vary according to the level. So, my thing, how I implemented this new, and the old curriculum, first, as I was taught, you secure listening skills before the children start to write, so I did a lot of oral work, conversations with them first, and when I know that they are able to move up, we begin writing at the Grade 3 level. And, depends (sic) on the topic, if we are doing the body, for example, we will do TPR, the Total Physical Response, the movement, we’ll sing songs, we’ll have role play, dramatizations, ahm, repetition of course for the younger kids because repetition is important, ahm, what else. Sometimes I show little video clips about, when we’re dealing with the culture part of the language.

Researcher: Wonderful. So what would you say is your main objective in teaching Spanish.

Teacher: My main objective is for children to achieve a love for the language, and also, not only enjoy and have fun while we’re doing it, but also to help them in their long-term life, in terms of secondary education.

Researcher: Okay.

Teacher: And to further their studies in it.

Researcher: In Spanish?

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: Have you encountered any challenges in teaching Spanish?

Teacher: Challenges? Nothing so far. I think I am able to, whatever...I don’t think I have any challenges.

Researcher: Okay. Have you seen any benefits from teaching Spanish to your students?

Teacher: Of course! I, ahm, every single child that I have taught in Grade 5, the Standard 5 level, they always come back to me, to me, some of them top Spanish in their secondary school. It is a huge, a vast, vast improvement and enhance advancement for the children themselves.
Researcher: Okay. And do you think it helps them with certain skills?

Teacher: Yes, all skills? Listening skills, reading skills, writing, comprehension, understanding.

Researcher: What about intercultural competence? Understanding different cultures and accepting these. Do you think there is an impact in that regard?

Teacher: Yes, yes, because at first some of the children might not be, didn’t really want to speak because they’re afraid, but when they got comfortable with the language, they began speaking, like some of the little ones.

Researcher: Okay, and how do your students feel about learning Spanish? Tell me about the infant children, how they feel, then tell me about the middle school children and the upper school?

Teacher: How do they feel? The little children, well, they love singing the songs, they love dancing, the infants feel the same way. These children love to dance, they love to move, they love singing. The bigger kids, they love the projects that they get to do, in terms of presentations and so on.

Researcher: Okay, so you give them, what type of projects do you give them?

Teacher: They sometimes have to research a Spanish speaking country, if it’s Christmas time, we do research a Spanish speaking country and describe how Christmas is celebrated. So they come up and do a presentation on that.

Researcher: Is that in groups, done in groups?

Teacher: No. Individually. And they share it to the class so that everybody would learn from it.

Researcher: Okay. So it’s used, then, as another resource, so the students could come and read other students’ projects.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. And ah, what about resources? Are there readily provided resources for you in this school to teach Spanish?

Teacher: Well, I source my own (chuckles) resources.

Researcher: So you pay for your own resources.
Teacher: Not pay, some of the things, what I ahm, some of the things I use are my own stuff, and then I have cds and stuffs that I got from Ministry, well, only because we had a link with the Ministry, that’s how we got that.

Researcher: And does the school provide anything else, like, do you have, ah...?

Teacher: Well, we have projectors and so on, internet and so on, which all classes should get soon.

Researcher: Okay, so you use that in your teaching of Spanish, the internet and the multimedia projector?

Teacher: Yes. The projector. Yes.

Researcher: What about cd players?

Teacher: Of course! I use that a lot.

Researcher: Okay, do you all have a language lab in the school?

Teacher: No.

Researcher: And are the classes individual classes, self-contained classrooms, or are they separated by blackboards?

Teacher: No. Self-contained classrooms. Each class is one whole class. We don’t have any blackboards, anything like that.

Researcher: Air-conditioned?

Teacher: Yes, air-conditioned classroom, lighting, very conducive environment for learning. (Chuckles)

Researcher: As compared to the government and public schools?

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: So, which of these target language interactions do you foster in the classroom? Listening, speaking, reading, writing?

Teacher: I try to get all done.

Researcher: At all the levels?
Teacher: Well, not the infants and so on. For the infants and so on, we might just use worksheets if we’re doing the concept of one, we might just have worksheets and the number uno to colour and to show one. But in terms of writing, per se, it starts from the Grade 3 level.

Researcher: How old are the Grade 3 students?

Teacher: They are 8 to 9 years. 8, 9, 10 years.

Researcher: Okay, so they do listening, they do worksheets and colouring and so on. And then from Grade 3 they do writing. How do you do the writing?

Teacher: Introduce the words, then. In Grade 2 they might see flashcards, and so on. So they are accustomed seeing the word. And then I put the word on the white board or I prepare a vocabulary sheet and so on, or they take down the words from the board.

Researcher: What about making charts? Are you doing that?

Teacher: Yes. I have charts.

Researcher: Do you make them yourself?

Teacher: No. I got charts from the Ministry so they are stuck up in the classrooms. I don’t have to make any charts.

Researcher: And how do you assess the students’ learning of Spanish. You spoke before about ah, presentations. So is that one way of assessing them?

Teacher: Well, they have course work and a final exam from Grades 3, 4 and 5.

Researcher: In Spanish?

Teacher: So their course work is 50 marks, which comprises of a project, attendance and then they have a mid-term. There is something called a mid-term, which, after the first two topics, in the middle of the term, they get an oral test, like a mental.

Researcher: Okay.

Teacher: Right. So that’s 50 marks.

Researcher: So that would be like them answering formulaic questions like ¿Cómo estás? and ¿Dónde vives? and things like that?
Teacher: Yes. It’s things like that. Or, tell me the number for 25. Or, **treinta** is what number?

Researcher: Oh. Okay. So again it’s oral. So what about the children at the infant level and Grade 1? How do you evaluate their learning of Spanish?

Teacher: Ahm. Well, they don’t have a final thing like the older kids. But in terms of how they speak, and their worksheet and so on, I use that to give them a grade.

Researcher: Wonderful. And tell me, from your perspective, what do you think about this new interim Spanish curriculum?

Teacher: This new interim Spanish curriculum? Well, I like the fact that it is an integrated approach because well, learning is not in a vacuum and you must pool together all the subjects and so on, which will make learning more meaningful for the children. Ahm, what else? Well, I now started implementing this, so….

Researcher: So previously, when you were teaching Spanish, you were using...?  

