

Daniel Madrid & Miguel A. Pérez Abad



The FL
Curriculum in
Spain and
Australia

Edited by Miguel A. Pérez Abad



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FOREWORD

Over the recent years all Western governments' education authorities have engaged at one time or another in the deep reform of their educational systems. This responds to an overwhelming reason: the world is transforming itself so rapidly in the last few years that it is a must to make every effort to keep pace with rocketing changes and come to grips with a 'global village' standpoint. This perspective of globalisation and holistic approach has permeated every educational system, and has posed a challenge to our societies. In the educational field, and more precisely in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, research has led to a far-reaching makeover in the curricula of L2. This is all relatively new, specially in Spain. The aim of this work is to contribute to a better understanding of the processes involved for teachers, learners and parents.

The first article deals with the Foreign Language Curriculum in Spain in secondary education. This is mainly covered by the English Language. It has been written by Daniel Madrid, who is a well-known university teacher and expert in this domain. He is fully committed to the design of the new Foreign Language (FL) curriculum, has widely published on ELT and the Foreign Language Curriculum (FLL), and provides a clarifying survey of the curricular framework, its objectives, teaching procedures, methodological guidelines, assessment criteria, etc.

In the second article, Miguel A. Pérez explains the main outlines of the FLL in Australia. When we refer to FLL in this part of the world, we must think of several languages, ranging from

Hindi, Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Thai, etc., to Croatian, Greek, Italian or Spanish. The set-up of so many curricula is an endeavour that the Australian Ministry of Education has undertaken and is developing to a highly satisfactory degree. The author is at present Technical Adviser to the Education Office of the Spanish Embassy (Australia), and has close links with the Education Departments of both States and the Federal Government.

We are proud to publish this joint effort, and invite the reader to find the many coincidences that relate one education system to another, in the hope to shed some light into this complex educational matter.

Miguel A. Pérez Abad – Editor
Melbourne (Australia), August 1999

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE SPANISH CONTEXT

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In contemporary society the need to know and be able to use foreign languages - and especially English - whether it be for professional social or purely personal reasons, has become a pressing one. Developments in communications and the increasing contact between countries and peoples have led to the rise of large socio-political organisations involving the constant exchange of information, and, indeed, of persons. Again, the fact that Spain has been a full member of the European Union for some years has brought with it the need for new approaches to the teaching and learning of English at secondary and university levels.

1. THE SPANISH SECOND LANGUAGE CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

At present, it is intended to extend the general communicative competence of the students by means of the acquisition of new concepts, strategies, abilities and techniques. Acquisition of a language is undertaken in a more reflective manner, in such a way that it encourages a deeper and more analytical knowledge of the mother tongue. Teachers are recommended to start from the basis of pragmatics, considering discourse (text) as the object of teaching and learning, thus going beyond the structuralist

paradigm, based as it was on the study of (relatively) isolated and non-contextualized sentences. Thus contextualisation in texts, dialogues, etc. is vital in order to make learning as realistic as possible and to favour interaction, social contact and the association of meanings with their situational context.

The official guidelines from the Department of Education take as a starting point the model suggested by Canale (1983) which is also recommended in most of the orientations set down by the Regional Educational Authorities. That is, it is assumed that the aim of teaching and learning a foreign language is that of developing the student's communicative competence, this being composed of 6 basic sub-competences:

- linguistic competence* (phonetic, semantic, morphosyntactic)
- sociolinguistic competence* (communicative functions, speech acts, intentions ...)
- discourse competence* (different text-types, internal structure, the relationship between cohesion and coherence)
- strategic competence* (cognitive, metacognitive, affective and communicative strategies)
- sociocultural competence* (social and cultural contexts)

Foreign language learning and teaching is thought of as a creative process which allows us to elaborate the different levels of internal representation of the new linguistic system in a progressive manner. The different contexts of communication which are presented in materials enable the students to build new meanings, as is advocated by Piaget. School syllabuses are designed cyclically (cf. Madrid and McLaren 1993, 1994) and tend to introduce the elements which make up the foreign language in

communicative situations. These elements recur later in different contexts, in differing degrees of complexity.

During their Primary Education the students become familiar with a wide range of communicative situations. In the Obligatory Secondary Stage (ESO), tasks are proposed which are designed to improve the students' communicative competence and which will allow them to operate effectively in a variety of everyday situations. These tasks are immediately applicable and also encourage the students to develop strategies and skills which will help them to confront new situations in the future. By means of a great variety of activities a fuller knowledge of the linguistic code of English and the rules which govern its realisations are encouraged, too,. Thus the students are constantly asked to reflect on the language, the skills of comprehension and expression and the sociolinguistic aspects of what they are learning. It is also attempted to contribute to the development of autonomy in the students.

The tasks suggested also develop the communicative skills in an integrated way, and due importance is given to the production of texts relating to the personal life of the students and their immediate surroundings. That is, as the official guidelines suggest, an important emphasis is placed on the productive skills.

And finally much use is made of authentic texts and "realia", in an increasing order of complexity, so that the students can take part in communicative situations of every greater complexity, so that they are able to achieve levels of autonomy which will enable them to continue their study of FL in greater depth in the future.

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE EFL CURRICULUM

The official guidelines laid down for the Spanish autonomous communities, in essence, establish the following objectives for the Secondary Education EFL curriculum (based on Madrid and McLaren 1996):

1. To understand everyday communicative situations, whether in oral or written modes: to grasp the general ideas and the specific details. This implies in turn:
 - developing the comprehension of various messages of increasing complexity
 - developing strategies which will allow the student to access general information (skimming) and specific data (scanning).
 - stimulating transfer from the situations which are presented to others.
2. To produce oral and written messages which are both correct and appropriate, in everyday communicative situations. This involves:
 - developing the ability to communicate accurately, fluently and appropriately,
 - using linguistic and non-linguistic resources creatively; these will enable the student to overcome "gaps" in his communicative ability,
 - using English as the language of instruction in the classroom.

3. To read a variety of texts with understanding, and being able to evaluate their importance as sources of information, pleasure, interest, etc. This means:
 - stimulating an interest in reading
 - helping the student to progress in autonomy and to enrich his/her vocabulary
 - preparing the students to be able to access cultural and leisure information .
4. To distinguish different types of language and basic stylistic features of narrations, dialogues and poems. This in turn requires:
 - appreciating the imaginative and creative uses of English in different texts.
 - interpreting distinctive features of prose and poetry
 - facilitating the transfer of interpretation and use between the mother tongue and the foreign language.
5. To analyse the linguistic and communicative functions of English in order to improve the students' own expression. That is to say:
 - using English as a facilitating instrument and a regulator of learning,
 - studying elements and mechanisms which encourage spoken and written communication.
6. To appreciate the importance of English as a "lingua franca", the knowledge of which permits access to other cultures and contributes to international understanding.

7. To realise different sociocultural aspects of English speaking communities and the linguistic forms through which these may be expressed:
 - identifying sociocultural aspects of life in the United Kingdom and the United States of America,
 - identifying and understanding other customs and ways of life,
 - recognising sociocultural conventions, whether verbal or not, which are shared by different cultural communities or which differentiate them from each other.
8. To develop a critical attitude towards the sociocultural contexts which foreign languages help to express, thus correcting the use of stereotypes and helping to reduce prejudices. This will involve:
 - contrasting sociocultural aspects which differentiate the English-speaking and the Spanish-speaking communities,
 - developing personal attitudes of tolerance and respect for other ways of life.
9. To develop autonomous learning strategies and to encourage the observation and analysis of the student's own learning processes, by means of tasks which imply:
 - reflecting on linguistic, cognitive and metacognitive aspects,
 - developing autonomous and cooperative work by means of projects which help to foster a desire for team work as well as self-directed learning.

