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# Introduction

After having traveled to Central Florida a first time in 2008, I was amazed by the amount of people who spoke Spanish everywhere I was going. My first thought was that it was a way of promoting tourism, since Orlando has many tourist attractions. I went back several times to the area, but not to the tourist spots as I had done; I noticed then that the use of Spanish along with other languages such as Haitian Creole or Vietnamese were largely widespread not only in the private area, but also in public places like stores, banks, restaurants, local administrations (i.e. USPS, USCIS, DMV).[[1]](#footnote-1) Indeed it is possible to spend a whole day in the area without hearing one single conversation in English. One explanation could be that, in counties like Osceola County, with a population with more than 50% of Hispanics, the local authorities might have enforced multilingual policies. I started investigating the legal grounds of Florida’s de facto multilingualism and my attention was drawn by the second section of the State Constitution, article 9, which stipulates that the only language recognized by the State of Florida is English. How could then Spanish or any other language be so present in everyday public life? What could explain the coexistence of English and other languages in the state despite this article? How could Florida possibly adopt this article in its constitution without facing obstacles to a full implementation? And if any, which obstacles is Florida facing in order to fully implement Article II Section 9 of their constitution declaring English the official language of the state? In order to verify this, I have read through different texts of laws and comments on them made by experts in the area of sociology and sociolinguistics; in addition to these readings I have tried to resume the main arguments explaining the adoption of this law, from a purely historical perspective as well as from a more structural and sociological one.

As I will demonstrate later in this paper, Florida is not the state with the largest Hispanic or Latino[[2]](#footnote-2) population. California has the highest percentage and number of Hispanics which would make it a very interesting case of accommodation of the Spanish language in public life. When looking deeper into the question of language recognition statewide, the case of California is very well documented at all levels (i.e. state, county and city) when it comes to language issues. But the specificities of Florida cannot be compared to California; as a matter of fact, the origin of the Hispanic populations as well as the reasons why they emigrated to California are different from the situation in Florida.[[3]](#footnote-3) This is why it is impossible to use California as an example representative for all other states having an important Hispanic population, though California has always been a laboratory for most activist groups trying to force English into all matters of public and private life.[[4]](#footnote-4) When looking for documentation about the language policies in Florida, I noticed that the case of Florida was partially covered at the local level; it is indeed very easy to find studies or research about the situation in Miami-Dade County, which has the most Hispanics, and which is the most homogeneous in terms of variety of minority groups – with a majority of Cubans. Nevertheless, Miami-Dade County does not represent the Hispanic mosaic of the rest of Florida, as I will demonstrate later. The particularity of Florida’s Hispanic population makes it therefore a more interesting and complex case to discuss than other states, as the context cannot be summed up to one major factor; indeed, in California or Texas the majority of the immigrants come from Mexico for economic reasons, whereas in Florida there is a lot of diversity within the community – Cubans and Venezuelans for political reasons, Puerto Ricans[[5]](#footnote-5), Dominicans and other Central Americans for economic reasons. The influence of immigration on Florida’s politics is therefore a different case to study; there are many divergent interests and motivations involved in the process of decision-making.

In the approach I am taking, I found interesting to use similar situations elsewhere, not only from the point of view of the origin of the foreign-language population (i.e. the fact that this population immigrated, rather than being a local ethnic one), but also from the institutional point of view (i.e. the way the federal state is organized and works). Most of the time, when experts discuss the issue of multilingualism in the US, the models they use as being fully comparable to the US are countries like Belgium, Switzerland or Canada. Nevertheless the issues experienced by these countries are far from being similar to the US. The only possible point of comparison is the federal system giving some freedom to the federal subjects to adopt specific accommodations in terms of language rights – though the exact nature of the different federal systems is not identical, like the dual-federal system in Belgium having territorial regions and linguistic communities overlapping one another. Never before the case of the US has been compared to Australia or Spain, which are the two examples I will use in this paper; the reason why I decided to use the examples of Australia and Spain is because both countries have had – or still have – multilingual issues with languages considered as foreign ethnic languages (i.e. not considered as languages spoken by historical ethnic groups).

When introducing races and languages in the US, it will be difficult to have the exact figures. There are two reasons for this. On the one hand, the US government does not make any difference between people of Latin American origin and people actually *speaking* Spanish.[[6]](#footnote-6) Therefore, when dealing with the Spanish language some official reports use the figures referring to the people regardless of the people’s mother tongue – English or Spanish[[7]](#footnote-7) – but only because these people are considered as Hispanics or Latinos. Some language studies centers, like the MLA or the Pew Research Center, have carried out surveys about language use at home and provide more accurate numbers; the figures showed on their reports compared with the Census figures about races confirm that there is a discrepancy between race and language spoken at home. This is also confirmed by several sociologists who showed that the community language is partially lost or abandoned from the second or third generation on (May 135);[[8]](#footnote-8) this process is called language shift.[[9]](#footnote-9) On the other hand, and as it will also be further explained later, when talking about the Hispanic population, two factors will influence the official figures: first, the fact that people can decide whether they consider themselves a Hispanic or Latino, and secondly the fact that a lot of Hispanic immigrants are illegally in the US and are generally not counted in the official figures (some surveys include estimates, but none are verifiable).

Throughout this paper, I will give more insight about the language question in the US, and more specifically in Florida. I will do so through the historical and structural context of the language policies in the country, the provision of actual figures about races and languages, the explanation of the past and current debates on the adoption of English-Only policies, and the influences operated by lobbies – both in favor of the minorities and in favor of the single-language policies. I will also bring some theories about socio-linguistics, especially related to language and status[[10]](#footnote-10) planning which I will use throughout the paper, develop the notion of official language versus national language; for the latter subject, I will explain when the term national language is preferred to the term official language. And finally I will try to link the situation of the language policies in Florida to other situations in the world, and I will see whether the way other countries or regions have acted benefitted the other cases or whether some adjustments needed to be brought to the original measures.

Concretely, in the first section – *Theoretical Framework* –, I will explain the approach I will use to discuss the subject of the paper, define what language planning and status planning are, elaborate and compare the notions of official and national languages, and explain what is meant by minority or community languages. This major section will refer to many sociological concepts which will be explained in each corresponding chapter. In the second section – *Historical and Demographical* *Context* –, I will place the context by developing the concept of official language in the eyes of the American tradition, giving figures about the Hispanic realities in the US and more specifically in Florida. In this major section we will deal with historical facts, official figures from the US Census as well as with various sociological research and some theories about language use among ethnic communities from immigrant descent. In the third section – *Lobbies, Debates and Other Influences* –, I will discuss the various influences and debates surrounding the issue of the official language question in Florida. I will talk in detail about the role played by the English-Only movement, focus on the English-Plus tendency gaining always more credit among the language specialists in the US – being linguists, sociologists or educators – and give the examples of two multilingual language approaches in other countries (i.e. Australia and Spain) in order to show that if clear explicit language laws are adopted, there is a lesser threat to social order and national cohesion. This major section will bring to light possible solutions for a multilingual approach of language policies in states like Florida. In the fourth section – *Language Policies* –, I will deal with the policies ruling the use of languages in the US; I will enumerate the major federal policies as well as the effects of some state or local policies implemented in Florida. In this section, I will be able to concretely show that very few restrictive policies based on the sole use of English are effective in Florida, despite the adoption of the official state language. Finally, in the final section – *Future of Spanish in Florida* –, I will show that Spanish can coexist along with English in Florida to the benefit not only of the population – whose language rights will be guaranteed – but also of the state – who will be more competitive in the national and international economy. I will also emphasize how important it is for social order and national cohesion that minority languages be maintained and valorized.

# 1. Theoretical Framework

To understand fully the theories which I will use when discussing the question of the languages in Florida, it is important to explain the different concepts at stake. I will start explaining the approach which I used in order to elaborate the development of this paper, then I will briefly introduce the notions of *language* and *status* *planning*. Following this part, I will deal with the terms *official/national language* and *lingua franca*. To close this chapter, I will talk about an important recurring matter throughout the whole paper: the *minority* or *community languages*.

# 1.1 Sociolinguistics: the historical-structural v. neoclassical approaches

In order to analyze the general context explaining the situation surrounding the adoption of an official language in Florida, I will use some sociolinguistic theories and approaches. Sociolinguistics describe “all areas of the study of the relationship between language and society other than those which are purely social scientific in their objectives, [and are therefore] intended to achieve a better understanding of the nature of human language by studying language in its social context, [and of] the nature of the relationship and interaction between language and society” (Trudgill, 2003: 123). There are different approaches in sociolinguistics, the two major ones being the *neoclassical* approach and the *historical-structural* approach. Generally speaking, the neoclassical approach is the dominant one when analyzing language policies; the historical-structural approach is an alternative one (Trudgill, 2000: 18). More specifically, the neoclassical approach focuses on individual linguistic decisions, whereas the historical-structural approach points out the constraints on individual decision making; the latter allows to explain language behavior and tries to resolve language problems facing individuals (Trudgill, 2000: 22). The historical-structural approach developed alongside the neoclassical one in order to add the environmental constraints and consider the context – political, social and economic – surrounding the issues faced by the individuals. The main differences between the two are listed by Peter Trudgill:

1. The unit of analysis used;
2. The role of historical perspective;
3. The criteria for evaluating plans and policies;
4. The role of the social scientist.

It is also important to note that each approach carries a powerful ideological orientation as to which extend the individual is or is not accountable for their personal situation (Trudgill, 2000: 31). In other words, while the neoclassical approach makes a direct link between the initial individual’s motivation and the result of the actions undertaken – in the case of our study, the fact that a person is able to speak a language after having followed the necessary classes –, the historical-structural approach focuses on the external constraints – being the cost of the classes, the schedules, place, personal family and/or professional situation, in our initial example – which would influence the result rather than on the direct connection between the motivation and the result. To sum up the main idea defining this concept, “the historical-structural model assumes that the primary goal of research and analysis is to discover the historical and structural pressures that lead to particular policies and plans and that constrain individual choice” (Trudgill, 2000: 32). This means that, when discussing the structural dimension of the problem, language policies are used by the dominant group as a mechanism to protect their interests and maintain the current situation. When analyzing the historical dimension of the situation, the approach examines the historical basis of such policies and the way in which they develop over time.

As we will see later in this paper, when it comes to the adoption of an official language through the historical-structural approach, the analysis of the situation in Florida allows to consider all the factors explaining why Florida has come to this situation. As a matter of fact when the relationship between the language policies and society needs to be understood and language policies have an impact on the social organization and order, the historical-structural approach prevails (Trudgill, 2000: 18). For instance, the fact that we associate full integration (i.e. social inclusion, professional success and economic betterment) with the proficiency or even mastery of English would deny the structural disadvantages facing minority-language speakers. Though immigrants truly want to learn and master English, their efforts to assimilate do not constitute a structural assimilation (Linton, 2004). If it were the case then African Americans – who have been speaking English for more than two centuries – would enjoy an ideal and advantaged situation within the American society (May 216).

# 1.2 Language planning and status planning

The activities of governments having to do with language are called *language planning*; if being more specific the terms *status planning* will be used when determining which role is played by which language in a given context (Trudgill, 2000: 132). Language planning refers to all decisions consciously taken about language issues to a pre-defined end; it can generate either from needs observed in society, or from demands addressed by the population, in particular by some component groups. Such decisions are seen as language planning if clearly identifiable and aimed at tackling a language-related issue or urgent problem. These policies establish which language varieties are used, when they are used and by whom, with the major purpose of improving communications and education; however they also influence *nationism* – i.e. the way in which a nation should be administered as a political and territorial unit – (Trudgill, 2003: 77, 92). Amy Liu calls it ‘language regime’ and defines it as “the set of rules that delineate which language can be used when and where” (Sonntag 44). Status planning will focus on the selection of a particular language or languages to become the national or official languages, and to which extend the policies defining this status will apply – i.e. in which areas – (Trudgill, 2003: 128). As we will see later in this paper, in the case of Australian language policies for instance, status planning brings a rational, comprehensive and as balanced as possible answer to the language issues; these qualities have been observed throughout the whole decision-making process. The policies will be implemented based on pre-defined context, being the federal nature of a country in the case of Australia (Lo Bianco, 1987b) or the US.

Robert Cooper divides what is commonly called language planning into three sub-categories, according to the stages of the process in which the policies fit: status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. While corpus planning (i.e. creation, modification and selection of forms of spoken or written language) and acquisition planning (i.e. teaching, learning and generally acquisition of a language) are closely linked to the very essence of the language itself, status planning is the “activities which include recognition by a national government of the importance or position of one language in relation to others” (Mac Donnacha, 2000). In the case of Florida where the presence of more than only one language is discussed in this paper, the status of these languages needs to be defined and framed, taking all of them into account in the general linguistic context of the state. Basing his theory on Cooper’s differentiation, Joe Mac Donnacha sees three levels in his model: status planning, language planning and functional language planning. In this paper I will focus on the status planning level, since I will not deal with the teaching, financial, human or grammatical resources incumbent to the other levels.

In language or status planning, policies are organized in two groups: implicit and explicit policies. Implicit policies are implied in the actions taken by society as a whole, most notably through the schooling system or through the general idea that some languages are worthier being spoken and used as dominant languages, or in some cases as *lingua francas.[[11]](#footnote-11)* In other words, such policies are induced from practice; they are *de facto* policies (Lo Bianco, 1987a). Such policies are uncoordinated, taken ad-hoc*,* and may distort language development in society. Unlike implicit policies, explicit policies involve consciously taken and instituted decisions. Only by explicitly naming them and adopting them, it is possible to modify or improve the policies after an evaluation has been carried out; when discussing the situation in the US, the conclusion is that the country has indeed adopted very few formal rules, and rather applied ad-hoc policies, being by tradition or by custom (Sonntag 45). In the case of language planning, the range is large and goes from the creation and fixation of orthography (i.e. language standardization through corpus planning) to the official status of languages in society or at school (i.e. status planning); explicit language policies are therefore not only sociopolitical, but also technical, linguistic, cultural, and educational (Lo Bianco, 1987b). Such policies affect the lives of linguistic minorities and impact them in their social, economic and cultural life as well; linguistic minorities forge their identity on language. Therefore, developing explicit language policies is a complex matter due to the constant shifts and modifications not only of language, but also of identification to the language; as Joseph Lo Bianco states, national identification is inherent to language and the slightest change in language policies or language itself affects the identification to it (1987b).

Until very recently, such policies, written as part of a country’s language planning, drew very little or no attention to the claims and needs of a targeted groups; minority language groups were hardly ever taken into consideration when evaluators started their work (Tollefson, 2011: 365). Only in the last decade have analysts performed what a historical-structural analysis, going beyond the simple neoclassical ‘cost-benefit’ analysis and including the targeted group variables (i.e. language spoken at home, economic context, legal situation). Involving people from the concerned minority groups represents a major asset to the making and later evaluation of the policies, especially in bilingual education (Tollefson, 2011: 372). [[12]](#footnote-12) Adopting policies within the frame of status planning is easy as long as the population univocally recognizes the major language or languages as being official and national (Mac Donnacha, 2000).[[13]](#footnote-13) In the case of Florida, status planning can be more complex, since many political, ethnic and social issues are involved. However, most governments are unlikely to actively involve the members of the minority communities in the preparation, decision-making or even analysis processes. For some experts, there is a link between language and power (May 4), which might explain why some governments deliberately chose not to work with linguistic minorities; as a matter of fact, many language policies are established to serve the mainstream dominant ideology in place – as has been the case in Britain with the Swann Report (Tollefson, 1991: 56). [[14]](#footnote-14) In the case of Florida, the wealthiest Hispanics are the first-generation Cubans,[[15]](#footnote-15) the ones who arrived in the 1950s. After the massive arrival of thousands of Cubans for economic reasons in the 1980s, the first-generation Cubans wanted to put socio-economic distance between the old community and the newcomers (Portes & Puhrman, 2015). As a result, and since they were mostly bilingual, the first-generation Cubans lobbied in favor of English-Only policies in the state.[[16]](#footnote-16)

# 1.3 Language statuses

# 1.3.1 Official language vs national language

As early as the Renaissance, the idea that one nation required one people and one language emerged. This language was to be called the nation-language (Joseph 22). Language and nation have long been very closely related, resulting in the adoption of language policies not based on functional criteria,[[17]](#footnote-17) but rather based on a symbolic value (Joseph 24).[[18]](#footnote-18) As a matter of fact, the state has always been involved in the matters of language, since the nation-building and political unity required the creation of a state language regime (Safran 253). This view is particularly true in US states like California, Texas or in our case Florida, where Spanish-speakers represent the majority of the population in some counties and cities;[[19]](#footnote-19) thus in such states, imposing a common language, being also the common language of the national administration, becomes crucial. Jan Blommaert describes the national language as “[one or a handful of] languages used in contexts related to the level of national symbolism”, whereas the official language is “used for practical purposes in administration, education, business and so on” (Mac Donnacha, 2000).

Another definition states that the official language is the language which must be used in government, law, education and other institutions, the status of which is defined by law, whereas the national language functions as the main language of a state, without reference to the status being set by law (Trudgill, 2003: 91, 99). In other words, the state can impose one or several official languages on all citizens and institutions, banning the use of other languages (Safran 253). Very often, when only one national language is involved, it is legitimated and institutionalized, usually to the exclusion of other languages (May 150), but not always, as we will see with the case of Australia; the language is formally recognized by the state and might get an official status, relegating other languages to the lower status (i.e. dialects in the case of different varieties of the same language). In both cases, the government decides which language is referred to as official and which one as national language of the state. When more than one language requires a status, the planning needs to be adapted for each language, following the three-level view of language planning, already discussed in the previous chapter (Mac Donnacha, 2000).[[20]](#footnote-20)

The establishment of a *common language*, being national or having the status of official language, is the representation of the dominant culture through language. The reason why a country or a state would have an established common language is symbolic: thereby the authority wishes to create a connection between the people and the state for effective membership and feeling of belonging to a common entity (Reilly, 2013). The contact between an advantaged national language and disadvantaged minority languages is therefore inevitable (May 309). Giving a language the status of national or official language – by law or by custom – grants it the language rights it needs to be not only the language of education, but also the language of the administration. Thereby this language is the language used to communicate with the public. This gives an advantage to the people already knowing this language (Joseph 55). Nevertheless, in the context of having minority-language speakers fluent in the dominant language and able to maintain their native language along with it, the adoption of a national language policy including the planning of accommodations for minority languages will result in a much more efficient and productive social mobility and inclusion of the minority groups (May 232). Constitutional recognition of more than one language at the state level is one way to protect minority languages which would otherwise be disadvantaged when in contact with the dominant language (Riley, 2013).