Teacher: Using the old, the Draft curriculum. Well that was going well but this one is a bit tough to work with, but, ahm, well, in this one there are limited things in this interim curriculum.

Researcher: Limited content?

Teacher: Yes. Limited content. Okay. So when you finish teach something and you cover that, okay, so what am I teaching next? What am I going to do next with the children? like that.

Researcher: So how was the first one, in comparison to this one? Do you prefer the draft, or do you prefer this one?

Teacher: I think both should have been, there should have been more content. This one is good, but it should have been more content as the first one.

Researcher: So the first one, you think it was better in terms of the amount of content.

Teacher: Yes. Because I don’t know if this is just for the term one, or they have more coming in terms of terms two and three, because if this is the
whole thing, then, I don’t know how we are going to work it through, or stretch this for terms one, two and three.

Researcher: Okay, and how has the school, or how have even you, implemented this mandate, this new curriculum in the school?

Teacher: Okay, well, before I have the class, I go around to the teachers, find out what they are doing, and if they are doing numbers, then this is what I teach them in Spanish. I teach them to say it in Spanish.

Researcher: Okay. So that you ensure that it is integrated with the other subject areas.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: Okay, and what about things around the school? You were telling me about…?

Teacher: Right. We are making signs to put on each class door, and if it is bathroom, *el baño*, we put that. If it is office, we put *oficina*, yeah, so…

Researcher: So, any other initiatives in the school in terms of Spanish, apart from putting up signage.

Teacher: Around the school? No, I think that’s about it.

Researcher: And do the parents receive the Spanish well?

Teacher: Yes, yes, they really do.

Researcher: Thank you very much, Ravita. You did wonderfully well. Great!

Teacher: Mil gracias (Chuckles).
Appendix P
Sample Video-Stimulated Recall Interview Transcript

Teacher: Ms. Andrea (Pseudonym)
Primary School B

Researcher: Let us talk about the new syllabus. I have my questions here about that.
What are your views on the new Spanish integrated syllabus, after having used this new syllabus for a term?

Teacher: I do not like it as much. In fact, I have not been using it exclusively. Yes they have completed the topics that were carded for the particular term. However, the class that I got have (sic) no background in Spanish. They never used it before. So I couldn’t really stick to it because for Standard Twos in that curriculum, it’s mainly the cultural parts of Spanish, where you look at the different customs and holidays we share and birthdays, stuff like that. Whereas things they could use every day, they did not know. So it’s new. I think it will grow on me, I will start to use it more, but for now, I can’t use it totally because of the place they are at right now.

Researcher: So in other words you want them to learn how to say simple words and phrases in Spanish first.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: Before you look at comparing and contrasting the two cultures-Trinidadian with Hispanic culture?

Teacher: Exactly. Now there are some instances where we’ll have topics where I get to show them different things from across the world. However, you know, I want them to have a lot of experiences. And the new syllabus...that doesn’t have it for them right now.

Researcher: OK. You think it doesn’t cater to the needs...

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: That you see your students have. OK. So we are going to look at a clip from lesson 1, and then we are going to talk about it. We were at the beginning of lesson 1, up to 2 mins. What was the aim of this activity?
Teacher: At first it was to introduce them to greeting people. Because we not only use it in the morning, we use it in the afternoon sometimes. OK. So the aim was to reinforce what was taught before and to make it fun.

Researcher: Do you think the students are enjoying Spanish?

Teacher: Yes they are. I have full attendance every single day. And every day I try to add something in Spanish for them to learn. Even if it’s you know, a simple greeting, like *Perdón*, or thank you.

Researcher: OK. And what resource did you use in this section of the lesson?

Teacher: Speakers and my laptop.

Researcher: And where did you get the song from?

Teacher: College. It’s a booklet I bought, an entire series, from level 1 to 5.

Researcher: What’s the name of that series?

Teacher: Miss, you know.

Researcher: Is it *¡Preparados, Listos, Ya!*?

Teacher: Yes, I’m guilty of using it, all the time (Chuckles).

Researcher: OK. It sounds like the series that you used at the University of Trinidad and Tobago for your training.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: And how do the students feel about these songs on the cds?

Teacher: They love it because it’s very catchy. The series don’t (*sic*) only have songs. They have actual exercises that they could do, that they are able to do. Because at first they were a little apprehensive about doing Spanish, about speaking in Spanish, but when they realized that it was simple, the songs, the exercises everything makes it simple. There are other things out there on the market, however for me, that particular series caters to their needs.

Researcher: OK. And what types of interactions did you use in this activity?

Teacher: Movement.

Researcher: And why did you use movement?
Teacher: Because that’s what they love. They are very animated, and I use it to keep their attention as well. Because it’s not like a normal English or Math lesson where they have to do stuff. They’re now learning, so we have to make it as fun as possible.

Researcher: OK. And what languages did you use, ‘cause I notice you said, *Muy bien, Siéntense por favor*, and the students say ‘*Gracias, profesora*’ and at times you used English. So what languages do you use in your class and why?

Teacher: I switch between English and Spanish because when I got them this term that we’re looking at, they had not done any previous work in Spanish. So I thought it would be unfair to totally immerse them all at once. So far, they have been doing well. Eventually I want to get to the point where they can understand instructions and express themselves well in Spanish and basic interactions. But for now I switch between basic Spanish and English for that reason. They have no background.

Researcher: OK.

Teacher: And it’s going well so far.

Researcher: OK. So you think it’s working and your objectives are being achieved.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: Great.

OK. So we are in lesson 1 at 4 minutes and 6 seconds. We’ve just looked at a clip there and we’re moving on to another activity. How would you describe this activity in your own words?

Teacher: (Chuckles)

Researcher: Or what was the purpose of the activity?

Teacher: The purpose was to have a fun way of getting them to count to 15.

Researcher: Um hmm.

Teacher: Now in the new syllabus they’re supposed to do up to 10, I think. The old one, it’s supposed to be up to 20 in the infants, Std. 1 level. But as I said for these, they never did any of this before. So this was just a continuation of what we had started.

Researcher: It seems to me to be a type of drill.
Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: So a drill up to 15.

Teacher: In a way, at first, when we first started the previous lessons before this first one, I had to actually get them to work with stuff. Like the actual number of things.

