



PROFILES OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN 25 COUNTRIES

Edited by Peter Dickson and Alister Cumming



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**Overview of phase 1
of the IEA Language Education Study**

Edited by Peter Dickson and Alister Cumming

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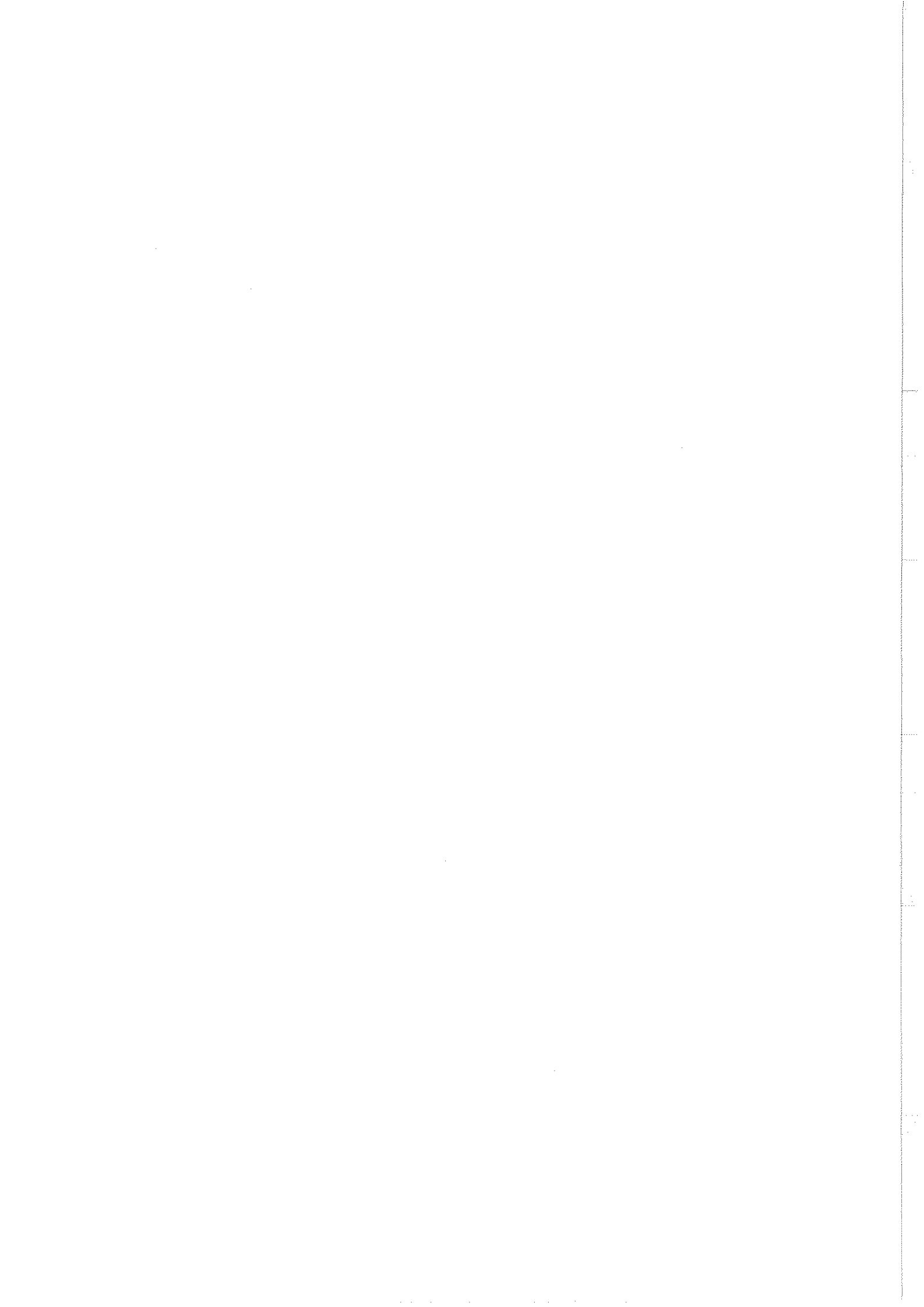
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FOREWORD

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) was founded in 1959 for the purpose of conducting comparative studies, focusing on educational policies and practices in various countries and education systems around the world. IEA has grown over the years from a small number of countries to a group of about 55 today. It has a secretariat located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. IEA studies have reported on a wide range of topics, each contributing to a deeper understanding of educational processes.

A proposal for the Language Education Study was developed in the early 1990s as a response to the need for information about foreign and second language teaching and learning, in particular about the levels of proficiency attained by students in school. This volume is one of two publications planned to disseminate information collected in 1995, in phase 1 of the study.