In the US, language rights have no formal or legal existence; most of the measures ruling the use of languages derive from the civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination (Sonntag 45),[[21]](#footnote-21) as was the case in the *Lau v. Nichols* case.[[22]](#footnote-22) Nonetheless, a bill declaring English as the national language (i.e. the common and unifying language) was approved by the Senate.[[23]](#footnote-23) Though it would have not imposed any restrictions on language usage, this act did not pass in the Congress due to the controversial immigration reform bill attached to it (Crawford, 2008). It was the first time that the US tried to pass a bill on a national language.[[24]](#footnote-24) However adopting a national language prevents the development of multilingualism (Joseph 44), since the status automatically denies any right of the other coexisting languages. In Australia, as we will see, English is not a *de jure* national language; nevertheless, the fact that the language policy puts the emphasis on its learning and mastering gives it the legitimation needed for it to be considered as *de facto* national language.[[25]](#footnote-25)

# 1.3.2 Lingua franca

The *lingua franca* is another concept which differs from the definitions of national or official languages and needs therefore to be explain in order to avoid any confusion. According to Amy Liu, lingua francas are spoken by many but are the mother tongue of only a few. Such languages are usually defined based on religious, commercial or colonial grounds (Safran 255). They are used among a group having no native language in common (Trudgill, 2003: 80). A lingua franca can also be an international language, serving the purpose of common understanding in a multilingual communication context (Trudgill, 2003: 65) – like French, German and English within the EU institutions, or Russian as language of interethnic communication in former Soviet republics. The denomination ‘lingua franca’ remains therefore mostly a *de facto* status rather than an official one. Based on the aforementioned descriptions, a lingua franca can be either an existing language, or an artificial one – called *pidgin –* (Trudgill, 2003: 80). Though the temptation of granting English more neutral status inherent to the term ‘lingua franca’, this denomination will not be used within the framework of this paper, as English does not fit the definition in the case of Florida or the US.

# 1.3.3 Minority languages and language shift

A minority language, also called community language or immigrant language depending on the context, is the language spoken by a linguistic community which is different from the language spoken by the majority – sometimes called dominant– group (Trudgill, 2003: 61, 82). In Australia, minority languages are referred to as *community languages*, and defined as the set of languages daily used for social, familial, cultural, economic and educational purposes, and being different from the dominant one (Lo Bianco, 1987b). [[26]](#footnote-26) They are predominant in urban areas with a long history of presence in the country. They are different from the main language spoken in the country and evolve along the national language.[[27]](#footnote-27) These languages are used by a wide number of citizens either as first or second language. Australia recognizes them and supports them through the National Language Act (Lo Bianco, 1987b), adopted in the late 1980s and revised in the late 1990s.[[28]](#footnote-28) In some cases members of the immigrant minorities do not use or even know their original language any longer; nevertheless they might still identify to it as part of their heritage, and might therefore consider it an associated language to the main language of the country or region where they live (May 135; Criado, 2004). This is due to the language shift; language shift, as opposed to language maintenance, is the process whereby a linguistic community – often a minority – gradually abandons its native language, shifting to another – often dominant – language (Trudgill, 2003: 78). Language shift is neither the result of ‘language murder’ from the dominant language, nor is it purely voluntary (May 146). Berzinger, cited in May (145) attributes it to four different factors: the contact between a minority language with a dominant one, bilingualism through the acquisition of the new language along with the maintenance of the original one, the limited use of the original language to certain situations and finally the shift from unstable bilingualism to monolingualism in the new language. Such a shift from a minority language to a dominant one is associated with progress and modernity (May 148); it is also associated with socio-economic aspirations (Joseph 48). However, as Stephen May claims it, “maintaining one’s minority language does not in any way preclude ongoing cultural change, adaptation and interaction”. By discerning language from ethnic identity, it allows to acknowledge that it is possible to be both Spanish-speaking and American in the case of Florida (May 8, 149); as already said, language is only one variable of ethnic or cultural identity.

As we have seen, when confronted to a dominant language, minority languages stop being used by the third-generation immigrants.[[29]](#footnote-29) If not maintained, these languages will be lost in the societies where they coexist with the dominant one. There are two solutions to this language loss: either the constant flow of immigrants speaking these minority languages – as is the case in Florida with Spanish being maintained by the successive waves of immigration from Latin America – or adopting explicit language policies in order not only to protect the minority languages, but also to maintain them among their native communities and to invite non-speakers to learn them; this has been done in Australia. When talking about language rights, John Joseph mentions the basic one which is the right for an individual “to use their mother tongue in public functions and to have their children educated in it, even though it is not the official or majority language” (54). In New Mexico, Spanish enjoys the same rights and status as English;[[30]](#footnote-30) such a recognition allowed the state to have its English-speaking teachers trained in Spanish in order to help the Spanish-speaking students, the posting of legal notices printed in Spanish, or simply during state and local elections.[[31]](#footnote-31) New Mexico is the only state in the US granting such extended rights to Spanish, and actively implementing them. Therefore Spanish is still widely spoken in the state, alongside English (May 212). May differentiates two types of minority languages: the national minority languages (i.e. the ones that are part of a national indigenous ethnic group) and the immigrant minority languages (i.e. the ones that are spoken by the immigrant communities). In his view, only national minority languages should be granted an official status and rights in a proactive way, whereas the rights for the immigrant minority languages should be based on tolerance, but specific to the private area (313). In this perspective, I do not agree with the distinction, as it is not relevant for the case of Florida, the non-English-speaking population of which is made up of immigrant groups, rather than indigenous people. The point May makes correlates with the way in which many European states have provisioned their national constitutions.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The solution of maintaining the use and the teaching of immigrant minority languages has been adopted by Australia after the publication of the Lo Bianco Report on the state of language policies in 1987.[[33]](#footnote-33) Therefore the role of the state is capital in the official recognition of a language and the acknowledgement of use within civil society (May 149). If minority languages get an official status and become legitimated by the state, they might survive as their speakers will not automatically make the choice of shifting to the dominant language (May 163), English in the case of Florida. This suggests that if minority languages get an official status, their speakers will keep speaking it and will not switch to English any longer, confirming the worst fear of the English-Only movement. However, as we have already seen, the balance between the number of minority language speakers and the number of English speakers among the population of Florida – and more generally of the US – as well as the importance of English at the national and international levels (in business, politics and culture) prevents any other language from supplanting it in the near future as dominant language of the country. [[34]](#footnote-34) As we will see in the rest of course of this paper, maintaining and encouraging the learning of new languages is an asset from which the state of Florida could benefit.

# 2.Historical and Demographical Context

In this part I will describe the historical context in which the question of the official language rouse in Florida; I will not only talk about the general issue of the official language in the US, but also show figures about the presence of Hispanics in the country and more specifically in Florida. This will set the frame of the whole discussion which will follow and will allow me to introduce the structural factors facilitating the adoption of the official language in the state.

# 2.1 The notion of official language in the US

In 1988, the State of Florida adopted a constitutional amendment on the official language of the State. This amendment was first publicly approved by referendum – 84% of the population was in favor of this amendment (Nunberg, 1989). The state submitted the amendment to a popular vote because the previous legislatures failed in adopting it at the state Senate (Linton, 2004). Raymond Tatalovich lists four criteria which, independently considered, could explain why a US state might adopt an official-English amendment (Schildkraut, 2001): firstly, if it is a southern state, where anti-minority tradition due to massive waves of immigration prevails; secondly, if the state has an important proportion of immigrants among the population[[35]](#footnote-35); thirdly, if the state’s population is more conservative; finally, if the administration is Republican at the time when the debate arose. When the amendment was adopted in Florida, all of these criteria were fulfilled, explaining why the adoption was possible.

Article II section 9 of Florida Constitution states that:

(a) English is the official language of the state of Florida.  
(b) The legislature shall have the power to enforce this section by appropriate legislation.

Florida is no exception within the Union; as a matter of fact the question of the official language in the United States is not a new concern. Though the question of languages in the US has never been central to the creation of the American identity (Safran 255; Kaplan, 2015) – with the exception of the current debate about American identity –, the subject was already discussed by the Founding Fathers, preoccupied by the high-scale immigration from Germany which had already started at the beginning of the seventeenth century in towns such as Jamestown, Virginia. In the nineteenth century they had settled in the northwestern part of the USA, from Wisconsin, and later Nebraska, to New York and Pennsylvania. Germans constituted the first minority group in the country, making up to 9% of the total population by the end of the eighteenth century (May 208).

Benjamin Franklin was convinced that German newcomers represented a threat to the Colonies; he believed that Germans would never fully integrate linguistically nor socially, as they always remained within their ethnic community. He wanted them to mix with the ‘local’ populations (i.e. French, Dutch and English) and to learn English in order to avoid what he thought would become political chaos. Franklin was one of the first politicians in American history to raise the idea of imposing an official language, even though he was behind the many laws to accommodate German language in public life (i.e. school, administration, church, politics) (Rumbaut, 2009); in the first half of the nineteenth century German was allowed in instruction in public schools, though the language did not have any official status in the country (May 211). However most US founders disapproved of language legislation despite the fact that all acknowledged the advantage of English as the unifying language; President John Adams actually believed it was important for a nation to have a common language and thought English should become the common language of the US (Kaplan, 2015). The first leaders agreed on the fact that the government should not play any role in language regulation at the federal level. On the other hand some thought about replacing English – the language of the British Crown against which the Colonies fought – with another language: German, French, Greek or even ancient Hebrew as an official language (Crawford, 2008).

From then on language became a political concern and a serious matter in former colonies such as Louisiana with the status of French, Florida and the southwestern states[[36]](#footnote-36) with the question of Spanish. Soon after the Purchase,[[37]](#footnote-37) Louisiana became the first state of the country to be bilingual (French and English) – de facto. In 1812 when Louisiana was officially part of the Union, most people in the state were French speakers (May 208); from then on, English was required to be used for official records (Riley, 2013), but not as the only language. As a matter of fact, Louisiana’s laws and official public documents were published in French, and French along with English were both used in the legislature and the court until the Civil War (May 210). Governor Jacques Villeré as well as many other officials of the early nineteenth century spoke only French. In the northern states,[[38]](#footnote-38) laws and official communication were translated in German. They were also translated into other minority languages like Welsh or Norwegian, used among the newcomers. In California the 1849 constitution even required all statuses to be translated into Spanish.[[39]](#footnote-39) Until the mid- and late nineteenth century, Spanish was the language of administration in more than half of what is now the US; as a matter of fact most of the current US was at that time a Spanish colony, later becoming part of the Mexican territory before being incorporated to the US by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (May 208). The first major concerns about multilingualism emerged much later, in the 1880s, at a time when the immigration waves became so important that it led to the creation of many anti-immigration lobbies and groups; the Americanization movement was born and gained power at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the breakout of the First World War. This movement based on symbolic patriotism expressed the fears Americans felt towards the massive waves of immigration from Europe and called for the assimilation of these immigrants (Aronovici, 1921; Crawford, 2004).

After WWI, many states issued laws restricting – or even banning – the use of German (Nunberg, 1989) in the public area (i.e. in schools, in church, on the streets, on the phone), due to the post-war trauma and paranoia. Though mainly focused on the sole use of English, these regulations threatened all the minority language groups. The explanation put forward at the time was the question of national identity (Nunberg, 1997) and national unity (Crawford, 2004). Since the end of the nineteenth century, the US have always used the concept of the official language as means for conveying the national ideology; this was closely linked to the notion of Americanism – the feeling of belonging to the American nation. However, with the important waves of immigrations in the twentieth century, Americanism in its cultural perspective needed for political unity was threatened, and politicians were fearing a loss of national identity. Nevertheless the question of official language has never been risen to a public debate, since English has always been the major unique dominant language of the US and supported by the international rank of the language (Nunberg, 1997). It happened in 1920 when the state of Nebraska adopted a new law imposing English as the official and only recognized language statewide (Riley, 2013).[[40]](#footnote-40) The reason was that more than half of the state population was German or from German descent and could have claimed German to become official; in fact a lot of Anglo-Saxon Americans were convinced that people from German descent felt pro-German during the war, or *un-American* to them (May 211; Nunberg, 1997). It was therefore a way of asserting the US victory on the German Reich by imposing English as the official language.[[41]](#footnote-41) Nebraska became the first American state having adopted an official language; the law made illegal any public intervention in another language than English and even prohibited the teaching of German at school before the eighth grade, even though the Supreme Court judged the law illegal.[[42]](#footnote-42) The *Meyer v. Nebraska* ruling was a precedent when it came to private minority-language education; it made official that private institutions could still teach in a language other than the state’s official one, despite the fact that a state would adopt an official language – which would affect the language of education in public schools (May 213). After Nebraska, other states adopted an official state language (like California, Florida, Arizona, Utah or Colorado[[43]](#footnote-43)), whereas only one opted for two official languages: Hawaii (English and Hawaiian). Furthermore, many states unofficially recognized two or more *de facto* languages, like Louisiana with French, or New Mexico with Spanish.[[44]](#footnote-44)

As seen, all these decisions have been taken at the state level. The US Constitution explains the organization of the federal system and gives details on the breaking down of the different powers – or *devolution.* Therefore each state can freely adopt its own constitution as long as its provisions are compatible with and do not contradict the federal constitution. It is also important to bear in mind that a considerable number of powers are held by local communities (i.e. counties, cities, towns) complicating the system and very often leading to many inconsistencies within the same state. Some fundamental rights have even been officially granted to the states or to the local authorities (Cohen, 2008). For example, the federal state directs the major programs and subsidies in education, however the school system is managed at the state level, with a number of decisions taken at the county level. Furthermore, article 9 of the Federal Constitution establishes the constitution itself, the federal laws and treaties as the supreme law of the land, meaning that if state constitutions do not go along with everything stated in the federal constitution, it is not considered as valid or legally applicable. As early as 1819, the Supreme Court case *McCulloch vs Maryland* was a landmark decision in terms of conflict between the federal and state levels. In its decision, the Supreme Court acknowledged that in case of conflict between the federal level and a state, the federal laws would have supremacy on the state laws; a state cannot take action impeding federal exercises provided by the US Constitution (Branaa 106).

For all these reasons, the question of the adoption of an official language might be raised, knowing that the law could not be enforced at all levels. When reading the above information, one could wonder why a state would adopt an official language if the implementation of this official use can be blocked by federal provisions. The federal constitution is in charge of establishing the federal education programs and delegates their organization to the local levels; in this optic, how will the Florida amendment on the official language have any practical effect? Are there any philosophical, ideological, economic, cultural or even political reasons for the adoption of the state official language, which can easily be countered by the Supreme Court in case of conflict between the state level and the federal level? This research paper will focus on the situation in Florida by using the historical-structural approach. Throughout the whole paper, I will bring clues as to why the adoption of the English-Only amendment was central in the political debate in Florida, which are the factors and motivations facilitating the decision-making process of this amendment and what are its practical effects in everyday life.

# 2.2 Hispanic immigration and population in Florida

# 2.2.1 Use of the terms ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’

As an introduction to this chapter, it is important to discuss the denomination of people from Latin American background. This terminology has long been a serious matter of debate at the US Senate. Categorized as 'White' with all other groups as opposed to 'Black' in the 1920s, 'Mexicans' in the 1930s – regardless of their actual country of origin – it is only in the 1940s that the link with the Spanish language is made when selecting the category, thereby excluding people from Latin American descent who did not speak Spanish any longer. The Senate agreed first to use the term ‘Hispanic’ in all the official documents, starting with the 1970 census, referring to people coming from any country influenced by Spanish culture (i.e. countries where Spanish is an official language or widely spoken, including Spain). This terminology was accepted by the Senate after Hispanics were considered an official group within the American population. The term was used in the institutions in order to determine the specific needs of the Spanish-speaking community in the USA.[[45]](#footnote-45) However, within the very same community, the term ‘Hispanic’ was – and still is – very often rejected as being too closely related to Spain and to the colonial past of Latin America; for its detractors, this term was too euro-centric. They preferred to use the term ‘Latino’, which reflected from their point of view the linguistic character of the categorization. Nevertheless, Italians, Romanians, French, Portuguese and Brazilians – who linguistically belong to the Latin world – are not supposed to fit into this category since they do not speak Spanish; they should rather be associated with the White Anglo-Saxon majority. This is the reason why the use of the term 'Latino' is also criticized. Since 1997, both terms – Hispanic and Latino - have been officially recognized by the federal government[[46]](#footnote-46) and can be used indifferently. However none of these terms refer to a race, but rather to an ethnic group or cultural sub-category unrelated to race; it is a matter of language, origins or descent.[[47]](#footnote-47) This is the reason why a Hispanic is also White, Black or Native American.