Researcher: OK. The concrete objects.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: So they would be able to understand?

Teacher: Yes, and get to this stage.

Researcher: To this point. So is this a type of reinforcement, then?

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: OK. All right. Great. We’re at 5 mins 35 secs. So in this section of the video we see a chart, a number chart. Where did you get this chart?

Teacher: The chart itself, I bought from an educational store, ‘Stepping Ahead.’ The actual Spanish word cards, I made them myself.

Researcher: Ok. So previously we talked about the cd and your laptop and so on. Does your school provide you with these resources?

Teacher: No. They are mine, I bought them myself.

Researcher: OK. So in this activity, what skills are you addressing? Listening, speaking, reading or writing? What skills?

Teacher: They’re listening, they’re speaking. They haven’t started writing as yet in Spanish. I don’t want them to get to the point where they think they could go home and learn off something and they could speak. I want them to be able to use it fully, and then.

Researcher: But I see that you have the numbers written under the numerals.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: So is it that you want them to be able to...

Teacher: I want them to associate the numbers with their names.
Researcher: So visually, you want them to...

Teacher: I want them to recognize them.

So we are at 8 mins 18 secs into the video.

Teacher: This is so cool. I never saw myself before! I like it (chuckles).

Researcher: So tell me, what was this activity about?

Teacher: This activity was about reinforcing what was learnt during the lesson. My lessons aren't long, however I do have reinforcements along the way. This particular game was for them to associate again the word name. Yes they could say it, they know it when they hear it. But could they associate it with the actual number when they hear it, and they were able to.

Researcher: OK. Great.
So tell me, what is the activity and what type of interactions are taking place in the class?

Teacher: OK. This particular activity, they had to write down their phone number. Any group member. They could write down more than one if they wanted. However, they have to be able to come up in front of the class and present it in Spanish.

Researcher: Ok. And what type of interactions do you have in your class? Individual only, pair work, whole class interactions?

Teacher: It varies, depending on the complexity of the task given; this one was a little harder. I gave it to them to challenge them. They’re very smart. However, it’s not only group work. Sometimes they do individual as well as pair. Pair, I mainly use that if I’m introducing something new, if it’s the answer to a question like how old they are, or ¿Qué hora es?, ‘What time is it?’ I will do that as a pair and then evaluate on an individual basis to see who is having trouble still and who I could help, give individual attention to.

Researcher: OK. Great. So that first interaction there, we have the students asking each other, ¿Qué hora es? What was the aim of that activity?

Teacher: The aim of it was to be familiar with the question, not really to learn off the question but if anyone was to ask them that question and they knew the time, they would be able to answer correctly.

Researcher: Was it something to get them to know the actual pronunciation?
Teacher: Yes. As it is with this lesson, I did not look really at pronunciation totally in the beginning because they just got it. It was just introduced to them, then.

Researcher: OK. So it was not a problematic phrase for them to learn?

Teacher: No.

Researcher: And what resources did you use in this lesson and where did you get them?

Teacher: The clock that I had myself was an old clock that I got from home that doesn’t work anymore. The clocks that they have, I bought those myself and put the hands on them so that they could use it. I tied in this lesson with a Math lesson that I had for the week so that we were able to reuse the clocks.

Researcher: Ok. So this was an integrated lesson?

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: Integrated with Math. OK. Great.

At this point in the lesson you have put up a flashcard on the board with the words “Es la una” and “Son las...”. What is the purpose of having the words written there for the students?

Teacher: Just to reinforce what they heard. They did it orally before. I thought it would be nice for them to see it as a reminder. As I said before, I don’t allow them to write Spanish, but I think it’s okay for them to view it.

Researcher: So that they can recognize...

Teacher: Yes, and associate, make the connections.

Researcher: So we are at 11 mins 30 secs and the students are clearly engaged in doing some kind of pair activity. Could you tell me a little more about what they are doing and what is the reason for this?

Teacher: Well, the activity itself was to get them to interact with each other in Spanish, asking each other the time and being able to answer correctly. Now the word cards that were provided, some of them were trying to read from it directly, but I told them it was just a reminder, then, to how to say it, get them to remember what we learnt during the lesson.
Researcher: So, in the two lessons we’ve viewed so far we’ve had am, listening activities, speaking activities, they can visually recognize some of the Spanish words.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: How do these activities align with your goal, which you stated in the first interview we had, the goal of communication?

Teacher: It gets them more open to use the language without any pressure, in a meaningful way.

Researcher: So that worksheet that you gave them, what was the aim of that worksheet where they had the words, 'Es la una'? They had the clock’s face and then they had to fill in the hands.

Teacher: To see if they can make that association. As I said before, I don’t want them to learn off the different forms that were introduced. However, if they could recognize it, even if it was given in written form, in a paper or anything, they would be able to say, ‘You know what, that is one o’clock!’ And I didn’t want them to write Spanish, like I said, but I felt if I got them to write in the hands of the clock, that would show that they understood what they were doing in that particular task that we did.

Researcher: Ok. So you felt that your goal of the students achieving comprehension, was achieved.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: OK. And in this section of the lesson, they are doing pair work. What are the skills you want them to acquire?

Teacher: I want them to be able to orally express themselves and be able to ask someone how old they are.

Researcher: What are the resources you used in this lesson, ‘cause I’m seeing flashcards?

Teacher: I made those flashcards or word cards for myself. Most of the stuff that we use has to be made because I’m yet to find a place where I could get everything that I want.

Researcher: That you would have to purchase. But does the school allocate money for you to purchase these Spanish resources.

Teacher: No, no, no. We do not get any allocation to purchase anything.
Researcher: So you are the one who has to financially provide these things.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: So here we're looking at a clip where you are going around to the groups and you're asking, ‘¿Cuántos años tienes?’ and they're responding. How do you find that works for the students achieving the objectives?

Teacher: Ok. I will start off by explaining why I go around to the groups. For me, if you give group work, it must be evaluated somehow, even if it's through observation. But by interacting with them, even if they ask each other the question and they are able to answer each other, I get an idea if they are learning what I taught and if I am achieving my objectives, if I should change something in the lesson to meet their needs or leave everything as is.

Researcher: OK. So we are looking at lesson 4, 3 mins 20 seconds. What is the resource that you and your students are using here, A*, and where did you source them?

