

## ABSTRACT

### CARICOM's Mandate for the Enhancement of Spanish at the Primary Level: An Analysis of Policy Implementation in Jamaica

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Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) issued a Mandate to member states for the teaching of Spanish to be enhanced in schools at the Primary Level (PL). This intrinsic, instrumental case study utilises a constructivist approach to analyse the implementation of the Mandate by Jamaica's Ministry of Education (MOE), the extent to which the teaching of Spanish at the PL in selected schools in Jamaica is guided by the ideologies that inform CARICOM's mandate, and the perceptions concerning sustainability in selected schools. Participants included two (2) Education Officers, nine (9) Principals and nine (9) teachers in selected schools at the PL, five (5) past student-teachers of Teachers' Colleges and two (2) lecturers. Data collection methods were predominantly one-on-one interviews, open-ended questionnaires and documents. Major findings reveal that the MOE employed two major channels of implementation: a pilot programme initiative and the training of PL Spanish specialists in the Teachers' Colleges, and successfully employed a top down implementation model in the first sixteen (16) schools that participated in the pilot programme, thirteen (13) of which have continued the Spanish programme up to 2015. The student-teachers highlighted areas of concern in the Spanish programme and were disillusioned as the promise of jobs was not sustained. Although analysis of selected PL teachers' perception of the ideologies uncovered concurrence for the most part, there was disagreement among some teachers as to whether the teaching of Spanish should begin at the Lower or Upper Levels of the Primary system. PL administrators' ideological stance and the visibility given to Spanish, among other indicators, have positively influenced sustainability of the Spanish programme in selected schools. These findings are expected to influence policymakers to enact changes for greater efficiency in policy implementation at the governmental and school levels, as well as teacher training at the PL.

Keywords: Nadine Karil Barnett; language education policy; Primary Spanish; Primary Primary Level; language ideology; enhancement; Jamaica; CARICOM