There is still a problem remaining with this terminology. The denominations ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’ qualify people from Latin American background who – presumably – speak Spanish. Nevertheless the facts show that many people from the second or third generation of immigrants[[48]](#footnote-48) do not speak the language which the first generation used any more, even though some counterexamples suggest that there are exceptional cases – like Chinese (Wiley, 1998).[[49]](#footnote-49) Indeed figures about Hispanics in the US have shown that there is no correlation between language and ethnicity, and “linguistic differences do not always correspond to ethnic ones” (May 129). The terminology is therefore erroneous since it does not reflect the reality which it should qualify. When exposing the numbers and facts about the Spanish speaking population, the term ‘Latino’ can be used to refer to people from Latin American background, and ‘Hispanic’ when dealing with Latinos actually speaking Spanish.[[50]](#footnote-50) However, these new meanings, supposedly reflecting the linguistic and ethnic reality among the US population as precisely as possible, are not acknowledged by the federal authorities. As a matter of fact official documents use these terms indifferently, keeping the denomination Hispanic as being the original one created by the government, and Latino being the one advocated by the communities’ elites. For the sake of clarity, we shall use *Hispanic* rather than *Latino* when referring both to people from Latin American background and non-Anglo citizens speaking Spanish; the preference for the term Hispanic is given based on the etymology of the word (i.e. a person speaking Spanish) and the focus of this being on language uses, and also based on the fact that, though the majority of Hispanics in the US do not give much importance to the use one or the other term, those who do prefer the denomination *Hispanic.*[[51]](#footnote-51)

# 2.2.2 Spanish speakers in the US and in Florida

Hispanics actually speaking Spanish represent more than 17% of the whole US population; they are the first minority in the US. In 2016 the US Census database estimated their number to be more than 57 million,[[52]](#footnote-52) making the US the second country in the world with the largest number of Spanish speakers after Mexico – with about 122 million, representing almost the country’s entire population. More than half of the Hispanics (54%) in the US live in only three states: California, Texas, and Florida; in these three states Hispanics make up a quarter of the total state population or more (respectively 38.9%, 39.1% and 24.9%).[[53]](#footnote-53) In New Mexico they even make up 48% of the entire population.[[54]](#footnote-54) According to survey released in 2015, about 20% of Florida’s total population speak Spanish at home; with more than 3.6 million Spanish-speaking people Florida is the third US state with the largest amount of Hispanics among its population in the US.[[55]](#footnote-55) As a comparison, Florida counts even more Spanish speakers than the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico – which is almost exclusively Spanish-speaking. However, Hispanics in the US do not represent a majority in any state and therefore cannot impose or even have a major influence on state politics – cultural or linguistic (Cohen, 2008).

The number of non-English native speakers in the US has more than doubled in 30 years, as well as the amount of those speaking English “very well”. Their number is constantly growing and it is therefore erroneous to think that English as the majority language in the US is under threat (Crawford, 2004). As early as 1973 a study revealed that a vast majority (more than 80%) of the first-generation Hispanic immigrants used only Spanish at home, whereas this figure was totally reversed by the third generation – more than 80% spoke English at home (Criado, 2004). The language shift takes place during the second generation, especially among the men (Rumbaut, 2009). A later study showed that 94% of Hispanic and Asian children of immigrants know English well, but only 44% know their parents’ language; 72% prefer to speak English (Portes & Hao, 1998, later verified by Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Finally, in 2004 the Pew Hispanic Center published a survey carried out in 2002 on language shift; the result showed once again that the language shift takes place in the second generation, with the highest number of Hispanics describing themselves as bilingual (47%).[[56]](#footnote-56) As a matter of fact immigrants nowadays learn English much faster than a century ago,[[57]](#footnote-57) and their children and grandchildren tend to be totally English-proficient when schooled in the US (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017). All this confirms what has already been said before about the choice of second-generation people from foreign descent to prefer English to their parents’ mother tongues. Two major factors explain this shift: the will to integrate for achieving a better socio-economic situation and the social pressure put on those individuals by a dominant English-speaking society (Criado, 2004). Some second-generation immigration groups also make the choice to racially or ethnically define themselves as part of the mainstream (i.e. White-Anglo) in order to facilitate their transition and integration (Portes & Rumbaut 45); this is the case for some Hispanics. In the US the Hispanic population is growing very fast and represents approximately 17.8% of the American population; nowadays Hispanics are the second largest ethnic group in the US after the White.[[58]](#footnote-58) The Census Bureau projects that there will be about 116 million Hispanics in the US around 2050; note that these estimates change every few years based on the data which the Census Bureau publishes.[[59]](#footnote-59)

The number of people of Latin American descent in the US is clearly higher than the Spanish-speaking population for two reasons: according to Rumbaut, the last generation of Latin American immigrants tend to lose their roots, including traditions and language,[[60]](#footnote-60) or to speak a hybrid language that is neither considered as Spanish or English (i.e. Spanglish[[61]](#footnote-61)). Citing some research carried out over a decade in the nineties among immigrant groups in southern California and southern Florida – areas with a dominant Hispanic community – Rumbaut claims that despite their important number, Latin Americans were also concerned by the loss of Spanish, even if this happened over a longer time than for some Asian communities (Rumbaut, 2009). This is corroborated by Veltman who claims that, despite some religious exceptions, no immigrant minority group has ever preserved its language longer than two or three generations.[[62]](#footnote-62) Several studies have shown that ‘Anglicization’ is a completed process by the third generation (Rumbaut, 2009).

The second reason is the very large number of Hispanics who are Mexican Americans (i.e. *Chicanos*[[63]](#footnote-63) particularly in the Southwest), sometimes born on US soil, but whose ancestors were born on Mexican lands before the Cession (New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, and Nevada) or Annexation (Texas) of Mexican territories by the US administration in the mid-nineteenth century;[[64]](#footnote-64) in several areas of the Southwest, some Mexican families have been living there longer than American ones. Many white Americans feel that Mexicans in the Southwest should assimilate and adopt the values, tradition and language of the majority; though many Mexicans use English at home and almost totally lost the ability to speak Spanish – especially the third and later generations of US-born Mexicans –, they usually work hard to preserve their cultural and linguistic identities (Gershon & Pantoja, 2011). Such practice is observed in other minority groups as well, like the Italian Americans, who end up speaking ‘broken’ Italian after a few generations (Joseph 59). This can also be compared to Central and Eastern European countries: Trudgill gives the example of Romania,[[65]](#footnote-65) where border changes have led to the situation where the country has fourteen native languages (2000; 122), most of which being officially recognized. In the US, only one state has adopted language policies considering this notion of border changes; though having adopted English as the official language, New Mexico recognizes many rights to Spanish on the grounds of border changes. As a matter of fact, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, more than half of the population in the newly acquired territory spoke Spanish; therefore the state now recognizes and uses both Spanish and English as languages of the state government, since Spanish is considered a historical local language, and not an immigration one (May, 212).

The balance of Spanish speakers in Florida is not comparable to New Mexico; the historical situation neither. As already expressed in percentage, Hispanics represent today more than 5.1 million people in Florida,[[66]](#footnote-66) mainly settled in Dade County (around Miami) – where more than two thirds of the population is Hispanic –, and in the I-4 corridor[[67]](#footnote-67) – between Central Florida (i.e. the Orlando metropolitan area) and the Gulf Coast (i.e. Tampa Bay metropolitan area). The data shows that Hispanics live mainly in urban areas. Indeed the rural Hispanic population is below the state average. Finally the latest census shows that most of the Hispanics live in the southern part of the state, below the I-4 corridor. As we will see in the next section, different communities live in Florida, and sometimes within a given territory; though Cubans represent the largest share of the Hispanic population in the South, other Hispanics from the Caribbean – predominantly from Puerto Rico – live in the central part of the state.

# 2.2.3 Waves of Spanish-speaking immigration

The situation with Hispanics in Florida and the context in which Hispanic families arrived in the state differ from the southwestern states, and this is mostly due to historical reasons. Florida was the first North American territory where the Spaniards landed; in 1513 Juan Ponce de León – a Spanish explorer later appointed Governor of Puerto Rico by the kings of Spain – landed in a whole new land near the current city of Melbourne, Florida, while in search for rejuvenating waters.[[68]](#footnote-68) He called it ‘la Florida’ (i.e. the Flowery Land) because the vegetation was in bloom. Later, many other expeditions led the Europeans – including the French who founded Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River – to explore the coasts of Florida. One of these expeditions allowed the most experienced Spanish admiral at that time, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, to establish the settlement of Saint Augustine in 1565. Saint Augustine was then the capital of the de facto territory of the Spanish territory, stretching then from the Keys to Newfoundland, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Prairies. However, very quickly and due to the rapid expansion and development of the British, French and Dutch colonies, the Spanish eastern dependency was confined to the current territory of Florida. Over a century the Spaniards built more than thirty towns and missions across the state. Nevertheless, they could not survive without the help of the Mexican colony of New Spain on which they depended; indeed, each year the Spanish administration in Mexico City had to send the ‘situado’ (i.e. an economic subsidiary of cash, food and supplies). Despite the fact that Florida was originally a Spanish dependency, most of the current Hispanic population comes from Latin American immigration. Less than 1% of the population is from Spanish descent, and most of them are also immigrants from the early twentieth century.

There are many Hispanic groups in Florida, and the largest of them is Cuban. Cubans started settling in Florida in the late nineteenth century, particularly on the western part of Florida, near Tampa or on Key West. Indeed Cuban entrepreneurs founded their cigar factories in these regions and attracted a lot of Cuban workers. The cigar-factory workers were the political, economic and intellectual elite from the island, having fled from the Spanish authority in Cuba. They only wanted to stay in Florida for a few years and wished to go back to the island once the Spaniards would leave their homeland. Once free to express themselves, they organized in political action groups and created a whole Spanish-speaking network for propaganda involving arts, like theatre with political connotations. At the end of the 1890s they even created an exiled revolutionary government in Florida, supported by Washington. Between the island's independence in 1898 and the 1958 revolution, only Cuban businessmen settled down in Florida and created new businesses on the continent. They left the island as tourists and decided to remain in Florida for economic purposes.

The first major wave of Hispanic immigration began in the 1950s, after Fidel Castro and Che Guevara established a communist system in Cuba. The first wave was exclusively made up of political refugees, fleeing from Cuba to Miami because of the geographical proximity with the island. Many Cubans from the middle and upper classes fled to the South of Florida. These families settled in the Miami-Dade County, started new lives there, and led anticommunist campaigns in Florida. Only the 1950s political apathy in the US could allow so many Cubans to easily and almost freely settle down in the US. At that time, about 125,000 Cubans would leave the port of Mariel in Cuba for the American coasts. Between 1959 and 1962 an estimated 250,000 middle-class Cubans were living in Miami. Even though they came from wealthy and educated families they lost everything in exile. The federal government granted the refugees assistance with finding a home and a job (Habel 76).

From the mid-1960s a lot of political refugees coming also from Cuba arrived in Miami and helped in the ‘Hispanization’[[69]](#footnote-69) of the whole region; one of the manifestations of Hispanization was the creation or re-creation of new neighborhoods, new ghettoes, in the traditional sense, such as Little Havana. Florida asked for an even repartition within the US to avoid this explosive population – often considered as dregs of society – to be omnipresent in southern Florida's everyday life. The federal government tried to make Cuban refugees leave southern Florida, and in general the whole state, but it was a failure. From 1965 to 1973 300,000 Cubans arrived in Florida because of the Cuban law reopening the island to family reunion. Indeed Castro's Cuba prevented citizens from fleeing out of the island; they could not officially leave the country for the US. This was the beginning of the second wave of Hispanic immigration to Florida (Habel 77). This new generation integrated more easily thanks to the many well-established – and tested – governmental programs, despite the refugees' background. The Cuban community was self-sufficient since the newcomers settled in areas already populated by Cubans and worked in Cuban factories or corporations. The key to Cuban success has been to recreate a mini Cuban society within Florida, where money and wealth had a central role. Some neighborhoods in Miami were and still are overpopulated by Cubans. This is the case of Hialeah: among its more than 200,000 inhabitants, almost 95% are Hispanic according to the 2010 census. This influenced the toponymy with names of places locally recognized (like Miami's 8th Street becoming *Calle Ocho*). With newcomers arriving in Miami, older immigrants moved to areas in the periphery, like Hialeah or Coral Gables, which became rich Cuban neighborhoods. However, the constant flow of Cuban immigrants in the 1970s and the growth in proportion of lower-class and less-educated Cubans among them constituted a threat to self-improvement among the community. Data at that time showed greater pauperization and an increase in delinquency and criminality in the Cuban community. The Cuban immigration switched from being a ‘model minority’ to another third-world group among many others; consequently, the first-generation immigrants distanced themselves from the new-coming ones, creating a major socio-economic gap within the community (Portes & Puhrmann, 2015).

The third wave of immigration began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a lot of people from Central American states – El Salvador or Nicaragua –, from the North of South America – Colombia or Venezuela –, and from the Caribbean – Dominican Republic – arrived in Florida, settling down in many areas like Southern or Central Florida. Therefore, Miami became the capital of the “Hispanic USA” with the creation of American TV channels in Spanish, trade banks or movie production agencies. By 1980 Hispanics represented 60% of the entire Miami population. Miami became the second largest Cuban-inhabited city in the world after Havana. In 1980 started the last large wave of Cuban immigration. More than 100,000 Cubans landed in Florida; but a part of them were thrown away because American officials found out that they had criminal records in Cuba (Habel 77).

There has also been a constant flow of non-Cuban Hispanic migrants since the 1950s in Florida; for some of them, experts disagree in using the term ‘immigration’ since we are dealing with US nationals: the Puerto Ricans who are American citizens by birth. Puerto Ricans have frequently left their island to move to Florida; the proximity between the territories and the similar climate conditions make it easier for them to accommodate. In recent years a lot of Puerto Ricans from New York[[70]](#footnote-70) came to Florida to find a new path in their lives. ‘True’ Puerto Ricans (i.e. directly coming from the island) and New Yoricans prefer not to be assimilated; the two communities carry different values through different backgrounds. Indeed most of the New Yoricans from the second and third generations do not speak or only speak very little Spanish and are proud to come from New York, whereas “true” Puerto Ricans still communicate mostly in Spanish, being their mother tongue, and feel nostalgia for their island. The reason why Puerto Ricans do not feel the same urgency and pressure in learning English – when they do not speak English – is because being American citizens from birth does not oblige them to assimilate in order to get any official document; they are free to travel and to move wherever they want within the USA (Linton, 2004). Today, in some areas of Central Florida, Puerto Ricans (from New York and from the island) represent the largest minority group. This is especially true since hurricane Maria devastated the island and pushed thousands of islanders to flee to Florida.[[71]](#footnote-71) The important share of Puerto Ricans in some counties is a capital fact when it comes to political action (i.e. voting and being represented in elections). Their voice is also more likely to be heard when it comes to speaking out for their language rights in the policy-making and decision-making process.[[72]](#footnote-72)

# 3. Lobbies, Debates and Other Influences

In this section I will elaborate on the different debates surrounding the question of the official language; more specifically I will present the different claims coming from the minority groups, explain the notions of English-Only and English-Plus policies and finally I will give two examples of legislations which have proven to be open to multilingualism, though in different ways the one from the other. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the public debates influence the policies adopted and how other countries have tackled the issue of multilingualism.

# 3.1 Minority groups' claims and influence on the public debate

Spanish is the non-English language that has been preserved the best in the US among the immigrant communities; as already explained this is due to the high number of their population in the US and to the constant flow of immigrants coming from Latin American countries. Furthermore the Hispanic community has been able to maintain Spanish in public life through the different media like television and radio; the use of Spanish instead of English as language of public communication has become an important marker of identity not only among the average Hispanic population, but also among Hispanic politicians (Linton, 2004). Many non-profit institutions are also targeting a dominant Hispanic public and raise concerns shared by the whole community; by doing so, they encourage people to relate to the claims raised by the organizations. As a result, more Hispanics identified themselves as being part of this cultural group since the 1990 census campaign. The growing number in the Hispanic community as a whole gained visibility and therefore legitimacy in claiming rights. But the conscience of a common interest and the awakening of a sense of community started with the creation of nationwide organizations. From the 1930s onward, LULAC (the League of United Latin American Citizens) has motivated Hispanics to vote for their representatives and elect people representing their interests. Between the 1940s and 1960s many other organizations were established with the same goals as LULAC (like the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund or MALDEF, the National Council of La Raza or NCLR, and later the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials or NALEO). These organizations pushed the Hispanics to take part in the national and local political debates, to vote and sometimes to apply for the American citizenship, in the case of immigrants. The implication and concern of Hispanics in politics coincide with the application of the amended Voting Rights Act (1975), permitting the translation of the ballots in Spanish in districts with an important Spanish-speaking community.[[73]](#footnote-73) Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the adoption of the different federal acts establishing multilingualism (like the Bilingual Education Act or the Voting Rights Act) is not the result of the minority groups’ mobilization and demands but, rather, the outcome of law-makers’ decisions in the broader context of the civil rights movement (Sonntag 45).

The fact that about 500 jurisdictions (or electoral districts) offer translations of the complex ballot measures and election procedures allow non-native English speakers to get fully involved in local, state and federal elections. Not to mention the large number of US-born nationals from Puerto Rico or from Native American descent who do not have enough knowledge – or even no knowledge at all – in English to understand the complexity of the system (Combs & Nicholas, 2012); the authorities cannot prevent them from being aware of their public responsibility as voters. Thanks to the expansion of their political representation and to the new organization of the districts (i.e. creation of the *minority-owned constituencies*),[[74]](#footnote-74) 17 Hispanics were elected in Congress during the general election of 1992, breaking thereby a new record. States which were not known for their Hispanic population got Hispanic representatives in Congress (like New Jersey or Illinois). For example, in 1998 Mexican Americans were elected vice-governor and president of the Assembly in California.

In Florida, the first Cuban-born mayors were elected in towns and cities of the Miami-Dade County in the 1980s (Portes & Puhrman, 2015). It is important to point out that at the federal level today one of the two US senators for the State. Both are from Cuban descent. At the House of Representatives 4 out of the 27 seats for Florida were held by people from Hispanic descent; only one of them was not from Cuban descent but from Puerto-Rican descent. This shows clearly that the representation is still not proportional (1 out of every 4 inhabitants in Florida is Hispanic, but only 1 out of every 9 representatives is Hispanic), but we need to highlight the fact that the situation is better than 10 years ago, when only 2 Hispanics were representing the State at the Congress. At the state level, the President *Pro Tempore* of the State Senate and the State Lieutenant-Governor are Hispanic, but only about 10% of the 40 senators are from Hispanic descent. At the State House of Representatives, the Speaker *Pro Tempore*, the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader are from Hispanic descent as well. In the hemicycle, the representatives from Hispanic descent represent about 16% of the members, which is still not proportionate but comes closer to the proportion of Hispanics in the overall population statewide.[[75]](#footnote-75)

As seen in the Hispanic representation at the federal and state levels, we understand that there is an active participation into domestic politics mostly by Cuban Americans. This is mainly due to two factors. The first is that Cuban Americans among all other groups have spent the longest time in Florida; most of the first and even second wave immigrants as well as their children have the American citizenship. Secondly, it is important to note that among the Hispanics, Cuban Americans are the ones having the biggest economic power in Florida and need therefore some political lobbying in their own best interest (Portes & Puhrmann, 2015). Another important Hispanic sub-community rising in political interest is the Puerto Ricans. Unlike Cubans from Florida or Mexicans from other states, Puerto Ricans do not enjoy an empowered influence at the national level, even though they are American-born. This shows the complex relationship between the different Hispanic communities. Indeed, most Hispanics are united on questions about bilingualism and immigration but divided when dealing with foreign policies. While Cubans first showed interest in the Cuban embargo issue and the relations with Cuba, the succession of immigration waves from the island and the differentiation within the community of different groups by waves of arrival encouraged the older generations to take active participation in the domestic political debate (Portes & Puhrmann, 2015); on the other hand Puerto Ricans are particularly concerned about the future status of their island.[[76]](#footnote-76) Finally, Mexicans and other Central American citizens support the collaboration between the US and Central America in economic matters.