Teacher: We are using houses on a palette stick, we made these ourselves.

Researcher: You and the students?

Teacher: Yes. It was very simple. I printed it out for them, I cut it out for them to make it a little easier, the assembly a little easier, and am, using double sided tape, we were able to make them. It took less than five minutes.

Researcher: OK. Great. So we are at 4 mins 39 secs. And here I am seeing some pictures. What are the resources you used for this section?

Teacher: I used the multimedia projector.

Researcher: Is that multimedia specially designated for your Spanish class use?

Teacher: No. It’s supposed to used exclusively by the CAC students.

Researcher: What is CAC?

Teacher: That's the Continuous Assessment programme that they have now, the Standards 4s and 5s. And the Infants and Std 1s. We as the Standard 2s have not been converted as yet, however it has been earmarked mainly for them.

Researcher: So how did you get to use the multimedia projector?
Teacher: I begged for it (chuckles). We don’t usually but my principal was in a good mood. I convinced him I would only need it for one session, which is what we needed it for.

Researcher: OK. And I see you have pictures of different types of homes. Where did you get them?

Teacher: Everywhere. My own pictures that I got from friends and family, I got some online, anywhere I could find them. They are a variety, then, it’s not only local homes that were viewed by the students are from all over the world.

Researcher: And they question to which they responded was ¿Qué es? and they responded, ‘Es una casa.’ So they were able to link the visual and communicate orally about the different types of homes.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: How do you think the students felt about this type of activity?

Teacher: They loved it. They were telling me that they wanted to see it again, but as I was telling you, that piece of device the school has, we don’t have it to use as much.

Researcher: OK. Andrea*, is this an integrated lesson in any way? Is this lesson about Una Casa?

Teacher: Yes, it is. I wanted them to not only learn the language but to get a feel about how they could link it to different parts of the world. Because as I said before, it is not only local houses, it is houses from different countries, all over. And they were amazed, they actually have a house they love.

Researcher: So is this linked with their Social Studies lesson, is this something they did in Social Studies?

Teacher: Yes. We’re doing different zones right now, they remembered this as well.

Researcher: So this section is 7 mins 7 secs and you have an activity here ‘Verdad’ or ‘Falso’. So in this activity you are showing them different pics on the multimedia and they have to say, Es verdad, or Falso. What was the objective of this activity and how did the students feel about it?

Teacher: Well, they had to look at the pictures. There were pictures of businesses as well as homes. When asked the question, “¿Qué es? Es una casa o no es una casa? Verdad o Falso?” They had to give the correct answer.
They were able to. My objectives were met. Because of that I think the multimedia helped the lesson because they were able to visually link the words and say the Spanish, say everything, everything came together nicely. They had never done this type of activity with the multimedia before. I was a bit worried they would not completely understand or they would take some time, but they did not. They were so happy with it that they started using it in every other subject area. For every single question, if it was a ‘yes’ to the question, they would say, “¡Es verdad, profesora!” So it transferred to every area, almost every area.

Researcher: Ok. So we’re coming to the end of the interview now Andrea. How do your students feel now about learning Spanish, because I would assume they’re still doing Spanish now this term with you?

Teacher: Yes, they are, it’s continuing. I have full attendance, even if they’re sick, they come. I like it because it has boosted their confidence. So far they are the only class in the entire school that has gotten to this level, so they are proud of that.

Researcher: In Spanish?

Teacher: Yes, they’re very proud of that. Even though the lower classes have to do it now, you will see that they will be correcting the other students. Like for example, if they hear the infants saying Buairnos dias or Buairnas tardes, they will correct them. And that makes me proud, I feel that I’ve helped them in some way so I think now it has made them more confident. Also, in their reading, they are also a remedial class by right.

Researcher: In what reading, in their English reading?

Teacher: Yes, in their English reading. However, from having to listen closely to the different topics we had to do, whatever it was.

Researcher: In Spanish?

Teacher: In Spanish, they are more focused during any lesson at all being taught, which is good for me.

Researcher: OK. So you think the Spanish has impacted on them in a positive way in their learning in other subject areas.

Teacher: Yes, I try to integrate it as much as possible, especially in Mathematics, we get to use it while counting. I don’t even have to tell them to use it as such, they start to count in Spanish.

Researcher: To count in Spanish in Math class?
Researcher: Yes, especially during subtraction or addition, wow, they use it. So I’m happy about that, they’re not afraid to use it. When I first got them, they were a little scared, they did not know what to expect, but now they’re good.

Researcher: So how would you describe your feelings...?

Teacher: (Chuckles)

Researcher: About implementing Spanish in the primary classroom?

Teacher: (Chuckles) Truthfully, it’s challenging, because resource wise because mostly everything comes from me. So if I am doing a particular topic I have to plan from way ahead of the time and get everything together and get photocopies everything, as well, has to be done elsewhere. Preparing the worksheets, those I usually do by myself because it’s hard to find things online that are exactly what we are doing at that time. So it’s challenging at times.

Researcher: It’s challenging financially for you because it comes at a cost?

Teacher: Well, I’m looking at the long term gains because they’re more open to Spanish. Because at their age I was not open to Spanish. I saw it as being tedious, having to like, write everything and rote learn everything. Yes it’s challenging financially, resource wise it’s challenging also, but in the long run, it pays off in the end.

Researcher: OK. And how do your students feel about learning Spanish?

Teacher: They love it. I have never asked them outright or interviewed them but...

Researcher: But have they told you?

Teacher: If I’m running out of time and they know for sure they will not be getting their Spanish class, it’s like a warzone. “Miss, so when are we getting Spanish!!??” So they remind me, and if I promise that they will be getting Spanish, they remind me so that they will get it back, so I think, looking in, they are very enthusiastic, their body language, they are very enthusiastic about Spanish. And I’m happy for that.

Researcher: And have you had any comments from members of the staff or other parents about teaching?
Teacher: Yes, a lot of the parents. First, I got some complaints because a lot of the parents did not finish school and were not able to help them. But I mean they were on the bandwagon when I called them together and explained to them it’s going to be school-wide soon. And I’m sorry they didn’t get to do it before and this is a great opportunity for them to start something new and to excel at it. So right now they are happy. If we’re learning a song they will come to find out the words sometimes. If it’s any member of staff have any trouble with any pronunciations or anything they’ll usually come to me and ask. If it’s any resources that I have I lend to them.