3. CURRICULAR CONTENTS

By CONTENTS we understand concepts, procedures and attitudes in relation to oral and written communication, sociocultural aspects and linguistic reflection or language awareness, as referred to in the Spanish official guidelines.

Spoken and written communication covers the knowledge of phonetic, lexical and grammatical aspects which the students will need to understand and use orally and in writing. Functional aspects of the language are given precedence, and these are studied through a rich range of sources: classroom English, the media, authentic and scientific documents, etc. These contents imply the establishing of associations between conceptual and procedural contents, between images and headings, for example, or between the inference and anticipation of meaning. Also the skills of distinguishing main ideas from secondary ones, deducing the meaning of implicit messages and understanding the general sense of information included in media texts.

The oral and written messages follow the rules with govern the development of a coherent discourse and teachers are supposed to adapt them in difficulty to the average level of the students ("comprehensible input"). Active participation in oral and written exchanges also contributes to the use of a variety of strategies and also has attitudinal implications which will favour or hinder its development. In the production of the message, a tolerant attitude towards errors and mistakes is encouraged, and these are accepted as an integral part of learning and are pondered through "learning to learn" activities.

Those contents which refer to sociocultural aspects present some of the rules of conduct which are to be expected in the countries whose language is being studied, as well as explanations of traditions, art forms, ways of thought, etc. Importantly, EFL teachers also take into account the presence of English in our country and indeed in our Autonomous Communities, as well as international events such as Olympic Games, sports competitions, international festivals, etc. An integral part of these sociocultural contents is the use of authentic materials, photographs and realia, which are intended to familiarise our students with these aspects.

As for those contents concerned with linguistic reflection, these will include notions, functions the phonological lexical, morphosyntactic and textual elements, the various discourse types, the sociolinguistic implications and the development of strategies which allow efficient communication. The contents in this group help the student to consolidate learning mechanisms, which have already been used in earlier stages of learning, to be able to think deductively and inductively, to observe, classify, put in order, categorise, look up lexical items accurately in the dictionary, indeed all elements that facilitate autonomous learning and the development of processes and experiences which were first undertaken in previous years.

The sequencing of contents: general criteria

The following principles are suggested to be present in all the teaching materials which aim to implement the Spanish National Curricular Design:

Connection with previous knowledge and the student's social and cultural environment. Teachers are encouraged to attempt to provide a significant learning experience, offering the student communicative situations which encourage him/her to relate them to previous knowledge and to his/her family and social circumstances.

Encouraging classroom interaction. Both contents and activities are recommended to be organized in interactive contexts (teacher - students, student(s) - teacher, student - student),

Attention must also be paid to the creative aspects of the foreign language. The first activities and techniques will be largely of a controlled or "guided" nature, to move gradually towards freer situations where the learners can develop their creativity using linguistic elements they have studied.

A functional approach to language. As has been mentioned, the starting point is pragmatics, that is, English is considered to be a medium or an instrument for oral and written communication. The notion of speech acts and of the communicative nature of the functions which we wish to express is central to this process.

Contextualized teaching. It is also recommended to present situations where learning is contextualized and thus significant, related to the interests and needs of the learners, and where reflective and conscious learning processes are combined with

those in which English is used in the most natural and significant way possible.

Value given to affective factors. It is assumed that the learning process involved in the learning and teaching of English depends on various affective factors, which may help, or hinder, them. Teachers must continually try to improve the students' attitudes towards the learning of English, to present, or create, needs which justify such learning, increase student interest and desire to learn, reward the considerable effort required, and create a classroom atmosphere in which achievement of the aim proposed (the learning of English) is facilitated and with which the students are pleased and satisfied.

Adaptation to the students' psycho-cognitive characteristics. In the obligatory stage of Secondary Education (*ESO*) the students are able to think abstractly, to relate concepts, to classify, to make hypotheses, to deduce and to generalise. Further, these students can identify and moderate their learning strategies. Thus systematic cognitive training can be introduced. The progressive acquisition of techniques of analysis, relating and abstraction in turn allows teachers to present descriptions of grammar and the analysis and synthesis of the linguistic and sociolinguistic principles the students have studied.

4. THE STRUCTURE OF TEACHING UNITS

Teaching units must be prepared so that (see for example Madrid and McLaren 1996, 1997) all the contents be exploited both orally and in writing, that is that they develop the groups ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION which the official guidelines lay down both nationally and for the Autonomous Communities in Spain. The contents must also provide activities that allow a systematic LINGUISTIC REFLECTION, that is an explicit teaching of structures (grammar), vocabulary and phonetic aspects. Other components include the target language cultural aspects, and cross-curricular elements related to the areas suggested in the official Curriculum. Finally, the teaching unit should also be concerned with the students' LEARNING SKILLS and include activities intended to develop the strategic competence of the students and their ability to work independently (*learning to learn*).

5. CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPICS

Teaching materials are supposed to present cross-curricular topics to be developed by means of reading texts or conversational activities. The cross-curricular topics must cover some contents belonging to the following areas:

- Educating for social life
- Education for health
- Education for sexual equality
- Education for care of the environment
- Sexual education
- Education for road safety
- Educating for technology
- Consumer education

- Multicultural and multi-ethnic education
- Educating for leisure
- Educating for peace and coexistence

6. PROCEDURES SUGGESTED FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

6.1. RELATED TO ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

Teaching units must aim to develop procedures similar to the ones listed below in a cyclical way:

- Identifying different text types
- Recognizing the parts of a text
- Listening and reading texts carefully in order to understand the main idea.
- Asking for explanations, orally
- Using the dictionary to discover the meaning of new words
- Recognize the components of a communicative situation by means of the headings or the participants
- Planning and organizing information to be communicated, following given models
- Interact with others, using various communicative resources
- Creating communicative situations following models
- Taking part in guided simulations
- Narrating and making up texts from given models
- Completing incomplete texts
- Completing incomplete texts choosing the missing elements
- Interacting with classmates, under guidance
- Telling stories with visual support

- Listening carefully to recorded texts.
- Willingness to read while listening.

6.2. PROCEDURES which favours REFLECTION ON LANGUAGE (LANGUAGE AWARENESS)

In relation to language awareness the official guidelines suggest procedures similar to the ones given below:

- Identifying and discriminating between phonological elements
- Identifying semantic, morpho-syntactic elements, punctuation, communicative roles, intentions, etc.
- Inferring the meaning of the basic terms needed for linguistic description, and using them
- Differentiating some textual and contextual elements, reflecting on their organisation
- Grouping and sequencing linguistic elements in order to form simple texts
- Relating meanings with words, phrases, functions, etc.
- Recognising some elements which provide cohesion and coherence in discourse
- Inducing grammar rules and testing their effectiveness in production.
- Forming new words from patterns observed in acquired lexis
- Relating linguistic and para-linguistic elements
- Identifying some of the elements involved in description, narrative and dialogue.

6.3. PROCEDURES RELATED TO SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS (CULTURE):

The teaching of sociocultural aspects is another curricular component in Secondary Education and the use of a

variety of procedures is also suggested. For example (based on Madrid and McLaren 1996):

- Identifying semiotic elements which are specific to speakers of the foreign language
- Recognizing sociocultural features related to the texts and communicative situations studied.
- Establishing comparisons between sociocultural features of the mother tongue and the foreign language.
- Distinguishing some norms of behaviour in countries where the FL is spoken, in contextualized situations.
- Contrasting sociocultural aspects of everyday life as seen in the foreign language with those of the student's own culture.