The IEA is grateful to the member countries which have made possible the completion of this first part of the Language Education Study. Special thanks are due also to the staff of the International Coordinating Centre, under the leadership of Peter Dickson at the National Foundation for Educational Research in the UK, and to members of the International Steering Committee, chaired by Alister Cumming from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, Toronto, Canada. Their work under severe budgetary constraints has been much appreciated.

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We are grateful to many other people for the part they have played. We have benefited particularly from the contributions to the study made by our colleagues on the working group of the LES Steering Committee – Kees de Glopper, Philipp Notter, Elana Shohamy and Hans Pelgrum – and from the advice offered by our senior consultants – Francis Debyser, Sauli Takala, John Trim, and G. Richard Tucker. We must also acknowledge the work of Cres Fernandes, statistician at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), and that of Alfred Sakyi and Nuzhat Amin at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) who helped the editors in the early stages of their work. Thanks are due also to those at NFER who assisted with the preparation of this volume for publication, in particular David Upton, who commented on the text, Mary Hargreaves, who finalised the layout for printing, Tim Wright who designed the cover and Enver Carim who oversaw publication. Finally, we should thank the secretarial staff of the Department of Professional and Curriculum Studies at the NFER —Pauline Pearce, Effie de Souza and Alison Bannerman —who carried out their work with the usual efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

USE AND ORGANISATION OF THIS BOOKLET

This booklet presents a handy, authoritative reference guide for educators, language policy analysts, university students and researchers, businesses, and government and non-governmental agencies wishing to obtain an overview of language policies and school systems for language education in a number of countries in Europe, North America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Profiles of each country are presented in convenient, brief summaries, suitable for quick reference.

The national profile for each country describes, in a standard format:

- ◆ the nation's overall language policy and the principal conditions of multilingualism in its society;
- ◆ policies for second language education for minority populations in schools;
- ◆ policies for foreign language education in schools;
- ◆ chief characteristics of the country's language education system, including: the organisation of the school system in respect to language teaching and learning; curriculum, syllabus, and materials for specific languages taught; assessment of students; teacher qualifications and support; and links and exchanges among students.
- ◆ current trends in language education within the country, and
- ◆ references to sources of information and the contact addresses of the author of the profile to consult for further in-depth information.

Some countries have explicit policies, enshrined in legislation, which govern the use of languages in society or the arrangements for language education in schools. Other countries have only implicit policies that follow from tradition or convention. Where there are legal provisions, it should be noted these may not be fully reflected in the de facto situation.

The countries represented (in alphabetical order) are: Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iran, Israel, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the USA.

The Appendix provides summary tables describing the starting ages, overall duration of language studies in schools, percentage of students enrolled, and modal number of minutes per week that appreciable numbers of students (i.e. more than 5%) in each country study with respect to the four languages commonly taught as a school subject: English, French, German, and Spanish. The percentage of students and modal number of minutes per week are

calculated in reference to two key points in secondary schooling: (A) the end of compulsory schooling (age 15 or 16 in most countries) and (B) the completion of upper secondary schooling (age 17 or 18 in most countries).

PREPARATION AND VERIFICATION OF THIS INFORMATION

The national profiles of language education are the initial results of the first phase of the Language Education Study (LES), coordinated by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in England, under the auspices of the IEA. As such, the information presented is the product of a systematic inquiry conducted in 1995 by the 25 national representatives, each of whom has authored the profile for their respective country. This inquiry was coordinated at the NFER, and supported by a steering committee, consisting of a working group, as well as a panel of senior consultants. This undertaking was thus a truly cooperative, international endeavour, involving leading experts in language education from Canada, England, Finland, France, Israel, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States, as well as the national research coordinators in each of the 25 participating countries, all of whom have significant experience in the field of language education.

To gather the information summarised in each national profile, a standard inquiry form was developed in consultation with all the national research coordinators who completed it in their own countries in the winter-spring of 1995, compiling an extensive national report. The inquiry form asked the national research coordinators to synthesise existing documentation — such as statistics on education, policy documents, and scholarly publications — within their respective countries, with the aim of describing (a) demographic, socio-economic and educational information, (b) socio-linguistic context, (c) language policy, (d) language curriculum and assessment, (e) language teaching and professional support, and (f) the overall system of schooling and higher education. Each country produced a detailed report which was then verified by a consultative committee of experts, set up to oversee national participation in the LES. Each of these 25 reports has now been summarised in condensed form as the national profiles appearing in this booklet.

Further work involving comparative analyses of these data are under way and will be published in the near future as a collection of articles highlighting trends in key aspects of language education among the 25 countries.