Among the policy makers, we also find influential communities, social strata and ethnic groups. This is particularly true when this elite enjoys economic power, despite the possible local or national changes in administration (Ager 175). In Florida, Cubans from the first waves meet this description and usually have a major influence on local politics – as is the case for most Hispanic State figures like Marco Rubio. Since the early 1980s they have founded several associations and lobbies encouraging people to take part in politics (Portes & Puhrman, 2015). Public figures also play an important role in bringing up the claims from the community; in the debate about the English-Only policies, the role of Hispanic elites has been sometimes described as digressive from the mass public opinion. In the case of Official English, people like Linda Chavez[[77]](#footnote-77) have often put forward their own interest and promoted their own values rather than the dominant message from the Hispanic population (Gershon & Pantoja, 2011).[[78]](#footnote-78) Nevertheless, it is important to know that when the amendment on the official language passed in Florida, neither the governor,[[79]](#footnote-79) nor the senators or the state attorney general, were in favor of it and strongly opposed the bill (Nunberg, 1989). We will see in the next section why a state administration can favor a popular vote rather than submitting a proposition to the State Congress.

As James Tollefson writes, “[…] the foundation for language rights is power […]. When a relatively weak linguistic minority gains some rights, the group may have a more secure foundation for improving its economic circumstances, increasing its power and eventually gaining greater rights” (1991: 187). Hispanics in Florida could have a louder voice and be heard at a higher level if they could find a common ground of understanding and deal together with the matters where they share the same views. In addition, the important number of Spanish speakers in Florida could greatly influence the debate on language policies; the choices are influenced by the number of people and the way in which they assert their claims (Safran 256). Also, when it comes to language policies, Deborah Schildkraut concludes in her analysis that “if immigrants and minorities become more involved in the political process, both locally and nationally, then lawmakers might be less likely to support legislation that could alienate them” (2001). However, it is important for the linguistic minorities to find a balance with the appropriate amount of language rights, and not be in a self-destructive situation where they would constantly be opposing the dominant-language majority in order to claim more rights (Joseph 62). Furthermore, very often, there is a tendency for the minority-language groups to adopt the dominant language only because it is easier to accept the *de facto* situation than to fight for their own language rights (Safran 262); this reason, along with the fact that most immigrants have other priorities, probably best explain why so many English-Only policies have been adopted throughout the country.

# 3.2 English-Only Movement

*English Only* is not a single lobby but the general appellation of all the groups supporting English as the official language, the general movement for the promotion of English as the official language (May 206). Some are more conservative than others, like US English, some are more progressive and inclusive, like English Plus.[[80]](#footnote-80) Their purpose is to make official the current *de facto* status of English in the US. Their key objectives are the following (May 207; Kaplan, 2015):

1. Adopt a constitutional amendment, making English the official language of the country;
2. Repeal laws mandating multilingual ballots and voting materials;
3. Restrict federal funding of bilingual education (and if possible cancel the group-maintenance bilingual education);
4. Strengthen the enforcement of English-language civic and immigration requirements for naturalization;
5. Expand opportunities for learning English.

The movement is nourished by the recent reactions against immigration and multiculturalism; this is partly due to the fact that one of the main lobbies was founded on the grounds of the Federation for American Immigration Reform or FAIR (Nunberg, 1989). However the states where the English-Only policies have been adopted and are usually supported are states with a very low rate of immigration. Actually very few states with an important foreign-origin population adopted laws giving an official status to English at any level (i.e. less than ten states out of 50, including Florida). Therefore, the movement should not be considered as a call for protectionism or simply as the expression of anti-minority sentiments (Nunberg, 1989), but rather as a way of giving language a symbolic value in order to support national identity (Nunberg, 1997; May 57; Wiley, 1998) without risking offending voters and thereby losing their support (Schildkraut, 2001). Some White Anglo-Americans in these states where immigration is not an issue are seeking to prove their patriotism; the form of patriotism which is put forward here is Americanism and support the melting pot thesis as well as the English language (Gershon & Pantoja, 2011).

In the 1983 context of growing immigration from Latin American countries, US English was created by FAIR founder John Tanton and Republican Senator of California Samuel I. Hayakawa,[[81]](#footnote-81) who later (1984) invented a new term for the Official English label: English Only. In the context of sponsoring a ballot initiative in California entitled “Voting Materials in English Only,” it became clear what the terms really meant: banning or restricting the use of other languages (St Clair, 1994).[[82]](#footnote-82) The movement started its activities at the federal level in the 1980s, when the use of Spanish was spreading to the business, health services and administration areas (Gershon & Pantoja, 2011). Already in 1981 Senator Hayakawa first introduced the English Language Amendment to promote loyalty and patriotism in the US (Riley, 2013); if such an amendment would have passed, no administration at any level would have been able to implement or recognize any program, policy, or document in any language other than English (Kaplan, 2015). Nevertheless, after a few failures to pass the bill even when modified, the English-Only movement changed their strategy and focused on actions in the different states, so that the pressure would come from the state level to the federal level (Cohen, 2008).

The other explanation for the state-level approach of the movement is that a bill for a constitutional amendment at the federal level requires 75% of the state legislature before adoption, whereas a change at the state level only requires approval from the legislature or voters in the state. However, Tatalovich notes that there exists an ideological cleavage in politics when it comes to official English. On the one hand he finds out that Democratic politicians usually oppose English-Only proposals; on the other hand he states that the Republicans are more divided on the matter (Schildkraut, 2001). This leads Schildkraut to conclude that in states with Democratic administration, official English policies are less likely to be adopted than in states with a Republican administration. Tatalovich also points out that in states with an important proportion of immigrants, the English-Only activists do not push for the bill on official English policies to be voted at the State Congress; state politicians counting on all possible votes will not risk losing the support from the minorities. Also, the passage of such an initiative in states with a high rate of immigrants is more likely (Schildkraut, 2001). Therefore, in these states, the English-Only lobbies encourage the state’s administration to start an initiative, where the public will have to express their opinion. This way, the political impact of validating popular results is almost non-existent. This was done in states like California, Arizona or Florida. Though English-Only currently affects only the state-level and local policies, if adopted at the federal level these policies will have an impact on the existence of bilingual education, the provision of government services, political and electoral materials, and language restrictions for government employees (Gershon & Pantoja, 2011). This has already been noted at the state level; before ruling it as unconstitutional in 1998,[[83]](#footnote-83) the state of Arizona approved in 1988 the following initiative: “This state shall act in English and no other language,” even preventing state officials from communicating with their constituents in any other language than English.

Many English-Only advocacy groups were created on the basis of racist discourses (May 207; Wiley, 1998). When asked about their will to remain part of such organizations like ProEnglish, many members claimed that they “wanted America to stand strong and not cave in to Hispanics who shouldn't be here”.[[84]](#footnote-84) Indeed some groups are spinoffs from immigration-restriction lobbies (like US English) and are usually active on the questions of immigration regulation (St Clair, 1994).[[85]](#footnote-85) These groups base their claims mostly on ideological and emotional grounds rather than substantive evidence (Pease-Alvarez, 1992). English-Only groups regularly organize actions in the states involving boycotting of targeted brands or of individuals on the language grounds. In Florida several of these acts were reported: for example people boycotted McDonald’s restaurants for translating their menus in Spanish, a bank customer’s mortgage checks were refused because they were written in Spanish, an assistant principal forbade the students to speak Spanish in a Dade County school, a clerk was suspended without pay for one month in Coral Gables because he spoke Spanish at work, and the list is still very long. The number of similar acts, though very difficult to estimate, boomed after the amendment for the official language was adopted in Florida (Nunberg, 1989).

There are a number of reasons explaining why English-Only movements wish to adopt and to recognize English as the only official language in the US. The first and already discussed reason is the history of the English language in the country. Indeed, the advocates of English-Only movements use as best examples the Founding Fathers and the texts on which the US institutions are based, reminding the country that the first language used in administration, politics and law was English; this fact should therefore be institutionalized by proclaiming English as the official language. As already mentioned, in 1981 Senator Hayakawaproposed to add the English Language Amendment (ELA) to the Constitution, in order for English to be once and for all recognized the official language of the US, and not a *de facto* language any longer (Tollefson; 1991: 121). However, the only reason why neither the Declaration of Independence nor the Constitution establish English as the official language is that the Founding Fathers were promoting the individual freedom to choose between different languages, based on the principle of freedom of speech. Furthermore, the US government already considers the ability to speak English as a proof of loyalty to the country: “[…] speaking English is defined by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service as a ‘basic citizenship skill’” (Tollefson; 1991: 110). Nevertheless many immigrants feel part of the American nation, though they do not necessarily speak English. As we have already seen, language does not constitute the only condition or marker of national identity (Criado, 2004).

Another reason given by the movements is that multilingualism is characteristic of pre-modern societies, whereas monolingualism is the standard pattern of modern societies (May 199). Very often English is associated with a rich and developed society, whereas the immigrant’s language – often Spanish – refers to under-developed and poor societies (Criado, 2004). However a lot of rich modern states enjoy the benefits from multilingualism like Finland (two nationwide official languages – Finnish and Swedish – and a regionally recognized one – Sami) or Switzerland (four official languages, recognized separately in four distinct regions). Trudgill reminds us that most nations are multilingual, no matter how many spoken languages are formally recognized (2000: 120); this is the case for example of France or the United Kingdom. Furthermore, a multilingual nation, with a handful of bilingual nationals, represent a major asset for the whole country in the context of global economy (Rumbaut, 2009); this has been used by the Australian government to justify the adoption of the National Policy on Language.[[86]](#footnote-86) Rubén Rumbaut encourages the adoption of an additive language policy anchored in English Plus.[[87]](#footnote-87)

The advocates of English as the official language also indicate that multilingualism leads to institutional and internal chaos, ethnic turmoil, political divisiveness and destruction in the states where two or more languages have an official status, whereas monolingual countries enjoy a peaceful and unifying atmosphere (Pease-Alvarez, 1992). The typical examples used in order to illustrate their point are Belgium or Canada (Nunberg, 1989). However, the cases of Canada and Belgium cannot be compared to the US since the origins of the debate and the relationships between the linguistic communities are completely different; in these countries the debate articulates around the rights of historical ethnic groups who are already formally recognized in a bi- or multicultural national framework (May 224). In addition, in the two aforementioned cases, ideology is not the core justification for the debate (Nunberg, 1997). As May points out, “it is not the cultural, linguistic and political expression or mobilization of (minority) ethnicities and nationalisms which are the cause of so much contemporary mayhem in the modern world, but their *disavowal*” (308).

As is the case with countries having classical Arabic as their official language, the adoption of a language, which is not mastered by all, may be a way to ensure that only part of the total population can access positions implying power; in Morocco for example, only 10% of the population master classical Arabic, the official language of the state along with the local Berber languages (Moscoso, 2015). Indeed, May claims that “a dominant language group usually controls the crucial authority in the areas of administration, politics, education and the economy, and gives preference to those with a command of that language” (152). By doing so, the elite retains power in the same community, being social, ethnic or linguistic (Ager 178) and automatically defines who should benefit from inclusion into or exclusion from education, employment or any influence in the social area (May 203). After all, the official language is a way to submit all other forms of language – being a dialect or a totally different language – to the established norm, and this norm will eventually become the symbolically unifying language of the community (Moscoso, 2015); by extension, the people in power use the official language to exclude the ones who do not master it. The situation of *laissez-faire* in the US led to a concentration of power in the hands of those who mastered English, as part of the dominant language ideology (Sonntag 45). Banning languages other than English from public areas in Florida – such as schools or local administrations – is therefore a way to assess social control and power on minorities (Tollefson, 2011: 370). As a matter of fact the choice of the official language is arbitrary and has to do with the political and social power relations in a given society (May 130). When redefining the balance among the different language communities within the general framework of language status policies, the dominant-language speakers – enjoying the advantages of holding power – might not be willing to renegotiate the situation which is at the moment serving them so well (May 233). Therefore, when only promoting English, the process leads to inequalities between English-speakers and non-English speakers; as has already been the case in Canadian history, restricting the use of minority languages causes interethnic turmoil – rather than national unity and peace –, and often impedes the dissemination of an official language (Pease-Alvarez, 1992). In this case, non-English speakers will inevitably be disadvantaged (May 152), especially in positions of power, since English is established as the *de facto* language of politics and business (Kaplan, 2015).

As previously said, for some Americans this cultural minority growing at a very fast pace could represent a menace for the linguistic integrity of the nation (Huntington 202; Nunberg, 1989; May 207; Safran 261). Let us not forget that the balance of populations has been a determining factor in the balance of power for the domination of Texas; after the Tejanos[[88]](#footnote-88) – who populated only very little parts of Texas (Krauze, 2013) – were overpassed by the very large number of American immigrants, the latter ones took control of the economic and political power in the region, leading to the independence first, and then to the annexation by the US. Such a concern is also observed today in countries like Latvia, where the important Russian-speaking minority could trigger the country’s independence; in this case the legitimation of an official national language as a clear marker of the country’s identity is considered as a key factor to counter a possible annexation by Russia (Joseph 57). However the situation in Latvia cannot be compared to the situation in the US. Indeed, an attempt from Russia to annex Latvia represents a plausible scenario since Russia is much bigger and constitutes a serious military threat to Latvia; furthermore, in Latvia, the Russian minority makes out almost half of the country’s population – even more than half in the country’s capital Riga. In the case of the US, it is unlikely that Mexico would invade the US; in addition, the Mexican minority, representing a little bit more than 40% of the population at the state level in California or Arizona cannot counterbalance the current situation of power. Nonetheless, this threat of change in the balance of power is a major concern for some organized groups from the English-Only movement such as Pro-English, English First or US English that are actively lobbying for the adoption of English as the official language of the country.[[89]](#footnote-89)

These groups argue that attitudes and linguistic affiliations of immigrants represent a threat to the English language in the US (Pease-Alvarez, 1992) – particularly among Hispanics (Criado, 2004). Nevertheless, studies have shown that the minority languages are much more threatened (May 214) by restrictive immigration laws, since without the replenishing effects of immigration most of these languages would very quickly die out (Crawford, 1996). Major languages like Mandarin, Tagalog, or more specifically Spanish, are not concerned, though language shift affects them as well; such shift is particularly notable among the second-generation immigrants who speak their mother tongue at home and within the community, and English in all other social and professional aspects of their lives (Rumbaut, 2009). American English is not threatened by Spanish in the US (Riley, 2013); furthermore it is definitely the least threatened language in the world (Trudgill, 2000: 190). This means that using the argument of national threat of Spanish for the English language in the US is not a valid one, since the position of English as dominant language in the US has never been challenged (Safran 260) since the early eighteenth century. Also, more than three-quarters of the population is monolingual in English (Rumbaut, 2009; Kaplan, 2015); this tendency should not change following the already discussed issue of language shift among the second-generation immigrants. In addition, due to the high number of immigrants already knowing English when arriving in the US (like immigrants coming from the West Indies, the Philippines, Germany or most African countries) and to the predominant position of English on the world scene, one can only disagree with the assumption that the survival of the English language is at stake. Furthermore, and as the English-Only movement very paradoxically points out, in most multilingual contexts, English is used as a neutral means of communication; this gives an additional argument in favor of its survival in a multilingual state.

The English-Only movement wants everybody to speak English, but they tend to forget that some people have to learn it first. And by trying to cancel English for Speakers of Other Languages or ESOL lessons to replace it by a transitional form of bilingual education, they will only aggravate the situation of non-native speakers by creating and enlarging the language gap between native and non-native speakers once they will be reunited in classes (May 218). Indeed, even if English-Only advocates claim that bilingual education leads to failure, a report on mother-tongue teaching led by the UNESCO affirms that children taught in their own language are more successful in their studies and eventually reach the same level of instruction as their fellow students taught in English (May 216). This has also been confirmed by a large research study carried out in 1991 showing that English proficiency among Spanish-speaking native students having been taught in Spanish was evident (May 219). The *Lau v. Nichols* case (1974) created a precedent in the sense that it highlighted the need for all pupils to have the same opportunities at school, including in terms of the language of education (May 213); nevertheless, this cannot be seen as the elaboration of minority language rights (May 214). English-Only laws are preventing the non-native speakers from efficiently learning English by raising new unnecessary barriers; outlawing the bilingual programs as well as other government-funded programs will be more counterproductive than helpful to the immigrants willing to learn the language. Joseph Lo Bianco came to the same conclusions when he was mandated by Australia to write the eponymous report (1987);[[90]](#footnote-90) as a matter of fact proficiency in English is only one variable to social improvement (May 216).

For centuries different languages have coexisted in the US. Today, about 350 languages are spoken at home according to a report covering the period 2009-2013 released in 2015 by the US Census.[[91]](#footnote-91) As already said, the dominant group may declare a language official as a symbol of national unity and cohesion, in order to fight social fragmentation caused by real or imagined threats (Ager 177; Nunberg, 1989). However, no correlation can be found between language diversity and civil strife,[[92]](#footnote-92) implying that the knowledge of English will definitely not prevent non-speakers from being model citizens; likewise, not speaking English will not automatically turn a person into an outlaw. As a matter of fact, no country where English is an official language has legally restricted the use of other languages (like Canada, India, or South Africa). These officially bi- or multilingual countries do not apply draconian measures comparable to the ones proposed by Official English or English Only advocates. Furthermore, such measures would go against the American tradition of opening and freedom of expression (Crawford, 2008). Therefore, it is a simplistic view to think that the movement is only motivated by racism towards minority language groups (Nunberg, 1989); as it has been noted in Florida, the wish to adopt the State official language was highly symbolic rather than discriminatory and did not directly aim at restricting the language choices and opportunities of the linguistic minorities (Pease-Alvarez, 1992).