7. ATTITUDES AND VALUES:

Teaching units must also develop the students attitudes and values related to all the curricular componentes. These are some of the procedures that teachers are supposed to develop in the EFL class (based on Madrid and McLaren 1996):

- Becoming convinced that comprehension does not necessarily involve understanding all the elements of a given text.
- showing a favourable disposition towards the independent reading of short texts.
- Developing attitudes which do not inhibit learning, including the acceptance of the inevitability of errors and their part in the whole learning process.
- Acquiring a positive attitude towards the learning of linguistic elements: grammar, phonetics, lexical items, etc.

- Assuming favourable attitudes towards the use of English as a means of communication, both inside the class and outside.
- Showing respect and consideration towards aspects of the foreign culture.
- Developing attitudes which lead to the conservation of our own culture.

8. METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

In general, teachers are recommended to base their approach on task-based principles, and special emphasis must be placed on:

- attention to meaning
- procedures and modes of participation
- the learner's contribution to the learning process
- the development of concepts, procedures and skills
- the use of English to solve issues which may arise
- problem-solving
- participation and assumption of responsibility on the part of the learner in the learning process and in the negotiation of curricular tasks.

In group work teachers must attempt to encourage the exchange of roles between male and female students, and to promote active participation. Teachers should also try, as far as possible, to ensure that the tasks and activities proposed are authentic and realistic, and closely related to real life. It is recommended to include tasks of varying difficulty, so that the differing abilities, interests and expectations of the students may be appropriately covered.

FL teachers are encouraged to bear in mind the student's previously acquired knowledge, that is the basic competence which is normally achieved in the Primary stage. Pair work and team work activities are regularly presented, in order to facilitate cooperative learning.

9. COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES OF LANGUAGE EXPANSION AND LANGUAGE REINFORCEMENT

The EFL curriculum that teachers implement also include activities that extend the comprehension of concepts, consolidate the basic procedures studied and intensify the attitudes needed for the encouraging of autonomous learning and those which promote collaborative learning styles. The language reinforcement activities aim to consolidate the basic concepts that have been studied in previous units, as well as productive and receptive procedures and activities designed to assess the student's own learning processes.

10. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

During the Secondary Education stage, the students must be graded according to the following criteria:

Oral and written comprehension

- The ability to understand, both in general and for specific information, oral and written authentic texts (dialogues, narrative and descriptive texts, etc.):
 - The use of contextual and formal elements

- The development of the strategies involved in the interpretation of messages.
- A receptive attitude towards these messages.

Oral and written expression

- The ability to express oneself intelligibly in everyday situations, and to follow and develop the topic(s) and organisation of the discourse undertaken.
 - Recognition of formal discourse organisational principles
 - Interest in using the foreign language wherever possible

Reading ability

- The ability to read texts in the foreign language in an extensive manner, on a variety of topics closely related to the student's own world:
 - Use of appropriate reading strategies
 - Use of a variety of resources to solve problems when they occur

Reflection on language and communication

- The ability to use effectively all communication strategies and linguistic resources which have been assimilated by reflection:
 - The level of conceptualisation of the notions and functions studied
 - Use of phonological, semantic and morpho-syntactic elements

Learner autonomy

- The ability to organise one's own learning procedures and to apply them in a variety of situations
- Transfer to English of abilities acquired in the study of the mother tongue
- Selection of strategies and techniques which can be extrapolated to real communicative situations.

Sociocultural aspects

- The ability to identify and appreciate explicit and implicit sociocultural information in the texts studied:
 - Appreciation of the points of view inherent in other cultures
 - Developing attitudes of respect towards other values and behavioural styles.

11. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

This curricular approach has important implications for the initial and in-service education of teachers. It requires the EFL teacher to be trained to play a variety of roles (Madrid 1996: 123-125):

- To act as informant:
 - Providing suitable input (dialogues, narratives, descriptions).
 - Explaining the use of the linguistic elements contained in the texts presented

- (structures, idioms, functions, connectors,...)
- Teaching the cultural elements, etc.
- Facilitator, mediator and monitor of meaningful learning experiences (see also Salvador 1994).
- Diagnoser of interests and needs:
 - Talking to students about interests and needs,
 - Using questionnaires to find out about the students' hobbies and their future possible needs,
 - Taking into consideration the characteristics of the community.
- Motivator and generator of positive attitudes.
- Provider of second-language acquisition situations:
- Using English -as much as possible- as the language of communication in the classroom: instructions routines,..
- Teaching *prefabricated language* by means of songs, rhymes, slogans and *realia*
- Acting out short and easy dialogues, simulations and role-plays.

The language teaching activities are supposed to foster this type of learning and to be oriented towards the development of oral and written communication, the establishment of attitudes and values for autonomous learning and the development of the students' communicative competence (Canale 1983). This orientation of teaching demands some additional roles; the teacher has to act as:

- Developer of oral and written skills
- Generator of attitudes and values related to the learner's autonomy:

- Provider of linguistic and communicative activities in the classroom
- Developer of learning and communicative strategies and procedures of offering tasks adequate for that purpose.

Finally, teachers are supposed to evaluate the teaching and learning process as well as the learning outcomes. That evaluation must be consistent with the aims of the school curriculum. It must involve not only the students but also the school system. Teachers are expected to obtain continuous information so that regulation of the processes and the system can be carried out in a efficient way. Teachers and schools must also promote self-assessment so that pupils learn to assess their own learning (MEC 1990: 242-243). So, teachers must also

- Practise continuous assessment of their teaching and of the learning process.
- Foster students' self-assessment.
- Act as an objective examiner and administer tests to assess the students' communicative competence.

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THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN AUSTRALIA

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INTRODUCTION.-

Australia has shown considerable dynamism in a variety of educational areas, but in the study of languages it lags behind many countries. In Europe, for instance, language study has long been a fundamental and prestigious part of schools' core curriculum. Languages have not occupied such a privileged position in Australia. While there has been a growth in the number of languages offered since the late sixties, when around 40 per cent of secondary students took a LOTE ("Languages Other Than English"), there has also been a decline in second language learning generally.

There are complex cultural, geographic and historical reasons that explain the Australian situation, but it suffices to mention the most important one. In the decades following World War II, the economies of the world were dominated by English speaking countries and the English language acquired immense postage and importance. Understandably, Australia, as an English speaking country, saw English as the most important language and the learning of other languages as a luxury.

While the English speaking world is still very significant, other players such as Japan, Europe and the Asia Pacific Region have come to the forefront. In interacting with these countries it is in Australia's economic and political interests that its citizens understand their languages and their cultures.

Fortunately, Australia is now gaining a deeper understanding of the educational importance of languages, as well as of their economic and political relevance in the contemporary world. Hence the need felt for a realistic and incisive LOTE policy for Australian schools, which the government is trying to implement. A LOTE for all students is the Federal Government's fundamental goal as regards foreign languages learning (FLL).

The learning of languages other than English (LOTE) is now widely regarded in Australia as serving individual, state, national and international needs:

- Individual needs relate to cognitive, personal and emotional development, as well as to increased vocational opportunities and the enrichment of communication and culture within Australian families and communities.
- State needs relate to both domestic and overseas commercial opportunities and to improving the access of non English speaking background Australians to a range of community services.
- National and international needs relate primarily to improved opportunities to benefit Australia's future economy in terms of world trade, tourism and diplomacy.