Researcher: Wonderful. So it seems to be a wonderful experience Andrea.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: And how does the principal feel about it? Has he come on board?

Teacher: I would say yes and no. Because he has been a little more giving, giving leeway to us to use some of the resources that have not been earmarked for us.

Researcher: OK. Like your multimedia projector.

Teacher: Yes. But slowly but surely he’ll get there. ‘Cause ever so often he’ll walk in, they’ll ask him questions in Spanish, they’ll greet him in Spanish. They’ll ask him questions in Spanish and he’ll say, “Miss, you and these children!” (Laugh) So hopefully he’ll get on the bandwagon soon enough.

Researcher: OK. So is there anything else you would like to add, Andrea.

Teacher: (Chuckles) I’d like to say that this was an eye-opening experience for me. Sitting down here and actually having to look and reflect on what I did, I never had the chance to do that before. Yes we would do it, yes we would have to conference with our lecturers on teaching practice. I find that it is so different from actually looking at yourself in action. I think that reflection, I like it. So I appreciated this.

Researcher: So you are saying that this stimulated recall interview has been beneficial to you?

Teacher: Yes, I’m seeing some things that I could have done better especially in terms of the multimedia and stuff. Also in terms of getting them to get some concepts faster than they did. You know, I’m seeing everything now and hmm....

Researcher: And you told me something about the students wanting to see...
Teacher: Yes, they want to see themselves as well, they’re very excited. They keep asking, “So Miss, when we getting to see ourselves, when we getting to see ourselves?” And I keep telling them we have to wait, it’s being put together and stuff. Right now they are on edge, they would like to see it. I think they would enjoy seeing themselves as well and how far they have grown. Because when I first got them they could not speak Spanish at all. They are not fluent Spanish speakers as yet but I think they will be more open to it as they go through. I hope that whoever gets them next will continue with the programme.

Researcher: Ok. So you've had them now for one term.

Teacher: One term.

Researcher: And they are doing a wonderful job and they are very excited about Spanish.

Teacher: Yes, they are.

Researcher: And you have accomplished one of the objectives of the curriculum, which is to foster a love for the language.

Teacher: Yes.

Researcher: And like you, I hope that this continues and that you continue to do Spanish. Thank you very much Andrea.

Teacher: You’re welcome.
Appendix Q
Sample Focus Group Interview Transcript

Wednesday 12th November, 2013.
Primary School B

Researcher: Today I have with me Tyrell, Taylor, Matthew, Jada, Aarti and Makaila (pseudonyms) from Std. 2. So, could you tell me Timmy, how long have you been learning Spanish?

Tyrell: Ah, weeks, ah, 3 weeks.

Researcher: Okay, so is this the first time you’re learning Spanish, since you came to Std. 2, or did you learn it before in any of the other classes?

Tyrell: First time.

Researcher: And you Taylor, is this the first time for you that you’re learning Spanish?

Taylor: First time also.

Researcher: And Matthew, is this your first experience with Spanish?

Matthew: No Miss.

Researcher: Where did you learn Spanish before?

Matthew: My brodder used to teach me Spanish home.

Researcher: Your brother? Oh! So he did Spanish in High School. And he would teach you some words? What would he teach you?

Matthew: He teach meh how to say the numbers in Spanish, like one, two, three, up to ten.

Researcher: Okay, so you knew the numbers up to ten.

Matthew: And when ah come in Standard 2 ah learn up to 15.

Researcher: So you learnt up to 15 from Miss but you knew the numbers one to ten before, from your brother? You knew how to say them in Spanish? Is that what you’re saying?
Matthew: Yes.
Researcher: Okay, good. So Matthew is saying he had learnt how to count up to 10 from his older brother. How old is your brother Matthew?

Matthew: 14.

Researcher: Ok. So his brother is 14 years old.
What about you, Jada? Have you learnt Spanish before?

Jada: Yes Miss.

Researcher: Where did you learn Spanish?

Jada: My sister used to teach me since she was in Standard 5 and she’s tell meh what is *me llamo*. I’s ask she what is dat. She say dah is morning, she’s tell meh how to say evening, and she’s tell me how to say bah bye an’ dem tings.

Researcher: So your sister taught you? Did you say how old she was?

Jada: 13.

Researcher: 13. She had learnt Spanish. Where? Was it in Standard 5 or secondary school?

Jada: Standard 5.

Researcher: Standard 5, so she could teach you that. And then, when you came here to school, is this the first time you’re doing Spanish? With Miss or did you do it in other classes?

Jada: I do it in anodder class.

Researcher: Which class was that?

Jada: I did use to go ah Spanish class and de Spanish teacher does tell we Spanish and all dem kinda ting, Miss.

Researcher: Who was the Spanish teacher?

Jada: Ah cyah remember she ‘cause I does go to she school. But is ah Spanish school that is ‘Little Kinders’ (pseudonym).

Researcher: What was that?
Jada: Little Kinders.

Researcher: So you learnt Spanish at your pre-school then. Little Kinders. Okay. And what kind of Spanish did you learn at your pre-school?

Jada: She's tell we how to tell we mommy chao and all dem kinda ting. And how to keep she, how to tell she morning, evening and good night, and those sort ah tings Miss.

Researcher: So how old were you then?

Jada: I was around three.


What about you, Aarti? Is this the first time you’re learning Spanish?

Aarti: Yes Miss.

Researcher: And Makaila. Did you learn Spanish before you came to Miss’ class?

Makaila: Yes.

Researcher: Tell me when.

Makaila: With meh cousin at home, she used to go secondary school and she used to teach meh how to say meh name in Spanish and those kinda stuff.

Researcher: Okay. So what did you learn from your cousin? To say your name in Spanish. Anything else?

Makaila: Yes, how to say numbers, good morning, good evening and all kinda stuff.


Now, I want to know something about how you feel. Tell me, in your own words, How do you feel about learning Spanish? I'm going to start with Tyrell. You can think about it and then...

Tyrell: I feel great about doing Spanish!

Researcher: You feel great?

Tyrell: Yes. Feeling happy.
Researcher: You feel happy about it.

Tyrell: Yes Miss!