It is also true that English-Only movements very frequently refer to the immigrants' level of English as 'limited English-speaking ability', linking this mainly to their lack of motivation when it comes to language learning (May 216). The movement also points out their lack of knowledge in English instead of promoting their assets in a foreign language (May 217).[[93]](#footnote-93) Moreover, as pointed out by Trudgill, English Only advocates wish to artificially create a cultural unity by suppressing differences (2000: 193); but if English were adopted as the sole official language, the homogenization of the American society would represent the end of cultural pluralism. Nonetheless, many proponents or the English-Only movement claim that the adoption of an official language at the federal level will guarantee unity, harmony, mutual understanding among the population and political stability. All these benefits have been stated in the California English Ballot Initiative (1984), which was reported at the federal level. In this initiative, activists were requesting a change in the federal law allowing voting materials only in English. This was a symbolic initiative, as the policies governing elections depend on the federal level. However, the ground was set at the state level for more reforms in language policies (Tollefson, 1991: 120) – as was the case with other propositions adopted in California in the same decade. Nevertheless, the debate on the official language in the US, as brought by the English-Only movements, made a major contribution as it highlighted the lack of a coherent policy to respond to the new diversity (Crawford, 2008).

The only reason why English Only can justify all the statements they make is by deliberately denying or ignoring all the research which has been carried out by professionals in this field; most of this research has been endorsed by many powerful actors – like the UNESCO or as we will later see the Australian government.[[94]](#footnote-94) As Joseph points out, only nations with powerful minorities – and thus feeling insecure – suppress minority-language rights in order to preserve the idea of a nation-state; once the nation is secure, it easily grants rights to minority-language speakers, leading the nation to become multilingual, and the minority-language speakers to be more powerful (58), since they are protected by specific language rights (62). The key to a peaceful nation-state is thus finding the balance between a secure nation and equal language rights. It seems like the US, and particularly states like Florida, have not found the right balance yet.

# 3.3 Response to English Only: focus on English Plus

As already discussed, the English-Only movement is plural and has a range spreading from very conservative to very liberal; one of the most liberal group is the English Plus lobby. In 1986 the Linguistic Society of America or LSA unanimously opposed to the English-Only policies by adopting a resolution; for them, such policies are “based on misconceptions about the role of a common language” and are “inconsistent with basic American ideals of linguistic tolerance”. Similar resolutions were adopted by other groups and language professionals, like the Modern Language Association or MLA, the TESOL, the National Association for Bilingual Education, the National Council of Teachers of English and the American Anthropological Association (Nunberg, 1989). The most important group created in order to counter the arguments of the English-Only lobby is English Plus.

English Plus was created soon after the foundation of the first English-Only group as a coalition of organizations and activists in order to respond to the growing English-Only movement (Kaplan, 2015). Its activists plead for an opening to linguistic diversity as a national strength and asset (Linton, 2004); the name of the group indicates the wish to master English along with a second language (Cohen, 2008). Later, in 1987, the coalition English Plus Information Clearinghouse[[95]](#footnote-95) or EPIC was created (Kaplan, 2015). The main purpose of EPIC is to centralize all the information about language rights and language policy and to actively work on the dissemination of public information about language policy issues; furthermore it responds to efforts to restrict the use of languages other than English, and promotes a valid alternative to Official English (Nunberg, 1989; Kaplan, 2015). English Plus encourages the development of multiple language skills among the population (Crawford, 2008). The idea behind it is that not only minority language speakers will have to learn English, but Anglo-Americans will have to learn a foreign language as well. This echoes the policy put in place in Australia.[[96]](#footnote-96) As is also the case in Australia, English Plus describes any additional language to English as a valuable knowledge and asset. Among the priorities set by English Plus are the need for better funding and better availability of the ESOL classes throughout the country, the increase of the investment in language education for foreign languages, the provision of essential services for limited English speakers and the guarantee of language rights (i.e. freedom to speak another language than English without discrimination and to maintain one’s own language). Even though the coalition agrees with the fact that the opportunity of learning English should be provided to all US citizens, its proponents do not believe that such goals will be achieved by the adoption of a federal official language (Kaplan, 2015). As a matter of fact English Plus also emphasizes the role of the state in maintaining the minority languages throughout the whole education cycle (Crawford, 2008). More precisely, it means that English speakers should acquire knowledge in a second language and become bilingual and non-English speakers should become proficient in English while maintaining their mother tongue (Kaplan, 2015).

Four of the most notable successes achieved by the group's actions were the adoption in 1989 of English Plus policies in Oregon, Washington, Rhode Island and New Mexico. The New Mexico policy, called the New Mexico English Plus Declaration, encourages the mastery of English along with other languages in order to promote diversity within the state and generally in the country (Cohen, 2008). Furthermore the Declaration establishes that the English language is not threatened (Joseph 63). While the English Plus declaration in New Mexico is based on the historical links between New Mexico and Mexico – as a Spanish-speaking territory –, the Oregon state language roadmap is based on an economic justification: since many major American companies are based in Oregon and these companies have pointed out the importance for the workers to be multilingual, the state has adopted policies promoting not only the teaching of foreign languages, but also the maintenance of the minority languages within the immigrant communities, especially Spanish and the Asian languages (Sonnetag 56). Just as was the case in Australia a few years earlier,[[97]](#footnote-97) all these policies aim to guarantee efficient teaching of English and the mastery of other languages simultaneously. Moreover the proponents of English Plus support the idea that interpreter services should be provided in emergency situations, that medical services should be offered in languages other than English, that the state should implement bilingual education and employment training programs, and that the examinations to get a driver’s license should be performed in different languages (Kaplan, 2015). As we will see in the next chapter, this echoes the provisions foreseen in the Lo Bianco Report and prevailing in the first national language policy adopted in Australia.

# 3.4 The debate on a national language policy in Australia

As explained in the introduction, one of the original elements of this paper is that it will compare the US case with similar cases, different from the traditional ones (i.e. Canada or Belgium); as a matter of fact, Australia is a commonwealth system close to the federal system in place in the US and has oriented its national debate on the status of languages around the question of the minority immigrant languages. In this section, we will see which measures and accommodations the Australian government have put in place and which policies have been implemented in order to protect the minority immigrant languages.

# *3.4.1 The Lo Bianco Report (1987)*

The situation in Australia is worth examining for two reasons. Firstly Australia, like the US, has no official language, only a *de facto* national language: English (Riley, 2013). Secondly, Australia as a nation has been created through major waves of immigration, as is the case for the US and especially in states like Florida, still experiencing important influxes of immigrants. At the end of the 1980s, following a long period of repression against all types of minority languages (i.e. indigenous and immigrant), the government requested an official report on the state of language policies in the country. The report had to draw a clear picture of the situation then and propose some possible solutions on the issues spotted during the research. Joseph Lo Bianco was mandated by the government to write this report on multilingualism in Australia; he was asked to evaluate the different measures put in place by the country to accommodate the residents speaking a language other than English as a mother tongue, focusing therefore on newcomers – mostly from Asian countries in the case of Australia – and aboriginal peoples. The Lo Bianco Report has been made public by the Australian government and is available online, but at a substantial cost for the reader. Therefore, I will use the remarks, comments and conclusions drawn by Tollefson based on the actual report (Tollefson, 1991).

As expected, Lo Bianco pointed out the importance of mastering English in order to succeed economically, socially and professionally. Proficiency in English will mainly allow immigrants to have access to the basic needs like getting a job or getting an education (Kim & al., 2010; Hoang & Hamid, 2016). What experts did not expect, though, was Lo Bianco claiming that throughout Australian history, English had always been the instrument of power and domination, unlike statements already made by English Only groups about English in the US. This idea was reinforced by the assumption that English as sole language of communication would only lead to more inequality,[[98]](#footnote-98) especially towards newcomers. While emphasizing the importance of ESOL classes heavily funded by the government – and needed as proficiency in English in Australia often means access to the job market and further education (Kim & al., 2010; Hoang & Hamid, 2016) –, Lo Bianco acknowledged that not everybody is suited for learning languages despite their motivation.[[99]](#footnote-99) Tackling thereby the traditional neo-classical approach of the official language policies, he insisted on the necessity of communicating in different languages – for political reasons, in the media, at the federal and local levels. In the last decades the number of non-English speakers in Australia has been growing from less than 20% of the overall population to about 24% nowadays (Hoang & Hamid, 2016), a proportion which is very similar to the one in the US (Riley, 2013) and more precisely in Florida. As a matter of fact for Lo Bianco equality and justice could only be achieved by means of multicultural policies, thus abandoning the assimilationist – and later integrationist – policies implemented until then in Australia. Lo Bianco also pointed out the importance of English-speaking Australian-born students getting to know other cultures and languages, especially the Aboriginal ones. This way, Australian multiculturalism would be respected by everybody, and not only by the people from the other cultures or speaking other languages than the dominant one. As previously mentioned the focus for newcomers remained the proficiency in English, as it would allow them not only to get a job and an education, but also as means of building a social network and taking part in the community life (Kim & al., 2010; Hoang & Hamid, 2016)

Despite all the very innovative statements held in the report, Lo Bianco admitted that if such multicultural policies might help in filling important gaps causing socioeconomic inequalities, it was not the sole solution to all the problems. In a nutshell, Lo Bianco in his report changed the way in which modern states approached multicultural policies, by finally considering the problem from a historical-structural point of view. For the first time in the so-called western nations, the whole society (i.e. the politicians, the public and the target minority groups) had been involved in the integration process; not only had the state expectations from the members of the minority groups, but the entire society had a role to play in this complex process since the report clearly pointed out the responsibility the society had in the integration path of the newcomers. Also, it was the first time in Australia that the state had publicly acknowledged the fact that not all residents were suited to learn the dominant English, and that in order to cope with this situation the state had to accommodate all the language policies in the spirit of social equity. In comparison with the situation in the US, this was a step beyond English Plus towards full inclusion and accommodation regardless of the language spoken by the minority groups.

# *3.4.2* *The National Policy on Language (1987)*

Following the publication of the Lo Bianco Report, Australia adopted a first National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987a). The need for such a policy rouse from the idea that a country could not base its actions on implicit policies. On the grounds of such policies, Australia often repressed bilingual education in the early twentieth century. However it is important to note that English had no official status in Australia at that time; even today, English is still not the official language of the country, even though it is a “unifying element of Australian society”, carrying therefore a more symbolic than formal value as the national language (Riley, 2013). During the whole twentieth century, speakers of minority or aboriginal languages also suffered from deliberate denigration, forced separation of families, or even punishment for language use in the public area. Such acts of repression reached a peak when implemented in the 1960s, with English monolingualism as the ruling ideology. In his report, Lo Bianco expressed the need to have clearly stated policies, also called explicit policies. The National Policy on Language made explicit statements and slightly modified the implicit rules. The major purpose of the policy was to give a multicultural approach to foreign languages teaching, social integration and to institutionalize ESL courses out of their current application in 1987.[[100]](#footnote-100) Lo Bianco knew that the shift to English for non-English speakers was not going to happen through establishing clear policies in English teaching, but rather as a result of the greater prestige of English in the Australian society.

As already mentioned, in order to reach this national agreement on a language policy Australia used the historical-structural approach by involving ethnically based community groups and second-generation members having gone through the assimilation programs. The nature of such national policy had to be non-party political and based on a national consensus (Lo Bianco 1987b). After having listed the factors motivating the creation of a national policy – being mostly economic: trade partnerships or economic crisis – and the purpose of the policy – being to replace the trend towards English monolingualism with a trend towards widespread bilingualism – the Senate’s report stated:

“Language policies should be developed and coordinated at the national level on the basis of four guiding principles, namely:

1. Competence in English;
2. Maintenance and development of languages other than English;
3. Provision of services in languages other than English;
4. Opportunities for learning second languages.” (Commonwealth of Australia, Senate, 1984: 312)

The policy therefore provided minimum language services for all, including interpreting and translating in languages other than English to those who could not understand or were not fluent in English; this included Aboriginals and the deaf. Such services were organized, provided and financed by the federal government. In 1991 the Australian government adopted the Australian Language and Literacy Policy or the ALLP; the policy stated that: “Proficiency in our national language, Australian English, is obviously necessary for an individual to participate as fully as possible in Australian society. But as important as proficiency in Australian English is for us as Australians, we also need to enhance our ability to communicate with the rest of the world. [...] Our multilingual population invests us with valuable linguistic resources. But we must not rely simply on the skills of those who are already bilingual. Many more Australians need to learn a second language” (Riley, 2013).

When it comes to the status of languages, Australia has not recognized English, thereby allowing the country to take into consideration other minority languages (i.e. indigenous and immigrant) as well. By bringing a multicultural dimension to the previous policy and protecting the minority languages, the state recognized language diversity as being a basic human right (Reilly, 2013). Australia wanted to promote language teaching and learning in general, and therefore introduced three guiding principles:

1. English for all;
2. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages;
3. A language other than English for all.

When introducing this third principle, lawmakers tried to give an equal treatment to minority-language speakers, who could already fulfill this condition; while they had to try their best in order to learn and speak English, English speakers had to make the effort of learning a language other than English. Portes and Rumbaut define this principle as selective acculturation (i.e. the preservation of fluent bilingualism through native culture and language while learning English), being for them the response to what they call dissonant acculturation (i.e. a forced assimilation resulting in limited bilingualism and rejection of the cultural heritage by the minority children) (273). However, though the Lo Bianco report was used as a solid base in building up Australian language policies, the American concept of selective acculturation has no political constituency (Portes & Rumbaut 274). Furthermore, in the last years the debate about recognizing English as the official national language of Australia has risen; if such allow were adopted, the minority language services – such as the translation service – could be disadvantaged as lawmakers could start implementing measures to support the one-language policy.

This policy has prevailed from the late 1980s until the late 1990s; at that time the Australian government decided to focus on the teaching of English and some Asian languages – Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Bahasa Indonesia – for economic and commercial reasons; the structural factor for which this change occurred can be explained by the decline of foreign language teaching in schools and universities; adopting the National Policy on Languages has not helped motivating English speakers to learn foreign languages. Because minority language speakers might be impacted by this shift in the national language policy, the High Court has been working on some specific regulation allowing minority languages rights to be protected when it comes to voting or participating in social life (Riley, 2013). This is the reason why public services like bilingual schools or the translation of administrative documents and procedures[[101]](#footnote-101) have been maintained. Though the Australian experience of progressive language policies was short, it created a precedent in world history which could be followed by other countries facing the same issues and challenges; this is the case of the US.

# 3.5 The Spanish Constitution on language policies: the case of Ceuta

Australia is an interesting example of how a country has tried to integrate the minority immigrant languages and taken the provisions to protect and maintain them at the national level, involving the participation of the different federate states within the Commonwealth. The situation in Spain is interesting in its federal dimension, rather than in the nature of the language rights; in Spain, only historical ethnic group languages are recognized (May 244), unlike Australia. This is the case in many countries in Europe, where the linguistic rights of historical ethnic groups present in the different countries are respected and protected by law – like Slovakia, Romania or Italy. In Romania for example, though Romanian remains the official language of the country, twenty different languages are recognized as national minority languages – i.e. spoken by a national historical ethnic group, like the Hungarians, the Roms or the Bulgarians. The Romanian Constitution stipulates that any local district where at least 20% of the population speaks a language other than Romanian can request this language to be officially used in public administration; the constitution also grants rights to other national minority languages in education and courts (Tamas 311). The fact that Spain grants to each region the right to define their language policies – and thus adopting the official regional languages – might give some clues as to how the US could handle such an issue in a federal context. Though not a federation of regions by definition, Spain is a decentralized state delegating some rights and responsibilities to its subjects. In addition, since 2005, the representatives of each region have had the right to use one of the co-official languages in their respective regions when addressing the senate in Madrid (Ferreiro 204). As José Carlos Herreras says, “Spain is an experimental laboratory for linguistic policies” (10).

Article 3 of the Spanish Constitution defines the three basic principles of the national language policy (Ferreiro 204):

1. Spanish in its Castilian variant is the official language of the State, and all Spaniards should know it and have the right to use it;
2. The other Spanish languages will be official in their respective regions[[102]](#footnote-102) according to the regions’ statuses;
3. The language variety of Spain is an important wealth and will be respected and protected.

When defining freedom of speech, the constitution guarantees the provision of political and social communication respecting language variety. As is the case in Australia, all important information should be issued in the languages officially recognized by the state. The region has the power to autonomously organize all aspects of education when the official regional language is other than Castilian. In Spain, though the main idea remains that Castilian is a warranty for social cohesion and national unity (May 243), regional languages have become official in their respective regions. Indeed the constitution finally recognized Spain’s cultural and linguistic pluralism (May 244) in the 1978 Constitution. In Catalonia for example, Catalan is the co-official language and people living in Catalonia can use either Castilian or Catalan; the regional government or *Generalitat* guarantees the mutual accommodation of the two languages (May 245).

However, as we have seen, the Spanish regions only recognize what they consider as languages of the national ethnic groups. The notion of ‘national’ can be discussed in the two Spanish autonomous cities – also considered as autonomous communities (Ferreiro 204) – Ceuta and Melilla. The case of Ceuta highlights the fact that national ethnic groups have to be of European descent, as the local indigenous population of Ceuta is primarily Arabic.[[103]](#footnote-103) Arabs started settling in Ceuta from neighboring Morocco from as early as the nineteenth century, but their descendants only acquired the citizenship in the 1980s (Moscoso, 2015). The situation of Ceutan Arabic, a regional variation of the language of the neighboring country, Morocco (Moscoso, 2015), is very similar to Spanish in Florida. More than 40% of the Ceutan population speaks Ceutan Arabic (Moscoso, 2015); this figure rises to more than 70% when it comes to the city’s students speaking Arabic at home (Rivera 191). Just as the second-generation Hispanic immigrants in Florida, bilingualism among young students starts very early in their education (Moscoso, 2015), with Ceutan Arabic being in a diglossic position; the impact of education on the choice of languages spoken will be discussed later in this chapter.