In direct response to and in recognition of these needs, the Government supports a balanced provision of a wide range of Asian and European languages.

In order to meet these needs it is necessary to recognise Australia's past neglect of the study of languages other than English in general, and Asian languages in particular, and to work to create a strong language base in the country. To this end, the education authorities have looked at a variety of issues and constraints, and have drawn up a list of recommendations that offer practical solutions to some of the perceived obstacles to the wider study of languages. The major recommendation is to provide all Year 10 students and 25 per cent of Years 11-12 (pre-university year) students with LOTE programs by the year 2000 and to achieve this by staged implementation.

The Ministry of Education concedes a high priority to the teaching and learning of LOTE in order to encourage all students to study a language as part of their general education and to ensure a balanced provision of a range of languages other than English. The cited Ministry has made a good start toward achieving these goals. Twenty languages are offered in mainstream schools, thirty-seven through the governmental School of Languages, seven through the Distance Education Centre and thirty-four through After Hours Ethnic Schools.

Some of these languages are studied primarily by first-language learners and play an important role in the education and community life of those students. Other languages are studied mainly by second-language learners and offer those students an opportunity to broaden their

educational and vocational opportunities. Some languages serve both purposes, being languages of the community and languages of international importance. All of these languages are significant in a community as diverse as Australia's.

Over the years, both States and Commonwealth funding has been provided to support and extend the teaching of languages other than English. Since 1992 the national focus in the promotion of the wider study of languages has concentrated on supporting curriculum development, professional development and teacher training in order to increase the number of Year 12 students undertaking LOTE study. Each State was required by the Commonwealth to nominate up to eight languages out of a possible fourteen. These languages attract per capita funding for Year 12 LOTE enrolments from the Commonwealth Priority Languages Incentive Element of the Australian Languages and Literacy Policy. For example, the eight languages nominated by Victoria are Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek and Vietnamese currently have the highest Year enrolments and reflect a balance of Asian and European languages. However, the support is not limited to these eight languages and the range at present available will be maintained through the integration of providers. In addition to this, particular support will be given to developing those languages which are under-resourced but considered to be of potential importance to the country; in order to achieve these goals, several strategies have been discussed. The aim now is to achieve an overall growth in language enrolments, with a fast growth rate in Asian languages initially to make up the lost ground in that area. It will not be possible to achieve this growth

unless there are quality programs available to students across the different States. There are still many problems to be overcome in providing a range of languages, particularly in country areas, and in encouraging students to study them. These issues need to be resolved if the promotion of FLL is to be successful.

What follows is a brief survey of the Australian Education Authorities commitment and policy towards FL curriculum in their educational system, with special reference to the state of Victoria.

I.- GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF SECOND LL - LOTE as an integral element of education

1.1. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN AUSTRALIA

There has been considerable growth in awareness of the importance of second language learning in the last decade, as the many reports on the subject show. However, it is usually the community benefits and/or the economic arguments that are emphasised; the cognitive and cultural benefits have often been neglected.

Despite this growing awareness and the important developments in LOTE learning policies in Australian education, it remains valid the claim that there is no culture of second language learning in Australia. Australians remain unclear about the intellectual and practical skills achieved through learning other languages and see no nexus between the knowledge of languages and their usefulness in providing access to other cultures and

increasing trading and negotiating skills.

Historically, the introduction of compulsory schooling led to a gradual replacement of classical languages by modern languages but, especially in English-speaking countries, language study was often reserved for academic students and for elites likely to be involved in diplomatic negotiations, scientific and academic research or international business dealings. This view was, to some extent, responsible for the exclusion of languages from the curriculum of most Australian technical, "non-academic" schools.

Even the debate on "community languages" in the 1980s, while useful in supporting the educational importance of languages, contributed to the move away from the quality education perspective. "Community languages" were promoted on the basis of instrumental arguments, on access and equity criteria and on their usefulness vis-a-vis the traditional languages of the Australian and Victorian curricula.

With the publication of the *Report on a National Language Policy* (1984) which, in addition to promoting the cognitive and educational benefits of language learning also discussed the instrumental benefits, the economic arguments gained prominence. These arguments have been important both because they are valid and because they have convinced business of the importance of languages. But it is equally important to emphasise the cognitive and cultural value of languages, and the contribution they bring to education. These issues are dealt with below, and as such are contemplated in the Government's provisions.

1.2. THE EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF COGNITIVE SKILLS

School education's primary objective is the development of cognitive competencies that are transferable to other learning experiences and to occupational situations. The study of languages is an important tool for achieving cognitive and mental skills. Solid arguments for this can be presented from contemporary research in the fields of structural linguistics, communication theories, anthropology, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, theories of translation, logic, computer linguistics, and psychology.

1.3. THE POTENTIAL FOR COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

It is not easy to connect skills to the performance of specific tasks, nor is it possible to assume that the development of skills is automatic or follows a fixed sequence. Their development is not merely related to ability - it is also related to the psychological and social environment affecting the child.

Just as favourable external conditions are necessary for any educational achievement, so are internal conditions, and quality programs and quality teaching are critical. Given these favourable conditions the potential exists for the development of a range of important cognitive and cultural skills through the study of languages, which according to the Ministry of Education are:

The Development of Critical Thought. There is

a view that language is a list of terms corresponding to things, concepts and meanings and is a mirror of the world. If such were the case, the study of other languages would be uninspiring and would not provide conceptual and cultural enrichment. Contemporary research, especially in structural linguistics, has established that each language is a unique entity. Since each language is a specific cultural and cognitive system, it is easy for monolinguals to believe that their language is not just one possible standpoint on the world, but the logical, natural standpoint. The study of another language has the potential to prevent this. It widens the perspective, encourages a reexamination of presuppositions and leads to an awareness of what language, culture and communication are, and how they function. Probably no other discipline has the potential to provide a critical perspective more effectively.

Enrichment of Conceptual Thinking. Every language is an original way of organising and classifying knowledge. Mastery of another language can lead to an increasingly complex understanding of the world and to an increasingly rich structuring of experience. The learning of another language provides an additional conceptual tool and equips the learner with the capacity to decode, encode and switch codes which can heighten conceptual skills.

Development of Conceptual Rigour. Language learning is a sequential and cumulative discipline, in many ways comparable to mathematics, music and the sciences. As an educational discipline, language study is similar to both the sciences and the humanities, because it involves mental rigour and an "artistic" dimension. This is why so much modern scholarship is inspired by linguistics for approaches in information theory, structuralism, logic,

semiotics, anthropology, psychology and even biology and the natural sciences.

Expansion of Creativity and Flexibility. The capacity to switch from one set of categories to another, from one code to another, from one language to another requires mental flexibility. The acquisition of another language develops this flexibility. It also involves the pleasure of discovery, an awareness of new dimensions and the development of a pluralist imagination. Creativity, flexibility and cognitive empowerment are very likely to be enriched by the possession of two languages, of two conceptual and cultural instruments.

Cultural Enrichment. The literature that establishes the connection between language and culture is irrefutable. Learning another language means learning another culture, or having access to another culture. Relating to other cultures through another language may or may not involve a new process of socialisation but it definitely leads to an expansion of perspective. The study of languages heightens cross-cultural sensitivity and communication skills and can lead to tolerance for diversity. These elements have not been traditionally understood in terms of skills, but they belong to that category.

