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**National Identities in Britain and Spain.
Notes towards an SLA Approach to a Better Future**

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Abstract

When Nairn first published *The Break-Up of Britain* (1977), the UK remained one of the most highly centralised states in Europe. The situation was not really that different from that in Spain in the wake of Franco's death (1975). Almost four decades afterwards, decentralisation applies to both countries. Scotland, Wales and (an increasingly normalised) Northern Ireland all enjoy devolved powers whilst Spain is now made up of "autonomous communities" which have turned the country into a federal state in all but name. Even though such moves were originally made to diminish the increasing pressure from peripheral nationalisms, the threat of separatist movements within both the UK and Spain is more acute than ever. The British Government has recently made it legally possible for Scotland to hold a referendum over its possible independence in 2014 whilst the newly elected Catalan Parliament is set to call a referendum on Catalonia's right to self-determination in the same year.

The present paper will explore national identity issues in Britain and Spain. In order to do so, this work will revise the "Projections onto a greater self" thesis (Prieto-Arranz 2009), looking back into the past of both nation-states so as to emphasise the parallels between their respective national identity discourses and point to a possible future, touching upon language policy and second language learning issues, as applicable in both countries, and their relation to identity, given that bilingualism "can help [bilinguals] to be more inclined to understand, accept and enjoy diversity" (Bilbatua and Ellis 2011, 14).

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