As already said the only officially recognized language in the autonomous city of Ceuta is Castilian – as is the case for most regions in Spain –, and this status puts pressure on all other languages including Ceutan Arabic (Moscoso, 2015), due to the prominence of Castilian as the only official language. However, Ceutan Arabic should be recognized as a minority language as it is spoken by a wide number of inhabitants. It should also be one of the languages used in public education, as main language of instruction or as a means for instruction – in the case of bilingual education. On the contrary Spain keeps this language at the state of ‘minorized’ language (Moscoso, 2015), meaning that the state artificially maintains its non-recognition. Though the city is like an enclave on Moroccan soil, most inhabitants of Spanish origin are monolingual in Castilian, whereas the Arabic inhabitants are bilingual.[[104]](#footnote-104) The use of Arabic or Spanish is very specific to certain areas of everyday life; Spanish is used in official communication and in institutions, whereas Arabic is used in a more informal context (i.e. at home, on the streets) (Rivera 191), even though most bilinguals switch from one language to another and might in the same sentence use words from Ceutan Arabic and words from Spanish; code-switching is the process of switching from one language or dialect to another within the same conversation; this is particularly common in multilingual situations or among a group of bilinguals/bidialectals (Trudgill, 2003; 23). This type of structured code-switching makes it comparable to Spanglish[[105]](#footnote-105) in Florida, as its users use it in order to mark their difference with both Moroccan and Spanish monolinguals in the city; indeed the way the language spoken is codified makes it impossible for non-bilingual speakers to understand, and puts the bilingual speakers in a position of power since they are the only ones able to understand the code (Rivera 198). Nevertheless, unlike Florida, where bilingualism in Spanish and English is seen as a transitory and generational characteristic, bilingualism in Ceuta is stable (Rivera 188) both in terms of context and of language maintenance within the same group of speakers.

When it comes to education in Ceuta, the whole system is managed by the national government since Ceuta does not have any particular autonomy status, unlike Catalonia. The approach used by the school authorities has been divided in four major phases: total assimilation, conclusion, linguistic insertion and inclusion (Rivera 192). These four phases are comparable to what has been done for decades in Florida, and the same conclusions have been drawn after each of these phases: assimilation and the attempt of erasing the minority – though the ‘minority’ group in Ceuta is the majority linguistic group in terms of absolute number of speakers – identity does not help educational, social or professional inclusion and does not empower the minority group. Ceutan Arabic-speakers at school are put in a position of total submersion, as most of them do not speak Spanish when they start going to school; this feeling of submersion is exacerbated by the fact that Spanish not only is the official language of the state but also because it is a major world language, confirming its position of dominant language in the city (Moscoso, 2015), a situation which is comparable to the position of English in the US. The need for adapted programs considering Spanish as a foreign language and recognizing teaching in the students’ mother tongue becomes central and therefore the focus of all future efforts in trying to elaborate language policies; otherwise, as is the case in Florida, education will contribute to creating or enlarging the gap between native and non-native speakers of the teaching language. In the Spanish education system, acknowledging the value of linguistic diversity has always been put aside, while only the use of the official language prevails (Rivera 194). Verónica Rivera thinks that by allowing Ceutan Arabic in the public spaces and institutions, like schools, Ceutan Arabic-speakers will develop additive bilingualism, which will considerably contribute to their integration; their mother tongue should be seen as an asset rather than a break to their empowerment (195). In addition, Rivera gives a number of suggestion with regards to the accommodation of Ceutan Arabic in the autonomous city; one of which is the adaptation of Ceutan Arabic to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or CEFR (198), which would imply the recognition of this language at the European level.

Rivera is not the only expert having proposed a status for Ceutan Arabic within the autonomous city – though only limited to education. Francisco Moscoso even advocates for the recognition of Ceutan Arabic as one of the languages of the Spanish state – obtaining thereby the status of co-official language in Ceuta, like Catalan in Catalonia or Basque in the Basque Country (Moscoso, 2015). Just as in Australia, recognizing minority languages in Spain might be a way to build a more equalitarian society by offering everybody the same opportunities through the recognition of their native languages. Moscoso also points out that, within the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages or ECRML, the European Union has insisted that Spain provided more details about the situation of Arabic in Ceuta and how the charter was implemented in regard to this particular case (2015). As a matter of fact the ECRML protects and promotes historical regional and minority languages in Europe, and Spain having signed it in 2001 should enforce it. Just as Rivera suggested when discussing the possibility of adding Ceutan Arabic to the CEFR, Moscoso insists on the central value of the framework which is the conservation of the linguistic patrimony and the protection of minorities in the European Union (2015). Promoting Ceutan Arabic and granting it an officially recognized status would not only contribute to the improvement of the local Arabic-speaking citizens’ condition – mostly through education and improvement of their self-esteem – , but would also promote a situation of multilingualism in the autonomous city. Moscoso eventually suggests that, within the context of the UNESCO’s Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, states should allow any linguistic community to use their language as an official language in their home territory and to receive education in their language, not only as a means of education but also as a main course in culture or language (2015). These proactive initiatives should be promoted in Florida as well for the well-being of the Spanish-speaking population; not many experts actively advocate for the recognition of Spanish, but rather propose transitory solutions using Spanish as reference language. Such transitory solutions are often triggered by state and local policies, as we will see in the next chapter.

# 4. Language Policies in the US

When asking the question about the effects of adopting an official language in Florida, it is crucial to enumerate the different policies affecting or affected by language policies in this same state. In the case of Florida, there are many federal policies describing the use of the languages and there are also state and local policies determining the scope of use as well. In any case, the fact that the federal laws prevail in case of contradiction will have an important effect at the level of the state or the county, as we have already seen it.

# 4.1 Federal policies

The Federal Constitution states that there is no official language in the United States; English is the *de facto* language of the law (Kaplan, 2015) – and therefore of politics – since the first texts[[106]](#footnote-106) were written in English. It is also important to note that the US have neither a ministry of culture, nor an agency in charge of setting language policies; this is largely due to the fact that Americans have little concern about the questions surrounding languages (Safran 263). At the federal level, the legislation currently protects policies on language questions adopted under specific acts, like the Bilingual Education Act, the Bilingual Voting Ballot Act and other programs guaranteeing the language rights of the public (Nunberg, 1989) like the right to an interpreter in a criminal trial or the right to resettlement for refugees among others. Some committees and commissions are also invested with the mission of protecting language rights for the citizens like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the House Education and the Workforce Committee. The US language policies, though not clearly stated as such, protect individual rights, rather than collective rights; so only individuals can claim rights for their personal situation rather than a whole group for the whole community. This is characteristic in the different law cases filed in the twentieth century;[[107]](#footnote-107) therefore accommodations for speakers of minority languages are usually implemented at the state or local level and are implicit (Safran 259).

At the federal level, the English Language Unity Act[[108]](#footnote-108) of 2005 is still pending at the House of Representatives. First introduced in 2005, it received from Congress some remarks. Reintroduced two years later, the act was referred to a subcommittee; however, the Congress adjourned it before the bill could pass. The latest action was taken in 2017 when it was reintroduced in its latest version; it is now being reviewed by two different subcommittees. If passed, this act will curtail most rights and services for non-English speakers, including bilingual provisions of the Voting Rights Act, while allowing some exceptions for the sake of national security as well as public safety and foreign-language teaching. The English Language Unity Act is not the first one to be submitted to the Congress; since 1981 when the English Language Act was first introduced,[[109]](#footnote-109) the bills proposing English as the official language have been rejected every year because of the care and caution with which constitutional amendments are treated (May 206).

# *4.1.1 The Bilingual Education Act*

When discussing the issue of language rights at the federal level, the first official policy to be mentioned is the Bilingual Education Act (1968). The question of bilingual education has been omnipresent in the short history of the US. Already in 1839, the State of Ohio became the first to adopt a bilingual education law for both English and German. In 1847 Louisiana passed the same law for French. Bilingual schools were common in more than ten states in the early twentieth century; German-speaking pupils represented 4% of the all the pupils following the classes in bilingual elementary schools, being more than the total amount of pupils – no distinction in the second language – registered in bilingual programs in the late twentieth century (Crawford, 2008). Special classes and schools were created after the enforcement of the Bilingual Education Act in the late 1960s, which was based on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Later the Bilingual Education Act was reinforced by the Equal Education Opportunity Act (1974). These acts allow the creation of parallel education in the first years of school, during which the student can follow the classes in his or her own language in order to better integrate in his or her future English-speaking environment. These acts only made official already-enforced policies applied from the early twentieth century; indeed before WWII, bilingual schools were already opened for sons of immigrants speaking French, German or Spanish. The revival of these schools happened in 1961, after Cubans opened the first bilingual English-Spanish school in Florida, the Coral Way Elementary School.

When adopting the bills and laws on bilingual education in 1968 under Lyndon Johnson’s administration, the US could not adopt a law stating English as the official language without threatening the existence of these rules; indeed if the country recognizes English as the official language, the government cannot subsidize multilingual programs – or even immersion programs for speakers of other languages – at school without being in contradiction with one or the other law. For the detractors of bilingual education, full immersion is much more profitable to non-native speakers learning English. Furthermore, from a social point of view, the bilingual programs led to the ghettoization of the foreign communities – Spanish-speaking as well as other non-native communities. The main reason is that the Bilingual Education Act provides a clear entry of the students into this so-called ‘transitional’ system – where most of the materials are taught in their mother tongue and only some hours are dedicated to the learning of English – is known, but not the moment when they will start attending the general curriculum taught exclusively in English (Schrag, 1998). Another problem with the application of these measures is the lack of clarity of the laws. In California for example, after the adoption English as the official language of the State in 1986[[110]](#footnote-110), there was little effect at the legislative, judicial or administrative level as no clarification was brought as to how restrictive measures in language use and application should be taken (Nunberg, 1989). As a result, in most occasions these laws are ignored or even countered, as it was the case in some states adopting local propositions amending the main dispositions. In spite of the lack of clarity, this does not mean that the federal state is willing to get rid of the bilingual education programs; in fact, next to the *Meyer v. Nebraska* case[[111]](#footnote-111), the *Lau v. Nichols* decision suggests that there is a tacit endorsement of bilingual education; the fact that the San Francisco Unified School District was denying non-English speakers to be taught in their mother tongue was in contradiction with the Civil Rights Act, which guarantees the equality of treatment for all (May 213). However, though the decision declared illegal to exclude non-English-speaking students from the school programs under federal provisions of language protection, it did not require the schools to provide bilingual education programs either (May 214).

The Bilingual Education Act has always been criticized. Some critics attack the lack of equality presented by these policies, since the acts grant extra help and accommodation to the non-natives, letting the natives with learning difficulty or disorders aside. The act is often compared to the tower of Babel: for many activist groups against bilingualism, the project will eventually fail and lead to total chaos in education, especially for the non-natives who will never be able to fully master the English language as proficiently as the natives. Successful cases when a student does succeed and later gets a career are considered exceptional and far from the mainstream. Some critics even come from Hispanic influential people, like Ron Unz,[[112]](#footnote-112) opposed to bilingual education stating that not only it can lead to learning delays, but also lead to cultural deprivation; the most notable popular vote was the adoption of Proposition 227[[113]](#footnote-113) in California, aimed at making it so difficult for parents to enroll their children in bilingual classes that they would rather choose to put them in schools only taught in English (Schrag, 1998; Combs & Nicholas, 2012). English-Only activists launched the campaign for the popular vote of Proposition 227 when Hispanic parents in Los Angeles gave a clear signal of approval by refusing to register their children in bilingual programs (Criado, 2004). One of the arguments used was that some children having to follow accommodated classes can feel ashamed or even inferior being part of another culture (Linton, 2004). However the bilingual education programs did not expand further than the metro areas where the most amount of non-English speakers live, like in the Miami-Dade County area (Criado, 2004); this contradicts the idea that all non-English speakers register their children to schools providing bilingual programs. Nevertheless, learning the majority or dominant language constitutes a major challenge for the minority language speakers and this could explain why many students who speak a language other than English at home fail in learning English at school. In many countries, only learning the majority language by means of bilingual education (i.e. referring to and teaching in the students’ mother tongues) has proven successful. This has been the case in Norway and Wales; in Wales, education in the students’ mother tongue not only gave them a better chance of success, but also recognized their cultural and social identity (Trudgill, 2000; 126). However, in the majority of the cases, foreign languages along with foreign cultures are taught as a school matter (Joseph 55), rather than used as a tool for efficient education for non-native speakers of the dominant language.

Very often, the cost of maintaining such programs is pointed as a valid reason why the US should stop financing them. In the 1980s the British government requested a report on education in order to explain why minority children were scoring lower than White English children; the purpose was to later make policy recommendations (Tollefson, 1991; 51). The report was named after its author, Michael Swann,[[114]](#footnote-114) who was in charge of carrying out the research; this report was supposed to supplant the conclusion made a few years earlier by the Rampton Committee in their report, publicly blaming the minority children’s failures at school on their tough economic situation at home and the teachers’ expectations and attitudes at school.[[115]](#footnote-115) The Swann Report, though supporting a multicultural approach to education, strongly advocated against bilingual education (May 128). As a matter of fact, although criticizing mother-tongue education at school (Tollefson, 1991; 52), the Swann Report emphasized the importance of mother-tongue education being organized out of the school normal hours and being funded by local ethnic minorities rather than public funds; this statement confirming the idea that bilingual education programs carry a substantial financial cost for the state (Tollefson, 1991; 48). After the publication of the Swann Report – and later the Kingman Report (1988)[[116]](#footnote-116) –, Britain concluded that the teaching of and in languages other than English would be a school matter rather than a means of education. Just as the supporters of the English-Only movement advocate, the report concluded that English had a central role in the unity of the country and the fact that people felt ‘British’ (Tollefson, 1991; 55). However, the cost of stopping has never been calculated; James Tollefson, citing Grin, mentions the higher dropout rate leading to low tax payments by families due to their lower salaries, the possible increase in criminality as a result of precarious situations and the costs caused by the financing of the courses retaken several times by minority language students. All this will probably represent a higher cost than financing programs preventing the students from enduring these situations (Tollefson, 2011; 363). Based on Britain’s experience, the opponents to bilingual education should also analyze the situation not only through a neoclassical dimension, but also by considering the context from a historical-structural perspective. By doing so, they would very easily conclude that though the initial cost might be considerable, the return on investment might be even higher in terms of career opportunities, social and professional improvement and active participation in the economy.

Despite all this, the English-Only movement has never stopped actively lobbying in order to restrict language policies in the field of education. As already said, a few examples of the restrictions included in the English-Only proposals are: ban on most federal publications in other languages, prohibition of the use of public funds to translate civil lawsuits or administrative hearings, elimination of anti-discrimination guarantees for limited-English speakers in federally funded programs (like the right of parents to receive school notices in a language they can understand). The Bilingual Education Act has already suffered major damage in some jurisdictions where local authorities were allowed to pass laws restricting its application and effects.[[117]](#footnote-117) US English have even compared bilingual education to child abuse in one of their advertisements (May 215) based on the assumption that when parents talk to their children in a language other than English, they prevent them from being fully proficient in English; indeed the two reasons invoked by English-Only proponents to explain why some Hispanic students get poor results at school is the maintenance of their mother tongue and the fact that they do not speak English at home (Criado, 2004). But this argument is not a valid one; as a matter of fact, while allowing children to be taught in their mother tongue in the first grades, the Bilingual Education Act does not promote proficiency in any other language than English (Linton, 2004) and thereby does not favor the maintenance of the mother tongue. In conclusion, though it has been acknowledged by the US National Research Council that bilingual education is “useful”, the way in which it is implemented – and in particular the funds allocated in order to organize the classes, hire teachers and train the staff – is poor and insufficient in order to fulfil the real needs and provide a decent and equal education for the non-English speaking students (Schrag, 1998).

# *4.1.2 Office of Refugee Resettlement and other integration programs*

In the same way that the implication of the federal government in language policies is almost inexistent, there is hardly any effort put in the integration programs; very often newcomers do not benefit from any support from any federal program in their integration (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017). As already stated many funds for federal programs aimed at teaching English in the students’ mother tongues are being cut since the late 1980s, resulting in a relative *laissez-faire* in the implementation of integration pathways. This has been the case for the programs proposed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (Tollefson, 1991: 113). The legislation, implementation and effective funding of such programs have been relegated to the state-level, resulting in big differences from one state to the other; after the first major influx of Cuban migrants arrived in Florida in 1959, the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act was passed in 1962, authorizing for the first time financing domestic refugee assistance, though limited to the Cuban refugees in Miami (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017). Other similar programs aimed at target groups of refugees followed, determining the extent to which the first-line help was to be provided – primarily medical help and English courses. As a result of the massive arrival of refugees between the late 1950s and early 1980s, ESOL classes focused on survival English, preventing newcomers from acquiring a decent level in English, which would eventually allow them to fully integrate in US society (Tollefson, 1991: 113). Portes and Rumbaut claim that the immigrant groups receiving support from the federal programs – especially the refugees, whom the government helps with economic assistance and job apprenticeship – have a greater chance to smoothly and quickly integrate (47). This greatly affects the people attending language classes, as proven by a survey carried out by the KU Leuven: in the OCDE most people actively following an integration program do not have time to look for a job. This situation results in a capital choice: putting more emphasis on the integration process – including language classes – or find a job as means of survival (González & De Cuyper, 2013). As already seen, people following the bilingual education program often have to make such a choice. Therefore, though the resettlement programs help the newcomer in the first steps upon his arrival in his own language, they are considered as temporary in a transitional phase, as is the case with most bilingual education programs.

# *4.1.3 Voting Rights Act and Bilingual Voting Ballot Act*

Developed in the same context as and complementary to the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Voting Rights Act (1965, amended in 1975) opened the possibility to discuss the question of languages as it guarantees the rights of minority groups to articulate their ethnic identity on a political and cultural way. These acts initiated a general hope for minority groups, especially for citizens brought up in Spanish who felt that they were disadvantaged since English was the only language to be used in the public sphere (Linton, 2004); however the initial main focus of the Voting Rights Act was the protection and rights of the African American community in the South (Schuit & Rogowski, 2017). Such concerns were addressed to the lawmakers and resulted in the establishment of language provisions for citizens having limited English proficiency in the context of an election (Engstrom, 2012). The main idea of the Voting Rights Act was to prevent any authority, being federal, state or local, from denying the right to vote based on the voters’ proficiency in English.[[118]](#footnote-118) These provisions range from “voter registration through activities related to conducting elections, including, for example, the issuance, at any time during the year, of notifications, announcements, or other informational materials concerning the opportunity to register, the deadline for voter registration, the time, places, and subject matters of elections, and the absentee voting process”.[[119]](#footnote-119) The genesis of this act started in the 1960s when Puerto Ricans in New York obtained the right to vote in Spanish; the state had to translate the voting ballots in order for them to do so (Linton, 2004). The act also provides language regulation in case of state ballot propositions in the different jurisdictions affected by its reach (Engstrom, 2012) (i.e. popular votes, when the citizens decide whether or not a state should adopt a policy), as was the case for the official state language in Florida.