Increased Understanding of Language. The experience of another culture and language can lead to a deeper, general understanding of how language functions. It gives rise to comparisons that are likely to have a positive influence on linguistic understanding and lead to a better mastery of the first language. Conscious understanding of the first language is generally limited in

that it is based on an awareness of its surface structures. To reach a deeper understanding requires skills that can most effectively be gained by the acquisition of another language. The study of a second language also provides the basis for learning a third or subsequent language which may become desirable through personal choice or occupational necessity.

Increased Cognitive Skills. Cognitive skills are among those concepts that are intelligible but difficult to define because it is not easy to establish a direct correspondence between the acquisition of specific skills and the carrying out of precise educational tasks. It is possible to make reference to some experimental evidence based on investigations into bilingualism which confirm the cognitive value of LOTE learning. Canadian studies of French students established that bilingual students achieved better scores on verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests, performed better academically and had a more open and positive approach towards English background Canadians. Bilingualism appeared to have a positive correlation with the development of cognitive maturity and cultural tolerance, and tests on metalinguistic awareness and divergent thinking proved similarly positive. Australian studies undertaken by Yelland et al. (1993) indicate that even less intensive exposure to second language studies can improve metalinguistic awareness, provided the exposure to the language commences in the first year of schooling.

1.4. LANGUAGES AND QUALITY EDUCATION

The study of languages is an intrinsically and

extrinsically worthwhile activity. It contributes to the development of skills essential to the worlds of study and work, as well as to meaningful participation in the life of society. It can develop the creative imagination, intellectual rigour, the critical faculty, an awareness of cultural contexts, and tolerance of diversity. In short, it is an important component of a quality education; a factor that is gaining increased relevance in the modern world.

1.5. THE INSTRUMENTAL BENEFITS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

In the last two or three decades Australia and other advanced industrial societies have undergone a number of qualitative changes. Given the bond between schools and society, a partly instrumental approach to education is inevitable. It is therefore essential that, in times of economic and social change, the relationship between schooling and the needs of the productive system is examined. However, it is no longer possible to assess educational needs from the standpoint of a single country. The economic and more general interdependence within regions and in the international environment requires a broad approach in which multilingualism will play a significant part.

1.5.1 POST INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

The last three decades have seen the rise of the post-industrial society; a society marked by an increasing shift from the machine technology of industrial society to intellectual technology, and by a shift from goods and commodities to services. A change has also taken place in the occupational area with an increasing need for a more

sophisticated, highly-educated work force. Continuous diversification and change in economic activities are accompanied by the disappearance of some occupations, by the de-skilling of sections of the work force and by the need for flexible high-order skills, continuous re-skilling and the transferability of skills. This new productive culture revalues some of the traditional skills of education - creative, critical, analytical, and communicative skills - giving them increased relevance and implying an even greater role for language learning.

1.5.2. THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Through the power of communication technology, people can share information knowledge almost as soon as these become available. This is achieved through a variety of media and using a number of communicative forms. No single, uniform model communication has been adopted and the capacity to understand other cultures is becoming essential. The image of the "global village", initially used to define the influence of communication systems in the modern world, has acquired a wider meaning in a context which economies and cultures transcend traditional boundaries and become interrelated. In this context, the conclusion is inescapable that multilingualism is becoming necessary for effective performance and participation.

1.5.3 TOWARD A GLOBAL ECONOMY

Internationalisation is nowhere more evident than in the economic sphere and trade is only one element of this. Trade was once the link of national economies with the world, but the growth and diversification in the activities of trans-national and multi-national companies, the coordination on a global scale of industrial production, markets, finance, and research and development, have

made geographical boundaries less important. This internationalisation of production and exchanges, and the movement toward the establishment of formal and informal regional trading blocks mean that economic spaces coincide less and less with national or political boundaries. The trend towards a global economy is another aspect of world developments that indicate the need for widespread multilingualism.

1.5.4. THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

In the last few decades, the Asia-Pacific region has grown dramatically in economic importance and all indications are that, even at a reduced level, the region will continue to experience economic growth well above the average for some decades. The growing wealth of the region is creating a large middle class of consumers that should increase the demand for Australian services and commodities. Investment in Australia is growing rapidly and tourism into Australia is now of major importance to the economy. Increased Australian trade with the region will be aided by a growth in Australia's linguistic skills. The relationship between economic performance and the development of a multilingual environment is difficult to quantify because of the existence of other important variables. Nevertheless, the link between trade and effective communication, although subtle at one level, is quite obvious at another level – the establishment of a favourable environment for negotiation.

The argument for the teaching of Asian languages is an important one. The belief that English is the language of business in the region was probably always partially unfounded, and it may become less important in the future given the growth in regional interdependence and the

diminishing reliance on English-speaking economies. Many Japanese are learning Chinese; Japanese is a language widely taught in China, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong; and English is not a compulsory school subject in a number of these countries.

Australia has neglected the study of Asian languages in the past and governments are keen to redress this. Nonetheless, it would be short-sighted to ignore the existence of a wider world economy. Latin America, the Arabic world and continental Europe all have the potential to become more important to Australia's economic interests than they are at the moment. For example, there are those who argue that economic developments in Europe could well match those of the Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, Spanish, Arabic and the languages of Europe remain relevant in the foreseeable future.

1.5.5. THE INCREASING RELEVANCE OF MULTILINGUALISM

The Asia-Pacific region is becoming more aware of its economic power, of the value of interdependence and of the consequent need for the various communities to learn one another's languages. Multilingualism in international dealings is here to stay and will increase in importance. Europe acknowledges this trend with strong defence of the plurality of its languages. It confirms the tendency of countries to increase their concern for linguistic and cultural distinctiveness in a manner proportional to the rise of their economic and political strength and is reflected in the Treaty of Maastricht. The Treaty overtly respects regional diversity and its concern with cultural and linguistic pluralism, while implicitly relate to economic considerations, explicitly stress the cultural and social value of its policies.

1.5.6. UTILITARIAN REASONS FOR THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES

In recent years many reports have highlighted the need for the promotion of an Australian export culture and the relevance of languages for improving Australian trade performance with the world and, more particularly, with the Asia-Pacific region. There cannot be any doubt about the value of multilingualism in international business negotiations. Even brief linguistic or cultural references will help to establish a positive atmosphere, while the capacity for sustained dialogue will make a significant impact. However, there is no simple connection between a knowledge of languages and employment. Languages are valuable, but as additional qualifications to other skills required by the market; bilingual technicians, engineers, businessmen are what are needed, not bilinguals or multilinguals lacking other essential skills. This clarification needs to be made to avoid unrealistic expectations and a view of languages as directly vocational disciplines.

1.5.7. THE POSITIVE FUNCTION OF MULTICULTURALISM

In discussions about improving Australia's economic performance and its general standing within the international community, Australian multiculturalism is seen positively mainly because it is capable of providing and encouraging communicative skills. What is sometimes overlooked is the importance of Australian multiculturalism in bringing about cross-cultural understanding and social cohesiveness, and also in promoting Australia as a successful model of a multicultural society. This helps to create a favourable regional and international impression and to increase the

success of Australian participation in trade, and in the international sphere generally. Therefore, policies that enhance Australia's multiculturalism are important from an instrumental point of view as well as for the social justice and cultural reasons for which they were developed.