Researcher: You are telling me you enjoy learning Spanish.

Tyrell: Yes Miss.

Researcher: Okay. What about you Taylor? How do you feel about it?

Taylor: Good, great, happy, enjoying it.

Researcher: And Matthew?

Matthew: I am very happy to learn in Spanish.

Researcher: And the girls in the back there. Tell me how you feel about learning Spanish.

Jada: I feel excited. I want to know how Miss know this because I does be telling Miss how to say *Me llamo* and those things and she say “I know those too”, and plus you is we Spanish teacher and we does be excited to see you every morning.

Researcher: Okay. So that is Jada. And then Aarti, how do you feel about learning Spanish?

Aarti: I feel excited about learning Spanish because Miss continue telling we Spanish over and over, like *cero, uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis*, and those stuff. She want use to learn Spanish and we can speak Spanish to her.

Researcher: Okay. Great. And then we have Makaila.

Makaila: I feel great about Spanish because Spanish is a good thing to know.

Researcher: So Makaila, do you want to say something else? (Pause...) Jada?

Jada: I feel nice because you everything you get to say the Spanish words over and you have lots of chirren to help you and those sort of things.

Researcher: So here’s the next question for you, boys and girls. Do you think that it is ... okay how do you feel about learning Spanish and your other subjects? Do you think it is something good? Do you think it is something difficult to do along with learning the other subjects? Or do you think it helps you in your other subject areas? How do you feel about learning Spanish along with your other subjects?
Tyrell: I feel great. It not difficult. It easy to do with meh other subjects and Spanish, too.

Researcher: Okay. That was Tyrell who said he feels great about it and it’s not difficult. Next we have Taylor.

Taylor: I feel great, good to do Spanish every day.

Researcher: Okay. Do you have to worry about getting tested in it or you just learn to talk.

Taylor: We just learn to talk.

Researcher: Okay. So you don’t have any tests. So that makes you feel good. And Matthew. How do you feel about learning Spanish along with your other subjects?

Matthew: I feel good because Spanish is anodder subject at the same time and yuh ge’ing better at it every time.

Researcher: Okay. Tyrell wants to say something?

Tyrell: I want to say that how yuh could say your other subjects in Spanish when you learn Spanish every day. And Miss taught us Spanish and stuff and you could say Miss ask us questions about how to say Mathematics and Science and stuff.

Researcher: Okay. Next we go to Jada. Do you think that Spanish is something that it’s okay for you to learn along with other subjects.

Jada: Yes Miss. I find this is my favourite subject now that, if you go in ah Spanish country you have to speak Spanish and those things, and dat you will have yuh family, you could teach them how to say Spanish. You could teach yuh mudder, yuh fadder, anyone, and those things, and you could teach yuh new teacher in de Spanish country.

Researcher: Aarti, how do you feel about learning Spanish with the other subjects?

Aarti: I feel great about it. It’s not difficult or nothing. If you ask ah teacher how to say ‘What is the time?’ Like one o’clock and stuff? I forgot that part. I know the numbers and all those stuff.

Researcher: And Makaila?
Makaila: I feel great about learning Spanish because it’s not hard, it’s easy work.

Researcher: So in Spanish class I see that you sing, you speak, you pronounce and so on. What are ...give me some examples of some of the activities you do in class. So here we have Tyrell. What are some of the things you do in class, in Spanish that you enjoy doing?

Tyrell: I enjoy doing time, and saying meh name in Spanish. And enjoy saying meh age in Spanish.

Researcher: And Tyrell, do you use Spanish anywhere else?

Tyrell: Yes Miss.

Researcher: Where else do you say it or sing it?

Tyrell: Home.

Researcher: Who do you say it to at home?

Tyrell: Meh mommy. Ah does teach dem how to say it.

Researcher: You teach your mommy how to say it?

Tyrell: Yes Miss.

Researcher: And does mommy say it?

Tyrell: Yes Miss.

Researcher: And how does mommy feel about that?

Tyrell: She feels great about me learning Spanish.

Researcher: And what did she tell you about learning Spanish?

Tyrell: That how it feels good to learn about Spanish. Spanish is good.

Researcher: And Taylor, What are some of the things you enjoy learning in class?

Taylor: I enjoy learning to say meh name, say de time, count from one to ten and fifteen and them thing.

Researcher: And do you use your Spanish outside of the class?
Taylor: Yes Miss. Sometimes.

Researcher: Sometimes? Tell me where. Give me an example.
Taylor: Home by meh mom, meh dad, meh cousin.

Researcher: You tell your mom and dad what you have learnt in class?
Taylor: Yes Miss.

Researcher: What about singing the songs? Do you sing the songs anywhere outside of class?

Students (chorus): Yes Miss.

Researcher: Where?

Matthew: Yesterday we went an learn ah new song outside with Miss laptop. I like to sing the Spanish songs and ting, and sometimes Miss does bring she computer and leh we sing new songs.

Researcher: And what do you do with the songs? Do you sing it at home or do you sing it in class?

Matthew: We sing it at home sometimes.

Researcher: Do you sing it in school or do you tell your other friends in school who are not doing Spanish any of the things that you have learnt.

Matthew: I does tell them sometimes!

Researcher: Okay. Thank you, Matthew.

Researcher: How do you... what are some of the things you like to do in Spanish class?

Jada: I like to sing. I like to dance. I like to say the numbers. I love to say the clock in Spanish. Chi’rren does be asking meh “What time is dat?” I does be saying, “Dat time is eight o’clock. I does be saying, ‘Son las nuev’.... Ah does tell them in Spanish, ah does be saying, tell them in English.

Researcher: So what is the Spanish that you tell them?

Jada: Son las ocho. Dah mean is eight o’clock and yuh ha’ to go in yuh bed. And ah does tell dem, is son las nueve. An’ Miss does be telling us is so late because the chi’rren does be coming to school late an’ we does be saying it togedder before, and we does have fun togedder.
All we does do is have fun with our families, our teachers and our elders.

Researcher: Where do you have fun with them? Is it in Spanish class or in other classes?

Jada: Spanish class, at home and other classes.

Researcher: So Aarti, what are some of the things you like to do in Spanish class? What are some of the activities?