The Voting Rights Act has been criticized in its multilingual dimension. Very soon after its adoption, Representative Steve King from Iowa stated: “Multilingual ballots divide our country, increase the risk of voter error and fraud, and burden local taxpayers. The multilingual ballot mandate encourages the linguistic division of our nation and contradicts the ‘Melting Pot’ ideal that has made us the most successful multi-ethnic nation on earth.” As other members of the Republican Party, he was in favor of taking out the language provisions guaranteed by the act; nevertheless the resolution never passed. In 2005 a survey was carried all over the country in the jurisdictions where the multilingual ballots should have been implemented and showed that two-thirds did not comply with the basic requirements in terms of community outreach by providing assistance in languages other than English (Engstrom, 2012), even though this was enforced by the Department of Justice: “The requirements of the law are straightforward: all election information that is available in English must also be available in the minority language so that all citizens will have an effective opportunity to register, learn the details of the elections, and cast a free and effective ballot”. Further research also showed that some geographical areas – even the areas populated by a large non-English speaking community – often get around this rule and do not provide the necessary material in the voter’s language (Parkin & Zlotnick, 2014).

As already mentioned, the primary focus of the Voting Rights Act was the emancipation of the Black community, granting them more rights in the electoral system resulting eventually in the election of the first Black president in the American history (Schuit & Rogowski, 2017). Nonetheless language provisions granted through the act in Sec. 4 also helped Hispanic leaders in being nominated for important electoral races and sometimes being elected, by addressing electoral messages in Spanish to their fellow constituents. Despite these guarantees studies showed that the electoral participation of citizens from a language minority keeps decreasing after each election (Parkin & Zlotnick, 2014). Nevertheless the act guarantees at the national level the rights of any voter to get the information required for doing their duty in any language they want, and no jurisdiction at any level can suppress these provision without obtaining the preclearance[[120]](#footnote-120) from the Department of Justice. Florida adopted a bill (H.B. 1355) amending 80 dispositions of the Voting Rights Act (Ellement, 2013), but none of the changes affected the language guarantees granted by the act. The Voting Rights Act has been an important step in the consideration of millions of non-English speaking citizens and their participation in political life and helps protecting language rights in the US.

# 4.2 State and local policies

When it comes to language-related matters, the state is free to define its own policy, as long as it does not interfere with the federal Constitution.[[121]](#footnote-121) Based on this disposition, Florida granted English the status of official language of the state. Nevertheless some matters like education are local and decided at the county level as already mentioned. Public schools have an important role to play when it comes to the integration of language minorities (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017); on the one hand they have to make sure that the non-English speaking students become English proficient and on the other hand they have to implement the federal programs affecting education (i.e. the Bilingual Education Act). Though the state cannot directly intervene in the school system, it can adopt some measures regarding the implementation of the federal programs, as was the case in California with Proposition 227 and in Arizona with Proposition 203 (Combs & Nicholas, 2012); both these propositions aimed at turning the statewide bilingual education programs in public schools into very limited immersion classes. Nevertheless many schools in Arizona obtained waivers and continued organizing classes based on the federal bilingual programs. After having backed up both these propositions, Ron Unz supported other similar initiatives in states like Colorado, Massachusetts or Texas; the outcome of these many popular votes was the maintenance of bilingual programs, but with important changes aimed at weakening its range of application (Criado, 2004). The success of the so-called ‘Unz propositions’ reside in the support they get from the Hispanic vote (Criado, 2004; Combs & Nicholas, 2012)

Immigrants’ integration is also handled at the local level by the creation of task forces, committees and other official groups organized by the local authorities (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017). This is the case in some cities in Florida; the Hola Office assists Orlando’s newcomers in connecting with the local residents, businesses and in getting involved into the community.[[122]](#footnote-122) Other initiatives cover nationwide actions, like the group Cities in Action in which mayors from the whole country actively take part in the initiatives, like addressing public letters to Washington; the 8th mission of the group is: “Work to reduce financial, language, and informational barriers to citizenship”. Their major concern is to help newcomers integrating; lately the mayors of Floridian cities Orlando and Oakland Park signed a letter to the Congress regarding the Dream Act and their concerns about young immigrants’ integration.[[123]](#footnote-123) Nevertheless, though inclusive and addressed to a non-English speaking target group, none of the abovementioned initiatives tend to promote language diversity or propose a more liberal and flexible language policy allowing people to use the language they want in an official context. However, they do not advocate either for the suppression of the language rights and protective provisions guaranteed by the federal policies.

# 5. Future of Spanish in Florida

As we have seen, Hispanics are the largest minority language group in Florida; it is therefore important in this debate to discuss the future of the language in the state. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Spanish has been the language of the immigrant, the illegal resident in the US and Americans tend to forget that it is the first language of native Mexicans born in the southwest (Criado, 2004); it is time the feeling embodied by the Spanish language becomes more positively connotated in order to give credit to those using Spanish as a first language in Florida and generally speaking in the US. For the last couple of decades, the learning of Spanish at school or university has risen in the US. However, the teaching of the language lacks resources, resulting in the creation of long waiting lists of students willing to learn or improve it. As a matter of fact, enrollments for Spanish courses represent the highest proportion among all enrollments in foreign language courses in the USA, outnumbering them by over 3 to 1. The reason why so many students opt for Spanish is due partly to the belief that Spanish is one of the easiest language to speak – idea mostly carried by the omnipresence in the American society and culture of what Lipski calls ‘junk Spanish’, which can be called Spanglish to some extent –, but also because many know that Spanish is the *de facto* second language of the USA – and of Florida – and one of the three most spoken languages in the world, particularly important when it comes to international trade with Latin America (Lipski 2002). The importance and the growth of the Hispanic community in the US makes it a central actor in the economic and political life (Criado, 2004); not only more and more politicians of Hispanic origin run for different positions at all levels – federal, state and local – but the wealth of Hispanic businessmen is estimated in billions of dollars, most of this wealth generated in Miami, Florida.

School has a central role to play in the propagation of the multilingual ideology and by extent the positive image of Spanish; multilingualism should be promoted not only as means of teaching the languages which will constitute the base of a multilingual society, but also in advertising and advertising the model to the future generations. As mentioned in the previous chapters when dealing with bilingual education, the lack of financial and logistical resources allocated to the teaching of Spanish results in the qualification of Spanish courses by most teaching organizations as the ‘Spanish problem’ (Lipski 2002), giving symbolically a negative connotation to the course. In the same idea, John Lipski notes that the Spanish language teachers in high school are often underappreciated (2002), whereas they should get more attention from the state in order to be able to perform more successfully. Schools need to recognize the benefits of bilingualism throughout the children’s education; indeed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “all children must be allowed to speak their own language and to practice their own religion and culture” (Kaplan, 2015), assuming therefore that the maintenance of their mother tongue through education and the valorization of their cultural background is central in their empowerment. As Robert Kaplan states, citing other research, the benefits of bilingualism include greater creative thinking, flexibility and tolerance toward other cultures (2015); bilingual individuals might be the bridge between two cultures, allowing smoother communication and integration of the minority or immigrant one.

Spanish is omnipresent in all aspects of the American society nowadays; not only it is used at home, but also in church, at work, at school and in the media (Otheguy & Stern, 2010). In the popular use, Spanish in the US has evolved into becoming a hybrid language, a new linguistic reality for millions of Hispanics who define the language they speak as Spanglish (Betti, 2011), because they consider that they do not speak Spanish well enough. Would Spanglish be a realistic alternative to English and Spanish in places where both languages are spoken in order not to give advantage to one or the other language? It is important to first consider the amount of speakers Spanglish accounts. Usually the line between those who consider that they speak Spanish and those who pretend they cannot and only speak some form of Spanglish is very blurry and difficult to draw (Otheguy & Stern, 2010); therefore it is impossible to hold a reliable census on the total amount of speakers. In addition, since it is not codified, it is very difficult to determine whether someone is proficient in Spanglish, having no framework for comparison. As a matter of fact, Spanglish was originally used to describe the popular form of language which is used by Hispanics in the US; it only describes language in its oral form.[[124]](#footnote-124) Though Spanglish is not a language (Betti, 2011) since it is not codified (i.e. it has no established grammar or fixed syntax), it would be considered as a form of code-switching[[125]](#footnote-125) – or lexical borrowings in its simplest form. In this regard it can be compared to Ceutan Arabic. The term Spanglish is often used to characterize the biculturality of its speakers (Otheguy & Stern, 2010) – two worlds, two sensitivities and two languages (Betti, 2011) –, and like Dariya with Spanish and Arabic speakers in Spain, Spanglish speakers are not very well viewed by either the English or the Spanish speakers (Otheguy & Stern, 2010), even though some consider it as a variety of standard Spanish (Betti, 2011). This is due not only to the bicultural value carried by these languages – and thus not a ‘pure’ language – but also to the fact that neither Spanglish nor Dariya are recognized as official languages. The situation of Dariya was similar to the one of Valencian which has always been considered as a variation of Catalan or Galician a dialect of Portuguese, until they both were officially recognized and consequently codified (Moscoso, 2015). Though the expansive use of Valencian is noticeable following its recognition by the region where its native speakers live, this process still needs to be observed for Ceutan Arabic in Spain and to Spanglish in the United States. Nevertheless, most experts (i.e. linguists, professors or translators) are not in favor of the extended use of Spanglish in the US (Betti, 2011). Therefore Spanglish cannot be considered as a linguistic alternative for the future; some even describe it as an interference created in order to cope with the need of integration in a foreign society.[[126]](#footnote-126)

Having discarded the possibility to use an alternative language, a multilingual approach seems to remain the only solution, as the assimilationist approach preferred for decades in the twentieth century has proven ineffective. Furthermore the ability to use many languages represent a major economic and competitive resource for the state and for the individuals (Ager 177). Rather than focusing their attention on the symbolic role of English, and the symbolic value of giving English an official status, policymakers should focus on a more long-term projection for what they expect for the state. If they want the Florida to be more competitive within the USA and also internationally, seen the geographical position of the peninsula and its economic situation of major trade partner for Latin America, the state should definitely have a plan for the teaching of Spanish at a much larger scale than it is now – not just for students from Latin American background, but for all students. In the modern world economy, the need for bilingual individuals constitutes a major advantage for any nation. As is often pointed out by the major economic groups or brands in the US, the knowledge in a foreign language may be an asset both on the domestic market – with Spanish as the most important language at the national level – and on the global market – with Mandarin as the most important language at the international level – when SME’s want to develop their activities (Sonntag 52). Nevertheless the US is losing this potential, as it is often considered as a ‘language graveyard’[[127]](#footnote-127) and the spread of English as a ‘linguistic genocide’[[128]](#footnote-128); the rapid acculturation of the immigrants and their shift towards English in the second generation causes a loss of linguistic resources in the minority communities. Illustrating this is the fact that, very often, bilinguals have lower salaries than English monolinguals – this is particularly true when we talk about bilinguals in Spanish – because, rather than being positively perceived as an economic opportunity, bilingualism is only considered as means of communicating with once own community (Linton, 2004). On the contrary, if we compare it with Belgium, the perception of bilingualism among the population in the region of Brussels and its surroundings is positive and usually gives a major advantage in the job market,[[129]](#footnote-129) allowing the workers to benefit from better opportunities in terms of job quality and salaries.

By adopting a progressive plan to promote the learning or maintenance of a second language, the US could use millions of second-generation immigrants who have been taught their mother tongue at home and could therefore use it for the benefit of the nation (Rumbaut, 2009; Sonnetag 54). To support this view, according to a survey from the General Social Survey carried out in 2000, the American public considered bilingualism as an asset; furthermore, this survey shows that Americans wanted to keep bilingual education, as they felt important for the students to learn a second language by the end of high school.[[130]](#footnote-130) If on the contrary the state is counting on the immigrants to assimilate after one or two generations, it is a risky bet, seen the constant influx of Hispanic immigrants; there will therefore always be newcomers who only speak Spanish and the Spanish-speaking community will keep being refilled every year with newly-arrived members. In addition to this, the future status of Puerto Rico as a potential 51st state in the Union might also trigger the situation; as a matter of fact, if the island becomes a state, its citizens – who speak Spanish as first language and as official and main language of the territory – will request the possibility to use their mother tongue invoking the language provisions in the Civil Rights Act. This situation could be problematic if Florida keeps its general policy against multilingualism, since many Puerto Ricans settle in Florida every year and keep speaking Spanish.

# Conclusion

Florida adopted the amendment on the official state language at the same period when many other states decided to make English their official language, giving thereby a clear signal to the immigrant populations: “welcome to America! Now speak English!” Such a law passed in the aftermath of the many attempts from the English-Only movement to adopt a federal amendment on the official language of the US. Nevertheless, since such an amendment would have failed to combine with the many federal programs aimed at providing multilingual services to the non-English speakers, it has never passed. The German notion of “one state, one people, one language” is a relic from the past, dated from the eighteenth century. Such statements were very popular at a time when the nation-states were being created and organized throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Reilly, 2013; Kaplan, 2015). Three centuries later, the need to have only one language per country or state is outdated and totally out of context; facts prove that multilingual states can work - though some encounter difficulties when it comes to the racial question often associated with the language – and South Africa, Canada, India, Belgium or Switzerland can be cited as such countries having official multilingual policies,[[131]](#footnote-131) or in the US context, Hawaii or New Mexico have multilingual policies and linguistic recognitions of minority languages[[132]](#footnote-132). Nowadays most of the world is bilingual; biculturalism and bilingualism become the norm in most of the countries (Kaplan, 2015).

In her analysis of the factors why English-Only policies could be adopted in the different US states, Schildkraut enumerated four major criteria[[133]](#footnote-133) already used by Tatalovich. Based on the results of the analysis focusing on these criteria, she concludes that “if the state-level phenomenon is analogous to national-level policymaking, then the fact that there is no institutional provision for a national direct initiative could imply that a national language law will not get adopted” (Schildkraut, 2001). In other words, most of the state-level amendments making English the official language have been passed thanks to the popular vote; as long as the federal Constitution does not provide the possibility to pass a federal law by popular vote will probably result in the US never recognizing English as the official language. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the major argument used by English-Only groups was the need for a national common and unique language as a symbol of the American culture and identity (May 208); however, this implies that there is only one homogeneous culture in the US, and thereby denies any sub-cultures the right to be represented. May points out that, though national identities are purely artificially made, they are meaningful to a large number of people (308); therefore it is capital for Florida, and generally for the US, to take into account all forms of American identity when defining their state or national policy on language. The whole debate articulates around the symbolic question of what it means to be American, which explains why states adopt symbolic laws having hardly any effect at all.

As we have seen the main target group of the English-Only lobby in Florida is the Hispanics; in the propaganda they depict the non-English-speaking Hispanics as no willing to assimilate and to integrate, and therefore un-American. Nevertheless the US need to accept that their Hispanics can feel both truly American and proud members of the Hispanic community; since races are still an important socio-economic marker, it could help Hispanics to be considered as a full race and not a cultural group (Criado, 2004). Very often the immigrants’ ability and capacity to learn English does not reflect their real wish to be proficient in English; as said there is a need to accommodate the people would do not speak English since it is not always linked to a personal refusal of learning the language. As May suggests, “Changing the language preferences of the state and civil society, or at least broadening them, would better reflect the cultural and linguistic demographics of most of today’s multinational (and polyethnic) states” (164). Though May is referring to the national minorities (i.e. the indigenous populations of a given territory), he acknowledges that the same can be applied to other (non-national) ethnic minorities. He also adds that, by giving a status to the languages spoken by the minorities, it will notably improve their chances of success in life by granting them the same rights and participation in public services, employment and education. This last argument is central when it comes to discussing the integration in social life of millions of Hispanics in the US.

As is the case for the US, Australia is home to speakers from many different languages. The set of policies giving certain rights to these minority and native languages and defining their uses need to be explicitly adopted in concerted action by the different bodies of the country: “Australia is a federation and therefore a national policy involves the participation of the governments which comprise Australia” (Lo Bianco, 1987b). It is crucial that the various bodies responsible for the implementation aspects of the policy coordinate their efforts to have a coherent action. In the case of Australia, the national policy on languages was seen as a way for the country to recognize the linguistic diversity, to strengthen national unity and improve the country’s position at the regional level especially when it came to commercial relations with the neighboring countries; only the latter argument was retained when redefining the Australian national policy on language in the late 1990s.[[134]](#footnote-134) Similarly to Australia, the US should not let the states adopt laws which are incompatible with the federal provisions, and rather act as a mediator in order to harmonize the linguistic measures. Only through coordination between the state and the federal government will a clear and explicit language policy not only be adopted, but also be implemented; as a matter of fact, even though the majority of the US states have adopted English as the official language, the effect of the state laws are inexistent because it is in contradiction with the federal and local provisions.