1.5.8. A BALANCED RATIONALE FOR THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES

If other communities learn English it means that they gain access to that culture – including the Australian –, can monitor the English speaking world's developments and assess its needs. If Australians do not learn the languages of their trading partners, they have no access to their media, to their publications, cannot monitor their needs and cannot easily find niches for exports.

It can be seen that the educational needs of Australian students and the needs of their productive culture coincide. Languages are both indispensable intellectual disciplines and increasingly indispensable instrumental vehicles.

III. GENERAL POLICY DIRECTIONS

3.1. LOTE POLICY GOALS

What antecedes has based the rationale for the teaching of languages in Australia on educational and instrumental lines. On the basis of educational arguments, languages are disciplines that can provide important cognitive and cultural skills and many of the tools necessary for full participation in society. The instrumental argument is that, in an interdependent world in which neither English nor any other single language is destined to become the lingua franca, multilingualism is becoming necessary to enable Australia to operate effectively in the world of trade and economic relations. Such an analysis leads to a policy guided by five major principles:

- 1) All students would benefit from the study of one or more languages other than English for a sustained period of time during their school years. Languages should therefore become an integral part of the school curriculum.
- 2) LOTE programs should provide students with solid intellectual skills and with a high level of communicative competence in the language or languages studied.
- 3) The learning of languages is an important vehicle for cultural and cross-cultural understanding, but the study of the culture of the languages offered for study should also be pursued within the general curriculum.
- 4) The goal of preserving and expanding the linguistic resources already present in the Australian community and the need to respond to regional and international factors require a broad policy of multilingualism.
- 5) Although the mainstream school system should aim to offer the highest possible number of LOTE programs,

catering for the full range of individual and collective linguistic needs requires a variety of educational structures.

3.2. A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH FOR ALL STUDENTS

3.2.1. The Need for Status. The case for making study of LOTE an integral part of the general school curriculum is overwhelming. A key learning area should not be made peripheral to the education of any child or be inadequately resourced. Being an option rather than a key component of the curriculum can mean being stripped of status. When financial constraints dictate change, electives become vulnerable because, although they may be considered valuable, they are by definition non-essential. Languages, as cumulative disciplines, need substantial and continuous resourcing and cannot be subjected to fluctuations in interest or support.

It has been argued that, despite growing consensus about the value of languages, a widespread culture of second language learning has not yet been established in Australia. Mandating LOTE study within the compulsory years of schooling would contribute positively to a change in this attitude and provide the area with increased status.

3.2.2. A Non-Elitist Approach. We all know that the learning of languages is beneficial to the development of essential intellectual skills. Consequently, an optional study of languages could disempower some students by preventing them from reaching a higher level of literacy and cognitive competence. With the advent of compulsory education, it was argued by some that success in the study of another language demanded abilities not belonging to all students. This elitist view joined forces with the radicalism

of the seventies and eighties, which argued in favour of choice and against the imposition of rigorous disciplines because these were perceived to be unsuitable for all students.

The social implications of linguistic competence have been studied in recent years, particularly by sociolinguists. The socalled "deficit hypothesis" of British sociologist Basil Bernstein (1976) claims that the social success of members of a society are not linked so much to initial material disadvantages or lack of privileges, but to their general linguistic competence or lack of competence. Others, for example Lakoff, have argued that it is more valid to view things the other way round - that it is not the deficit in linguistic ability that causes social deprivation, but social deprivation that causes linguistic deprivation.

Whatever position is assumed on this question, there is an important message in the deficit hypothesis. That is, that there is an interdependence between cognitive and linguistic development, and social performance which has implications for society's capacity to develop or fail to develop the natural potential of all children. The equal opportunity argument becomes even stronger when the study of languages is also viewed for its potential to deliver skills that can be of vocational benefit.

3.2.3. Overseas Policies and Practices. An examination of second language policy in other parts of the world and above all in comparable countries can be useful. The purpose is not to borrow practices uncritically but to see whether something can be learned from them. For instance, most European countries make the study of another language compulsory, at least during a substantial part of secondary schooling. This is a tradition that goes back several centuries and, in recent years, practical

considerations linked to travel, commerce and international contact have strengthened it. There are enormous variations in educational practices in Europe, and the importance of languages in the curriculum is not everywhere accompanied by quality programs. In a very real sense, English-speaking countries have been responsible for greater progress in the development of modern policies, programs and materials for language learning than non English-speaking countries. Australia has made a significant contribution to this area.

3.2.4. Policies in Australian States. The report *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future* (1994) recommends that Australian governments "progressively mandate the study of a second language during a student's compulsory school education" over the next decade. Throughout Australia there is growing consensus in support of this:

- The New South Wales policy is to provide programs immediately from Years 7-10, and from Kindergarten to Year 12 by the year 2010.
- In Queensland, all students are now required to study a LOTE in Years 6-8, since 1996 all Year 3 students must undertake language study, and by 2001 all students will be studying LOTE from Years 3-10.
- The Australian Capital Territory (ACT, Canberra) has made LOTE study compulsory for Year 7 since 1995 and for Year 8 since 1996.
- Tasmania is presently considering mandating LOTE study in all its schools.
- South Australian policy avoids the term "compulsion" but requires that all students be provided with the

- opportunity to study a LOTE from Prep to Year 7.
- In Western Australia, there is no general prescription but a mandatory approach has been adopted by a number of individual schools for Years 6-8.
- In Victoria, the LOTE Strategy Plan recommends "That schools be required to provide P-10 language programs for all students and for at least 25 per cent of Years 11-12 students by the year 2000."

3.2.5. Toward a Mandatory Study of Languages. The Council has endorsed the above recommendation for government schools and believes it is valid for other school sectors. There is now agreement across the educational community that the study of a LOTE constitutes a key learning area and is therefore an area of study that all students should be required to undertake. The recommendation is based on strong educational arguments widely shared by non government schools; indeed the mandating of LOTE study in individual schools and at varying stages of the curriculum has been more widespread in Catholic and independent schools than in government schools. Therefore, even within the context of respect for the autonomy of school systems and for individual schools, it is feasible to set the goal of progressively making languages a normal component of the FL curriculum for all Victorian students.

3.3. EARLY PRIMARY YEARS AS THE OPTIMAL AGE FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In Australia, support for an early start to LOTE learning has been growing as is evidenced by the number of LOTE programs in primary schools. The view of the

Council is that the teaching of languages should be a continuous process starting at the Preparatory Year (the first year of schooling) which is in agreement with the view that "the earlier the better".

Many submissions to the inquiry by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts which resulted in the 1984 Report on a National Language Policy, argued that "the optimum age to commence language learning occurs in the early primary years, or even during pre-school, when children are able to acquire a language naturally with minimum interference from their mother tongue". Some suggested that early adolescence is perhaps the worst time to commence language study "given the psychological and emotional difficulties experienced at that time". The Senate inquiry acknowledged that the general consensus favoured an early start but was reluctant to identify the optimum age to begin language learning. What seemed important was that "opportunities to commence language study should be available at a variety of ages."

Since then, research evidence has not been conclusive but the lack of consensus is more apparent than real. The "younger the better" argument is related to the strengthening of cognitive development and to lasting achievements. The "older the better" position suggests that a later start, at Year 3, leads to more rapid outcomes but is not convincing about the duration of these outcomes. Rather than disproving the argument in favour of an early start, the debate points to the need for appropriate programs and appropriate methods for teaching various age groups. Another issue pertaining to this argument is related to the need for adequate government resourcing to support early start programs.