Researcher: I like to sing dance, play. Ah does tell meh mommy, Mommy, is time to wake up. Ah does go Spanish class with her. Sometimes, or her, we does be speaking in Spanish with our Spanish teacher. She does understand us. All she teach the rest of teacher, dey does forget and all those stuff.

Researcher: Okay. Makaila. What are some of the things you like to do?

Makaila: I like the songs. I like to dance and sing and do odder stuff in Spanish class.

Researcher: Is there anything you do not like to do in Spanish class?

All (chorus): No. No.

Researcher: That’s an easy one? You like to do everything?

Jada. Everything in class, but except for one subject I doh like.

Aarti: Saying yuh name in Spanish?

Jada: I don’t like Social Studies.

Researcher: Okay. Jada says she doesn’t like Social Studies. I want you to think carefully. If there is one word you can use to describe your Spanish class, what word would that be? Think about it. I’m going to start with Makaila this time. Makaila, are you ready? One word to describe Spanish class, what would that word be?

Makaila: It is fun.

Researcher: Okay. Makaila says it is fun. Matthew?

Matthew: It is great.

Researcher: Matthew thinks that Spanish class is great. And Taylor, what’s your word to describe Spanish class?
Taylor: Excited.

Researcher: Exciting. And Taylor?

Taylor: It is fun and it have, it have plenty of excitement to learn in Spanish class.

Researcher: Okay. Jada, what about you?

Makaila: Since yuh talking so much!

Jada: I love it because Spanish class is great, nice and ah first off a new subject. I find is fun, easy, not hard, but some chi’rren does say it hard. Fun easy, excited, you could learn to be togedder with the song, yuh could sing togedder with it, You could move with it and those set of things.

Researcher: Okay, and finally Aarti, how would you describe your experience in the Spanish class?

Aarti: It’s excellent! I love it!

Researcher: Is that your general feeling students, about Spanish?

All: Yes Miss.

Researcher: Your general feeling is that you...

All: Love it.

Researcher: Why do you like it?

Matthew: You get to learn new things.

Tyrell: You get to sing songs and you get to do the activities. Dance, sing, have fun.

Researcher: And what about the things, you get to use resources. What are some of the things you use in class?

Martin: Songs, de clocks, yuh using charts.

Researcher: Good. Do you get to draw in Spanish class?

All: Yes Miss.

Tyrell: We draw weself.
Researcher: And what about listening to music. Do you get to do that?
Matthew: Yes Miss. Miss bring she laptop and she borrow speakers from de computer class and she go somewhere quiet and we sing de song.

Researcher: Okay, so Matthew says that Miss brings her laptop, she borrows speakers from the computer class, she takes you to a quiet place, that means she doesn’t do it in the class. It would be noisy.

Taylor: It would disturb.

Matthew: Yesterday we went outside and we learn ah new song.

Researcher: Okay. So the overall feeling about Spanish is that you..? How do you feel about Spanish?

Jada: I love it!

Researcher: Is that how you all feel?

Jada: I love it. I want to carry it home, practise it every night, I want to say it in my dreams.

Researcher: (chuckles)

Jada: I want meh mommy and meh sister. Meh mommy does ask meh ‘What time it is?’ I’s tell she, "Son las ocho" and she does tell meh “ Ah does be late for work and all dem kind of ting.

Researcher: So would you all like to continue learning Spanish?

All: Yes Miss!

Researcher: And when you go to secondary school, would you love to do Spanish?

All: Yes Miss.

Jada: I love it!

Researcher: Why?

Matthew: Because you could teach others about Spanish.
Taylor: To say the time and thing.

Tyrell: Especially in ah Spanish country you could speak Spanish too. Many Spanish things you could say it.
Researcher: Okay. And Matthew says if you go into a secondary school and they ask you the time you would...

Matthew: Already know it.

Researcher: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you very much Taylor, Tyrell, Matthew, Aarti, Jada and Makaila. Thank you very much for chatting with me about Spanish and I hope your Spanish experience continues to be an enjoyable one. Great! Thank you again.
Appendix R
Sample Curriculum Officer Interview Transcript

December 20th, 2013. RCLRC, Couva

Researcher: So, I am interviewing Ms. Abigail Joshua (pseudonym), Curriculum Officer at the Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre, Couva, Trinidad. Could you tell me Abigail, in your view, what are the benefits, from a ministerial perspective, of teaching Spanish as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) at the primary level?

Abigail: Primary level is really the ideal time to optimize language learning, so having Spanish being taught at all primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago is going to be of tremendous benefit to the student, because when they reach into secondary school, it is now preparing them to be open to learning, to continue to learn the language in secondary school. In addition, because of our geographical position, learning Spanish in particular, is crucial and starting it at the primary level is of tremendous benefit to the Ministry of Education (MoE) in terms of long-term, what is going to happen to Trinidad, the education of our students in Trinidad and Tobago.

Researcher: Ok. And what has the Ministry of Education done, what has their role been in facilitating the implementation of Spanish at the primary level? Because first there was a draft curriculum for primary schools, so what did they do at that time with that draft?

Abigail: Ok. That curriculum was a specialist curriculum. It could have only been taught by people who were specialist Spanish teachers. But the curriculum that has been designed in this new primary curriculum rewrite is for the generalist teacher. So that the way it is written, in addition with the support material that goes with it, it is made so that every teacher, any teacher who can read, can teach the Spanish, so it will be for a generalist teacher. And we have to understand too that am, it is only recently that B. Ed students have been exposed to Spanish, teaching primary level Spanish so it will take a while before we have people who have had training in teaching Spanish. The primary school teacher, like who would have graduated 20 years ago.

Researcher: From training college?

Abigail: Right, who may have not done Spanish even at the Form 5 level, so the curriculum is designed for the generalist teacher.

Researcher: OK. Has the Ministry done anything like workshops to help these teachers?
Abigail: Ok. What has happened in terms of the Spanish, it is a decision that was taken. You know that there is going to be training in the various subjects, okay, am, we had opted to use an e-manual. Rather than go around, because of the number of us who are, who have the responsibility for training, it would have had to be the curriculum officers alone, so we opted, the Spanish unit opted to go the way of an e-manual which would have included an audio tape of vocabulary that is used, to give them ideas of methods etc. to use, but because of some glitches with media and the publication of that, it would have been an e-manual on cd form, on soft copy, so that is what is the problem now with that. So even though the idea is there, we have put everything in place, but it has not been sent out there.