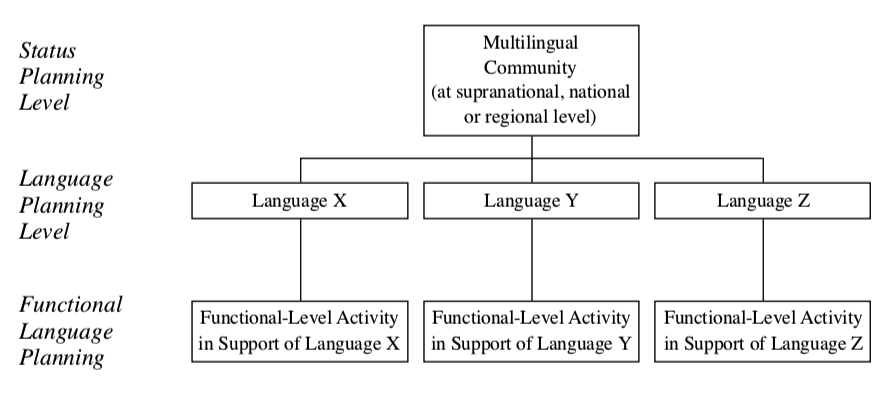
An additional argument toward a coordinated multilingual policy would be the fact that all parties – not only the non-English-speaking population but also the state – will benefit from these measures. As Lo Bianco writes, “the fundamental objective of the language planning in Australia becomes, therefore, to ensure that Australia derives maximum benefit from its rich linguistic resources” (1987b). He goes on by emphasizing how important the cultural value of non-English speakers is for Australia, and how they needed not only official recognition, but also official support. Language maintenance and bilingualism are beneficial for the citizens as well as for the country. They are therefore a valuable asset not only for the country’s economy, but also for the national culture. Very often in the US there has been a bifurcation, some asymmetries between the national domestic language program and the international language program; indeed the domestic roadmap has been trying to assimilate the non-English speakers and to create a situation of national monolingualism, whereas the international – or foreign-language – roadmap tends to promote multilingualism among the US population in order to fulfil the role of international power (Sonntag 51) and become more competitive in world trade relations. Clear language policies could help in solving the gap in the national approach on languages. Hispanics are aware of the benefits of linguistic diversity in the US; this is why learning English is as important as maintaining Spanish for them (Gershon & Pantoja, 2011). On the other hand the consideration for minority languages in the US is quite negative; most children are taught very young that the language which their parents are using is not legitimately acceptable and has less value than English (Portes & Rumbaut 271). Such statements lead to dissonant acculturation of the children through a strong assimilation, rather than to selective acculturation. By doing so lawmakers forget that the primary function of language is to communicate; therefore the choice people make to use one of the other language is not linked to the will not to integrate, but rather to the wish to be understood in once environment and community (Linton, 2004). This factor also explains why the maintenance of Spanish among Hispanics is prevalent in densely populated urban areas rather than in rural areas.

The basic concept of nation-state at the American level needs to be remodeled and reimagined in order to separate the notion of national identity from the language, and thereby accommodate greater cultural and linguistic diversity (May 311). As we have seen it is possible to be a Spanish-speaker and feel American in Florida. The Spanish Constitution and the Australian policy on languages show that territories – being here countries, regions or states in the case of Florida – expect their residents to have some knowledge in the national language, along with them being allowed to use their minority language as part of their individual rights (May 312). What is here encouraged is bilingualism – or multilingualism – as has already been explained in the previous paragraphs. April Linton even advocates to define assimilation in the US context as the bilingualism rather than monolingualism in English (2004). However, by promoting bilingual policies the state gives a considerable advantage of one particular minority language group over the other groups – in the case of Florida, this language would be Spanish –; therefore, when establishing language policies, the state should take care of recognizing allminority groups (May 313), as has been the case in Australia in the past. To summarize my whole point in one sentence, as is the case for the situation in Ceuta where always more experts – mostly linguists and sociologists – advocate for the implementation of a multilingual policy, multilingualism must be the norm, *de facto* or *de jure* whenever possible (Joseph 44). The debate in the US needs to involve the point of view of linguists regarding the question of language diversity in order to have an inclusive policy on languages rather than an exclusive one; as a matter of fact this issue is a political one rather than a sociological one (Wiley, 1998).

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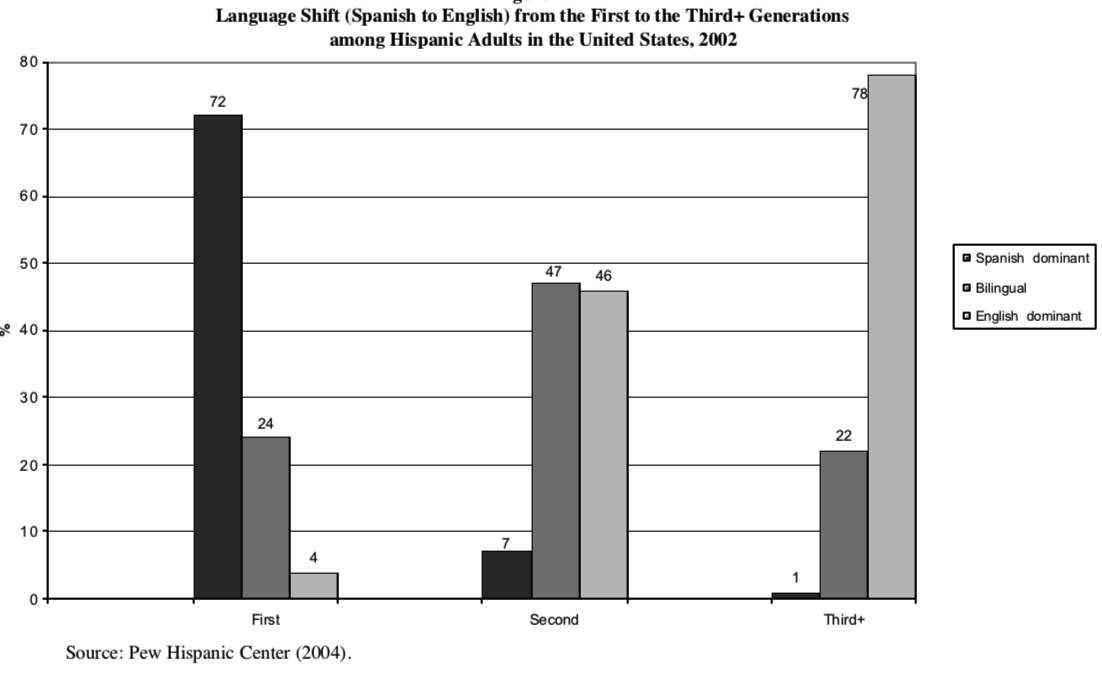
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# **ANNEX I**



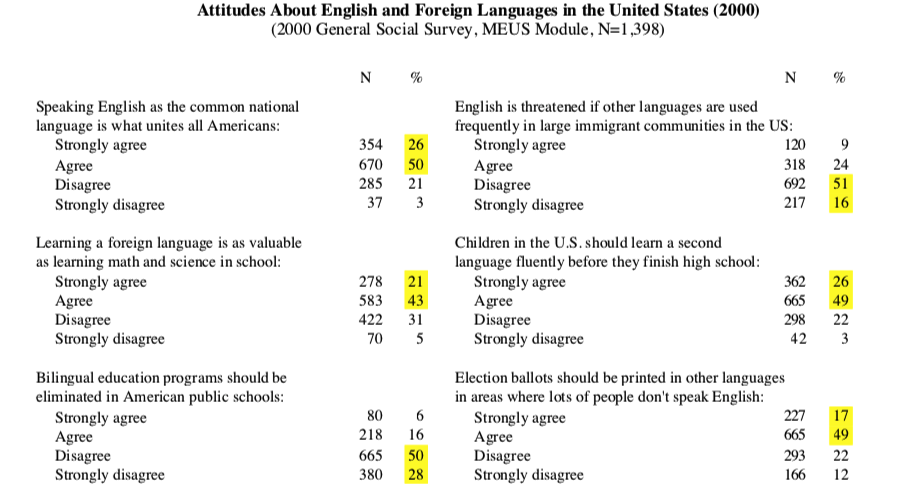
In this figure, Mac Donnacha shows that, whenever confronted to a multilingual community at any kind of level, the language planning process in its two latest phases (or levels) needs to be differentiated per language.

# **ANNEX II**



In this figure, the Pew Hispanic Center draws the attention on two aspects of language shift: it shows the reverse tendency between the first- and third-generation immigrants in the language mostly used (Spanish for the first, English for the latter), and it emphasizes the importance of bilingualism among the second generation.

# **ANNEX III**

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This figure shows how the American public opinion is in favor of bilingualism at school; they recognize the importance of knowing another language in addition to English, as we can see in the highlighted figures (in yellow).

1. Namely the United States Post Service, the United States Customs and Immigration Services and the Department for Motorized Vehicles [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See section 2.2.1 for the terminology [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See section 2.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See section 4.1.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It is important to note that the number of Puerto Ricans in Central Florida has significantly increased in the last quarter of 2017 following the devastation caused by hurricane Maria. According to several newspapers (Miami Herald, Nov 15th 2017; New York Times, Nov 17th 2017; CNN, Nov 18th 2017), more than 150,000 Islanders have moved to Florida in 2 months. However, further study revealed that this number was taken based on the air arrivals from the island in 2-month time, including also returning tourists. Based on the official requests for aid after the hurrican (FEMA applications), about 5 500 applications have been submitted in Florida, corresponding tot he number of families who relocated in the state (according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See section 2.2.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Figures from the 2000 language census suggested that over 21% of the Latinos or Hispanics did not speak Spanish (Criado, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See sections 2.2 and 4.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Language shift is the process of language displacement, which takes place among the linguistic minority community over three generations, from the community language spoken by the first-generation immigrants towards the new language (May 145). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See section 1.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See section 2.3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For example, the Quechua community in Peru has actively taken part in the implementation and evaluation of the bilingual programs in Quechua and Spanish. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See section 1.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See section 4.1.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. First-generation Cubans and their children in Miami were even richer than the local white non-Hispanic residents. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. i.e. the language which is more likely to be widely understood. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See section 2.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See annex I [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See section 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See section 4.1.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Most bills introduced since the early twentieth century focused on the official character of English. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See section 3.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Note that when talking about a dominant language, we are talking about the importance – or the status – of this language in a given context (i.e. social, economic or geographical). It is not based on a world ranking of languages. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Note that Aboriginal languages are not included in this category. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See section 3.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See section 3.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See section 4.1.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See section 3.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See section 3.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Tatalovich also noted that in states where the immigrant population was so important that they were close to become the majority group, the outcome of a referendum – also called initiative – was more likely to be a rejection of the English-Only policy at the local or county level. This has been noted in some counties in states like California, Arizona and Florida (Schildkraut, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Act of acquisition, through which the US became the owner of the former French colony of Louisiana. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Missouri [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Article XI, Section 21 of the 1849 Constitution of the State of California [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Article I, Section 27 of the Constitution of the State of Nebraska. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. In 1918 Iowa even prohibited German in all the spheres of society: administrative, business and private use of German was strictly forbidden until the Supreme Court declared the law to be invalid in the 1920’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Meyer v. Nebraska* [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. In these states Hispanics represent more than 10% of the entire population. There are 34 American states and territories (like the bilingual territory of Puerto Rico) that approved English as the official language – or as co-official language – in their constitution. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See section 3.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/ [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. US citizens can freely choose whether they feel or identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino or not. It is a question of personal choice. Therefore official numbers may be biased. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. According to Fishman, the process of language shift might take up to four generations for the Hispanics, due to the constant flow of immigrants coming from Latin America (May 214). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See sections 2.2.2 and 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Definition inspired by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, fourth edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/> [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. US Census 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Note that the figures for Florida are lower than the reality; as suggested by Marytza Sanz and Marucci Guzman, coordinators of the Central Florida Census Corner Project for 2010, Florida is the most undercounted state when it comes to figures for Hispanics because many undocumented migrants fear repression and deportation and prefer not to take part in the Census data collection. Another explanation is that a lot of non-English-speaking migrants do not know or understand what this data collection is and do not fill in the forms. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/map/US/RHI725216 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Survey carried out between 2009 and 2013 by the US Census Bureau, showing who among the people aged 5+ speaks Spanish at home. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See annex II [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. This is due to the fact that when Europeans migrated to the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the physical distance made it impossible for them to keep strong ties with their homeland; furthermore most of them never left the national boundaries once they moved to the US (Kaplan, 2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Note that in some cases Black Latinos/Hispanics appear in both Black and Latino/Hispanic categories; same thing with white Latinos/Hispanics. Even if in the official US Census a person wants to be registered as Black/White and Latino/Hispanic, the data will consider this person to be only Latino/Hispanic (2000 Census). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/16/with-fewer-new-arrivals-census-lowers-hispanic-population-projections-2/ [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Rumbaut states that the first generation speaks mostly Spanish, the second is bilingual and the third is mostly English speaking. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. See section 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Cited in a book review from Ha Lam, Arizona State University, 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Term applied to US residents – citizens or not – of Mexican origin and not to be confused with *Tejanos* (see section 4.2). The term *chicano* can also refer to the English and/or Spanish spoken by Mexican-Americans (Trudgill, 2003; 21). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. However, it is important to point out that at the time when the first American pioneers crossed the Midwest and headed to the Pacific in the early 1800's, the estimated Mexican population in the current ttern states (including Texas) was 100,000. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See section 3.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. According to the US Census 2016 estimates. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. The I-4 is an interstate motorway going from Tampa Bay to Daytona Beach through Central Florida, cutting the peninsula in the middle from East to West. The I-4 corridor here refers to the areas bordering the motorway. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Though Marc Gottlob and Hale Smith differ and claim that Ponce de León was confronted to a

    native speaking Spanish. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Hispanization is a term used for the ongoing process of implication of Hispanics in political, economic, social and cultural matters. It also refers to the incursion of the Spanish language in all spheres of life. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Informally called *New Yoricans*. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. As already mentioned, many Puerto Ricans fled to Florida in the aftermath of the hurricane. According to Governor Rick Scott, more than 300,000 Puerto Ricans arrived in Florida in 3 months; however, economists of the University of Florida in Gainsville stated that only about 50,000 people left the island. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. See section 3.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. See section 4.1.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. If 5% of the registered population or more than 10,000 people in a given district is allophone, the law obliges the administration to translate the ballots in case of elections (Parkin & Zlotnick, 2014). This also applies for administrative paperwork like driver's license and other official forms. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Figures from the US and Florida Congresses [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. One of the reasons why the territory has not reached statehood yet is for linguistic reasons (Wiley, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Linda Chavez is an American author, [commentator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pundit_(expert)), and radio talk show host from Hispanic descent. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. One of the many examples is that Chavez presided US English and supported the claims made by the lobby until she felt personally targeted by co-founder John Tanton who was ‘anti-Hispanic’ and ‘anti-Catholic’ in her view. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. In 1988, Governor Bob Martinez, a Hispanic Republican, was in office. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. See section 3.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Samuel Hayakawa was a Republican Senator from 1977 until 1983 for California. He was a Canadian born American, of Japanese ancestry. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Citing James Crawford, “Hold Your Tongue!” [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. https://www.oyez.org/cases/1996/95-974 [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Result of a telephone survey carried out by Gary C. Lawrence Co. of Santa Ana, CA, 1992 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Citing James Crawford, “Hold Your Tongue!” [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. See section 3.4.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See section 3.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Term borrowed from Spanish referring to the Mexicans living in Texas before the annexation. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. https://www.usenglish.org/official-english/about-the-issue/ [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. See section 3.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Figures vary depending on the source. For more information about the status of each language: https://www.ethnologue.com/country/US [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. J.A. Fishman, Interpolity perspective on the relationships between linguistic heterogeneity, civil strife and per capita gross national product, 1991, cited in Crawford, 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. See section 3.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. See section 3.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. EPIC is a coalition established by the National Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Forum and the Joint National Committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. See section 3.4.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. See section 3.4.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. See section 1.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. As part of the Child Migrant Education Program and the different bilingual education programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/information-in-your-language [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Called in Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas*, autonomous communities [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Ceuta has been under Spanish dominion since the nineteenth century as a fortified city. Later, the north of Morocco became a Spanish protectorate, the western part under the tutelage of Ceuta. Arabs have constantly been present in Ceuta since then. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. The Ceutan dialect of Arabic – also known as *Dariya* – is not normative in the sense that it is not written, and uses many patterns of Spanish. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. See section 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. The three first texts are the Declararation of Independance, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. See *Meyer v. Nebraska, Lau v. Nichols* [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/997 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Proposition 63 was approved by 73.2% of the voters [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. See section 1.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Ron Unz is a powerful Silicon Valley businessman of Hispanic origin. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. In 1998, Proposition 227 limited the access to these programs only to parents requesting it, and for a maximum period of one year; the majority of the voting Hispanics - more than 60% - supported the proposition. Taking the example of the Europeans coming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, these Latinos are favorable to public acculturation – not private, though – for a better and quicker integration. The proposition was repealed by Proposition 58 in 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. The Swann Report (1985) is the reference in terms of bilingual education analysis in Britain. It has often been criticized by proponents to bilingual education programs as being biased by the conservative ‘pro-English’ government in place at that time in Britain (Tollefson, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. The British government did not accept the Rampton Report assigning responsibility to school and the economy; therefore they mandated another committee for elaborating a second report, which would focus more on the minority students and their parents bearing responsibility for the situation in which they were. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. The British government ordered the Kingman Report in an attempt to reassert the dominance of English in the UK; as a consequence the report had to strongly support the primacy of English (Tollefson, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. As was the case in California or in Arizona. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Voting Rights Act, Sec. 4. (e)(1) and (2) [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Department of Justice regulations [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Particularly true in the southern states, because of their long history of discrimination, the procedure obliges states willing to amend the dispositions granted by the Voting Rights Act to obtain the preclearance from the Department of Justice, as provided by Sec. 5 of the act. The purpose of this preclearance is to determine whether the change will affect the voters’ access to the electoral system based on their race or color. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. See section 2.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. http://www.cityoforlando.net/hola/ [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. <http://www.citiesforaction.us/release_2018_06_05> [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. It is common to hear words like sóbbuey, lonch, bildin, trok, jáiscul, from English subway, lunch, building, truck, and high school (Otheguy & Stern, 2010), though these are met in their written form mostly for marketing and advertising purposes. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. R. A. Martínez cited in Betti, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. L. F. Lara, cited in Betti, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Term used by Portes and Rumbaut and by Linton [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Term used by Day and Skutnabb-Kangas, cited in May [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Information from Brussels Employment Office Actiris [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. See annex III [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Note that these countries have multilingual policies accommodating the national “ethnic” languages, not the languages of modern immigration. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. As is the case for many European countries, Hawaii and New Mexico recognize what they consider to be ethnie languages, i.e. languages spoken in the territories before the English-speaking Americans came. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. See section 3.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. See section 3.4.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)