3.4. TARGETS FOR YEAR 12 (pre-university year)

The attrition rate in Year 12 LOTE candidature is a major concern because languages are cumulative subjects requiring long study before they can produce a high level of proficiency. Australia has moved from the 45 per cent participation rate reached in 1967 when a Year 12 language was a prerequisite for entrance to some university faculties, to 16.1 per cent in 1982 and 12.5 per cent in 1992. The attrition rate in Victoria, for example, was higher than the national average, dropping from 14.5 per cent in 1982 to 9.6 per cent in 1992. This attrition can be put down to many factors; the increased range of competing subjects offered, the practice of treating LOTE students with a range of proficiency levels as one cohort, and the design of the Victoria Certificate of Education (Certificate obtained after passing pre-university year, abbreviated as VCE) which made it difficult to include languages in the core curriculum. However, the major reason remains the lack of a culture of LOTE learning discussed earlier.

The 1993 and 1994 figures show an improvement in Victorian VCE LOTE enrolments from 6042 in 1992, to 6436 in 1993 and to 7725 in 1994. These figures are probably a sign of changing attitudes and it is important for Victoria to capitalise on this and aim at progressive increases of about 3 per cent per year. The Commonwealth's 1991 target of 25 per cent participation by the year 2000 has been modified to the year 2006 by the Council of Australian Government. However, Victoria is well advanced in the area of LOTE study and can realistically aim at 25 per cent by the year 2000.

Some members of tertiary institutions and the teaching community have expressed the view that the present VCE structure, which requires a study of four units of English and then a choice from a specific range of subject fields, can result in delayed selection of LOTE and into a prioritisation of subjects which have negative effects on the pursuit of LOTE study. Since it is important to eliminate impediments to a high participation rate in VCE LOTE study, the situation should be monitored by the Board of Studies (Education Authority responsible for the curriculum design).

3.5. VCE ASSESSMENT AND TERTIARY ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The VCE assessment system for LOTE has been the subject of heated debate focussing on two major positions. On the one hand, some tertiary institution representatives and groups from the wider community argued that a significant number of LOTE students were not second language learners but native speakers, and that this disadvantaged second language learners. The contrary position was that students of non English-speaking background were disadvantaged in English and in other language-based subjects and that it was unfair to take away from them the opportunity to redress the balance in some way.

After a series of discussions involving tertiary institutions, the Victorian Government and the community, the original decision by the Victorian Vice-Chancellors Committee to reassess the 1993 VCE results in eight languages was withdrawn. Nevertheless, it became

clear that, at least in some cases, the problems were sufficiently real to warrant investigation and to search for a more acceptable system. The issues are not new; they have been canvassed in a number of reports. The 1988 Tuffin and Wilson report and the 1989 Garnaut report argued strongly for separate groupings and separate assessments. However, the notion of differentiating on the basis of background is problematical. Considerations about background are usually made in educational institutions to identify special needs and address them, not to determine assessment procedures. Moreover, it would be impossible, in many cases, to determine who is a first language learner and who is not.

The important issue is that neither assessment procedures nor tertiary selection become disincentives to the pursuit of LOTE study. The Council referred this matter to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Higher Education and Training and a LOTE Reference Group was established to explore it. The recommendation was that assessment procedures and tertiary entrance requirements be regularly reviewed and developed to ensure that no group of LOTE students is disadvantaged.

3.6. THE TEACHING OF CULTURE

The learning of another language is a cultural experience in itself as well as an ideal introduction to another culture. Nevertheless, more directly cultural components are important to make LOTE programs effective and the school curriculum more integrated. This can be achieved by making sure that the various disciplines taught in the school develop components that address the history, literature, art, and economic and social systems of

the communities that speak the language or languages at that school.

Cultural studies such as Asian Studies exist in a number of schools and teachers of various subjects cooperate to teach topics and course components related to the languages offered by the school. Sometimes sections of assignments, for example in History, can be submitted in the relevant LOTE. These are valuable practices, but the objective is to promote both the teaching of LOTE as an integral part of the curriculum and the teaching of an integrated curriculum.

3.7. A POLICY OF MULTILINGUALISM

According to the State Education Ministry, Australia in general and Victoria in particular has diverse language requirements. It needs to encourage language maintenance and development among ethnic communities as a matter of social justice and as a way of protecting its cultural and linguistic richness. It needs to teach languages of economic, historic and international significance, and to teach and preserve Australia's indigenous languages. Given Australia's geographic position and linguistic variety, it would be inappropriate to adopt the European system and teach a small number of languages in schools. A multilingual policy is more complex to administer but Victoria has already shown a great deal of initiative in this area. It has a wide range of languages taught in primary schools and continues to develop innovative materials and programs. It also possesses a flexible, decentralised school system. Victoria is therefore well placed to develop creative responses to its diverse internal and external needs.

A multilingual policy requires a variety of providers; mainstream schools, the Victorian School of Languages and the After Hours Ethnic School Network. The Victorian School of Languages and Ethnic Schools complement mainstream LOTE provision and deserve strong support because no day school system can cater adequately for the number of languages important to this community.

3.7.1. The Issue of Categorisation. As a result of a request from the Commonwealth Government for states to draw up a list of up to eight key languages out of the fourteen nominated by the Commonwealth, a process of categorisation of languages has occurred. In Victoria, the key languages have been selected on the basis of community preferences as expressed through school choices. The most popular languages - namely Modern Standard Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek and Vietnamese - have been designated as key languages to be offered predominantly in mainstream schools. A number of other languages - Arabic, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Thai - have been designated as languages for priority development because they respond to wider needs and require additional support and development. These languages could be provided by day schools and also by the Victorian School of Languages and Ethnic Schools.

Some languages are of particular importance in specific geographical areas. These are languages of particular community significance such as Hebrew or Turkish. Again, these are offered by both mainstream schools and complementary providers. Other languages, for example Latvian or Ukrainian, do not attract sufficient enrolments in specific geographical areas for viable

programs and are primarily provided by the Victorian School of Languages and Ethnic Schools.

Because these categories are descriptive and non-discriminatory, the languages included in them will be able to change over time as needs change, giving flexibility to the Victorian position.

3.7.2. The Indigenous Languages of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Currently, Worawa Aboriginal College in Healesville offers Gupapuynu in a second language program and Mount Evelyn Christian School offers a second language program in Warlpiri. The Victorian Board of Studies is currently accrediting a course in Indigenous Languages at VCE level. Nationally, indigenous languages are offered as:

- first language programs to maintain and develop students' use of the language of their community. These are often bilingual programs using the indigenous language and English as the languages of instruction;
- second language programs for students with little or no background knowledge of the language or its culture;
- revival programs where the language concerned is spoken by a small group of older people, or where the language is no longer actively used. These programs aim to involve learners in the community in retrieving and documenting the linguistic and cultural aspects of their language.

The national *Statement on Languages other than English for Australian Schools* (1994) states that: "The survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages is at a critical point. The number of older speakers continues to decline, and younger partial speakers tend to shift to

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander varieties of English or, in the northern areas, to one of two creoles. Schools and education systems have the potential to assist in the maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Islander languages, in the preservation of linguistic heritage through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language revival, and in the formation of identity through a knowledge of one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. School-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language programs also provide a basis for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to learn about the unique linguistic and cultural heritage of Australia".