Researcher: OK. And what role have you played in implementing Spanish at the primary level?

Abigail: Well, I was involved particularly on this project as a team leader for the Spanish writers. It would have been two of us together, but a lot of the responsibilities eventually, because the other person is the curriculum coordinator, she would have had other responsibilities apart from the writing of the curriculum. So I would have been there to edit lessons and that kind of thing, learning plans, part of the writing of the curriculum itself, I was involved in that. Am, my role is not specifically to edit Spanish lessons, but general. So it was a really fantastic experience. It was one that as a student of curriculum that I have appreciated, it has helped me tremendously, you know, doing it in theory at UWI is one thing, but actually being involved in writing curriculum is a fantastic experience, and anybody who is in love with curriculum, would welcome it.

Researcher: OK. And how do you think principals have responded to the implementation of Spanish at the primary level?

Abigail: Well, it has been a mixed reaction. I think the first thing is the fear that they do not have the manpower to deal with teaching Spanish, as I said, some of the teachers would not have done Spanish since secondary school, some of them never even did it for O’ levels. But the approach that we have taken in this matter of teaching Spanish is the FLES model, am, once we get that e-manual out and once we get it to them that anybody, any teacher can use this curriculum, it’s been very, very positive.

Researcher: Ok. And how have teachers in the school responded to the teaching of Spanish?

Abigail: I think they are excited; they are excited to learn it to, because for some of them it’s learning. And the way how we have done those unit plans for Spanish, they are very excited.

Researcher: What…
Abigail: My fear is that a lot of people have this idea that the Spanish that we have done in the curriculum is mostly oral.

Researcher: Yes, I see.

Abigail: We have opted to eliminate writing. And reading is only in so far as ahm, you might see something and be able to recognize that it’s Spanish. Not for the children to read, but we have this mindset that if we don’t write a language, it is not, children won’t remember it. Right, so we have to get it into the minds of the teachers that we do not need a copybook at all for Spanish.

Researcher: Yes, I see.

Abigail: You know, so that I think is the issue with teaching Spanish. But those with whom I have come into contact…there’s one of the writers who has a website and he was showing me some of the positive responses he got from teachers with regard to the teaching of Spanish—“excited about it”.

Researcher: Ok. That’s excellent. And are there any plans to evaluate how children view the learning of Spanish?

Abigail: Well, I don’t think so. Not from the Ministry’s point of view but I don’t see it as, I see it as something that could be done by a researcher, an M.Ed or something like that, somebody who has an interest in teaching primary school, am, teaching Spanish in the primary school.

Researcher: OK. So as far as you know, no such surveys have taken place.

Abigail: Not particularly to deal with the children. Not with the children.

Researcher: And, so do we anything about the children’s responses to the learning of Spanish in Trinidad?

Abigail: Only in so far as teachers tell you, as teachers report about what goes on in their class.

Researcher: And what have the teachers been saying?

Abigail: Fantastic!

Researcher: The children’s response is fantastic?

Abigail: Yes, excellent, and they love it.

Researcher: And from your perspective, how do you see the primary Spanish policy developing?
Abigail: Well, I can see it only getting am, improving, improving how we view languages. I see it as, in Trinidad, we don’t value languages.

Researcher: Foreign languages?

Abigail: I don’t think we even value English. We don’t value the humanities in general, as Trinidadians. I’m not too sure about Tobagonians, but I guess from the Trinidad point of view, we don’t value the humanities. They also look at languages, the first reaction people say is, “Children, people cyah even talk English, they want to teach them Spanish!” That’s the basic kind-a thing. But the research has shown that at the primary school level, is the best time for a child to learn languages. I see that the vision of the Ministry now is to that. So therefore it can only get better from now on. But the other point is that the rest of the education fraternity has to buy-in to it and to understand the rationale and the slant that we’re taking with this particular primary curriculum.

Researcher: Um. That’s true. And do you think there is anything that is needed to make the Spanish implementation at the primary school more effective?

Abigail: Well, definitely resources. We need the timely delivery of resources; we need the timely delivery of the documents because as I was explaining to you about the e-manual, had it been delivered in the time, then things would go as planned. So to me, these are the crucial, crucial points. Resources and documents to be delivered in time. Oh, and there’s one other thing. The way how the curriculum is designed, it means that the children must be engaged, be running around, jumping around, moving around. And I don’t think that our schools, many of our schools are constructed to take that kind of interaction. It is, ah, I mean, with the new Spanish, we have things like relays, vocabulary relays where they have to run and do something and that kind of thing, or move around. Our schools are not structured, most of our schools are not structured to deal with that.

Researcher: Uhm hmm. Because most of the schools have an open plan, with classrooms divided by blackboards and so on?

Abigail: Yes, divided by blinds and that kind of thing.

Researcher: Ok. And what plans are in place for the evaluation of the Spanish initiative?

Abigail: As I said, I don’t think that there is any, there is a, not specifically Spanish, but I know that the evaluation of the curriculum, generally, will come, because that is also part of curriculum, the managing of the curriculum, but to say specifically Spanish, not that I know of.

Researcher: Yes. O.K. Great. Thank you very much Abigail. You’ve been very, very helpful.
Appendix S
Sample Resources Used for Spanish Instruction- School A

Chart- Days of the week
Chart- Professions
Moving Colors

Color the pictures according to the words listed.

- verde
- rojo
- anaranjado
- blanco
- rosado
- amarillo
- negro
- azul
- café
- morado

What is your favorite color? (Answer in Spanish.) rojo, azul, verde.
el autobús

el tren
Water cycle worksheet
Appendix T
Sample Resources Used for Spanish Instruction - School B

Teacher created worksheet- Counting to ten
Emparejar Números

Unir los números con las palabras y con las imágenes:

1. tres

2. cinco

3. uno

4. dos

5. cuatro

6. siete

7. diez

8. nueve

9. seis

10. ocho

Teacher-created worksheet
¿Qué hora es?

Dibuja la hora y dibujar las manos en los relojes.

Son las nueve.

Son las tres.

Es la una.

Son las cinco.

Son las once.

Son las siete.
Teacher-created worksheets: Telling time to the hour.
Teacher-created clock resources
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