3.7.3. Australian Sign Language - Auslan. In 1993 ten Victorian government primary schools and a number of secondary schools indicated that they provided programs in Auslan. The Directorate has negotiated with the Deaf Community for the establishment of an accreditation panel for primary and secondary teachers of Auslan, and the Victorian School of Languages has negotiated with the Deaf Community for the possible introduction of Auslan in its centres. A study design for Auslan has been developed by the Victorian Board of Studies. The national *Statement on Languages other than English for Australian Schools* (1994) includes guidelines for the development of Auslan and "acknowledges the right of deaf people in Australia to maintain and develop their linguistic and cultural heritage . It recognises in particular that the signing deaf constitute a non-English-speaking group with a distinct sub-culture characterised by shared history, social life and sense of identity, united and symbolised by fluency in Auslan. The national statement recognises key issues covering the development and implementation of Auslan programs. These include:

- the need to make Auslan extensively available to deaf students in schools
- the need for appropriate teacher training
- the need to develop curricula and resources for teaching of the deaf at all levels of schooling to assist complete access to a first language for all deaf people
- the need to consider the benefits of teaching Auslan to both deaf and hearing students.

The development and maintenance of Auslan requires a great deal of work. Continuing development of Auslan as a LOTE is an important part of preserving the linguistic heritage of Australian Sign Language."

3.8. A BALANCE OF EUROPEAN AND ASIAN LANGUAGES

LOTE policy in Victoria needs to be informed by a search for balance: balance between the intellectual and instrumental components of the rationale; balance between internal and external demands; and balance in the offerings of European and Asian languages in mainstream schools. (The categorisation of languages into European and Asian is not a wholly legitimate exercise because, although it is based on objective description, it fails to take account of languages such as Arabic and Russian and this issue needs to be addressed.) While accepting the emphasis on the economic significance of the Asia-Pacific region for modern Australia, the Ministry of Education believes that all languages are potentially of economic significance, just as all languages have cultural significance.

Given Victoria's policy of multilingualism, the search for balance requires additional resources and the intelligent use of existing resources, not a redirection of resources from one category of language to another. Economic arguments need to be accepted, but critically, and it is important not to assume that what is, is always an indication of what will be. In January 1994, the Chief Executive of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry warned of the danger of too much dependence on Asia-Pacific markets:

"There is a danger of an El Dorado atmosphere being created, which could alienate Australian business from trade and investment opportunities in Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and the Americas including the oft-ignored Latin America."

Similarly, the first recommendation contained in the Department of Employment, Education and Training report *The Relationship Between International Trade and Linguistic Competence* (1991) suggests:

"That account be taken of the establishment of Europe as the world's longest developed trading block and hence that both European and Asian business languages be fostered."

A prediction contained in *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future* (1994) is that in the year 2005 the economically most powerful group of countries will consist of the USA, Japan, China, Germany, France, Italy, Korea and the UK. All of this suggests that, on economic criteria alone, it is unwise to put "all one's eggs in one basket".

A balance of European and Asian languages in

mainstream schools protects existing programs and also encourages stronger growth for Asian languages which, although improving, are still under-subscribed. To affirm this balance, the authorities consider that it would be valuable if mainstream schools aimed to offer at least one European and one Asian language in their curriculum.

IV. A SAMPLE OF L2 CURRICULUM

A concretion of the 2LL principles mentioned above can be found in the following lines, where we present the aims, objectives and outcomes of the VCE L2 curriculum.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are to develop the student's:

- ability to use L2 to communicate with others.
- understanding and appreciation of the cultural contexts in which L2 is used.
- ability to reflect on their own culture(s) through the study of other cultures.
- understanding of language as a system.
- ability to make connections between L2 and English, and/or other languages.
- cognitive, learning and social skills.
- ability to apply L2 to work, further study, training or leisure.

OBJECTIVES

The student should be able to achieve the following objectives:

- Objective 1 - Exchange information, opinions, and experiences in L2.
- Objective 2 - Express ideas through original texts in L2.
- Objective 3 - Analyse, process and respond to texts that are in L2.
- Objective 4 - Understand aspects of the language and culture of L2-speaking communities.

Meeting these objectives will involve using the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, either individually or in combination, and being able to move between L2 and English.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes and associated knowledge, skills and understandings, which the student is expected to achieve at the end of a course based on this syllabus, are listed below. These outcomes are derived from the objectives.

Exchange information, opinions and experiences in spoken and written form.

- participate in a conversation, interview or discussion on known topics.

- write and respond to informal letters, notes and messages.
- present information, exchange opinions and explain ideas on known topics.
- describe and comment on aspects of personal experience and future aspirations.
- ask for and give assistance/advice.
- use culturally appropriate conventions relevant to productive text types.
- speak/write using registers appropriate for different audiences.
- link, sequence and show relationship at sentence and paragraph level.
- use a range of question and answer forms.
- use appropriate intonation, stress, spelling and punctuation.
- self-correct/rephrase.
- demonstrate an awareness of, and use, gesture in spoken communication.

Express ideas through original spoken and written texts

- produce a report, presentation, article or advertisement designed to inform a wide audience.
- write or talk about events/experiences in the past or present.
- use a range of relevant text types for specific purposes, e.g. to describe, to persuade, to inform, evaluate.
- use first/third person narrative perspectives.
- vary style and register for audience and context.
- organise and sequence ideas.
- use simple stylistic techniques such as repetition,

questions, exclamations or changes in tone, emphasis and speed of delivery.

- simplify or paraphrase more complex expressions.
- use dictionaries and appropriate reference materials to enhance communication.
- Analyse and use information and ideas from spoken texts.
- understand and identify main points, supporting points and detailed items of specific information.
- convey gist.
- infer points of view, attitudes, emotions from context and/or choice of language and intonation.
- convey meaning accurately.
- recognise and use a range of text types, appropriate to spoken communication.
- Identify context, purpose and intended audience of spoken communication.
- establish and confirm meaning through re-listening, using contextual clues, cognates, using dictionaries.
- summarise, interpret and evaluate information from texts.
- identify the purpose of registers and stylistic features such as repetition and tone in conveying meaning.

Analyse and use information and ideas from written texts

- understand and convey gist, identify main points, supporting points and detailed items of specific information.
- convey gist.
- infer points of view, attitudes, emotions from context

and/or choice of language.

- summarise, interpret and evaluate information from texts.
- compare and contrast aspects of texts on a similar topic.
- convey meaning accurately.
- recognise and use a range of text types, appropriate to written communication.
- identify context, purpose and intended audience of written communication.
- demonstrate knowledge of and use of simple stylistic features such as repetition and contrast.
- establish and confirm meaning through re-reading, using contextual clues, cognates, grammatical markers, common patterns of word formation, using dictionaries and other reference material.

Respond critically to spoken and written texts which reflect aspects of the language and culture of the L2-speaking communities

- identify values, attitudes and beliefs expressed in a range of texts in L2.
- analyse information and ideas to find similarities, differences, evidence to support particular views.
- demonstrate an awareness that different social contexts require different types of language, as well as different register.
- appreciate themes, experiences and the use of linguistic devices in a range of texts.
- read and summarise a text, rewrite a text and compare two texts.
- select and make use of relevant reference materials.

And it goes on to describe several items under four main headings: communication, contextual understanding, linguistic structures-features and strategies. But this will be the subject of a further study to be undertaken in the immediate future.

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The FL Curriculum in Spain and Australia

Spain and Australia do not have too many things in common, one might think at first sight. This book explores the inner core of L2 learning and teaching, and comes to terms with two realities apparently wide apart. Drawing on the 'global village' theory, the authors shed some light into the educational organization of two western countries, and provide some insights into the way we teach and learn L2. In the end, it is very similar. Australia and Spain are not so far, after all...!

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