AUSTRIA

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

German is the official language of the country and the first language of 93% of the population. There are a number of officially recognised ethnic groups — Croats, Czechs, Hungarians and Slovenes (since 1992/93, Slovaks and Roma/Sinti also) who receive special support and protection from national authorities. They have a right to school education in their mother tongue and to use it in legal and administrative contexts. However, this usually applies only in those districts where at least 20% of the population belong to one of these ethnic groups. Other languages used in society are mainly those of immigrants and migrant workers, in particular Serbo-Croatian, Turkish and English.

The media in Austria are almost exclusively in the German language. Only a small, educated minority watch non-German-speaking satellite TV channels (which can be received by two-thirds of all households), or listen to Blue Danube Radio, a network broadcasting mostly in English nation-wide for 13 hours a day. In the economic sector, English is steadily gaining importance, although German is still an important trade language, especially in Eastern Central Europe. Since Austria is proportionally one of the biggest tourist countries in the world, foreign languages are important for a large part of Austria's working population. In addition, most Austrians regularly go on short shopping or sightseeing trips to neighbouring countries.

Second language education

German is taught as a compulsory subject at all schools and all levels of education. The languages of certain minority groups are also taught in the areas where they are spoken, especially in primary schools. Recent reforms have introduced intercultural

learning as a 'generic' subject in all schools. In an effort to integrate the children of immigrants, refugees and resident minorities into the school system better than before, the regular teaching of German as a second language to these children has been established at compulsory schools, and many 'mixed' classes feature bilingual teaching assistants.

Foreign language education

Since 1985 an act of legislation has required that a foreign language be taught in primary schools and that every pupil has to learn at least one foreign language in lower secondary education. Pupils in primary schools can in principle learn any language, provided that two-thirds of the parents are in

favour of their children learning that particular language. Nevertheless, the vast majority opts for English. In secondary education, English is also by far the most commonly and most intensively taught foreign language, followed by French and Italian. Some efforts have been made over the past years, however, to diversify language education by encouraging the teaching of 'lesser used languages' (Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Russian, Slovak and Slovene). The implementation of bilingual schools (mostly German/English) is also being supported.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

For those languages taught as a compulsory subject, the number of periods per year and week is prescribed in the national curricula issued by the Federal Ministry of Education. Individual schools offer languages as optional subjects, according to demand and capacities. The time allocated to individual languages varies with students' ages and school types, ranging from 50 to 250 minutes per week. On average, students aged 10 to 14 receive 175 minutes of instruction in a foreign language (usually English or French) per week. For students aged 15 to 19, the average amount of time allocated to each foreign language is around 120 minutes per week.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The national curricula follow a standard pattern, containing general aims as well as didactic principles and prescribing attainment targets in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The curricula are in the form of frameworks that list a choice of topics, communicative activities and text types for each grade, leaving it to teachers to select and adapt these. According to general didactic principles, teachers are expected continually to revise and update the contents and methods of teaching suggested in the curriculum. They are also asked to aim at interdisciplinary teaching and to deal with current events.

The content of teaching is governed substantially by the use of textbooks written according to the latest curricular requirements. After approval by the Ministry of Education, these enter a list of recommended teaching materials from which schools and colleges can choose. All textbooks used in courses are given to students free of charge. Schools usually have a large collection of supplementary teaching materials in all media for every subject, and most schools also have their own library for pupils. A national Library Service Centre for Schools has recently been established to promote and improve these institutions.

Assessment of students

Assessment procedures are defined by General Guidelines which teachers are free to interpret. Although a criterion-based mode of assessment is being promoted, norm-based forms of assessment are still quite common. As a rule, assessment should be evenly spread over the entire school year and include all aspects of performance. Formal assessment follows a marking system with five grades: very good (1), good (2), satisfactory (3), sufficient (4), not sufficient (5). Expected levels of achievement required for each grade are described (though only roughly) in the General Guidelines. In language courses, assessment is usually based on two to three written tests per semester, participation in class, oral repetition, and written homework. Although all these elements should theoretically be of equal importance, the written tests are generally weighted as the most important factor. Individual pupils can also ask for a short oral examination, the results of which are then included in their overall school records. Primary schools (Grades 1 to 4) have no formal assessment of foreign languages.

Formal examinations occur in cases of reassessment, for example, after summer holidays if students fail one or two subjects, and as final examinations for certain school programmes which are held before a panel of examiners. Examples of this are the matriculation examinations (Reifeprüfung) at the end of upper secondary education (AHS/BHS), as well as finals for the intermediate secondary and apprenticeship training programmes (Abschlußprüfung). The examinations are usually set by the schoolteachers themselves. They must comply with the national curriculum but may be adapted to the school programme and the teacher's individual choice of topics.

Teacher qualifications and support

In Austria, all schoolteachers are required to have some kind of formal qualification, except a small proportion who work on the basis of a special contract and are not employed by the state. Basically, there are two types of teacher training institutions: tertiary colleges, and university courses leading to an academic degree (Magister). For teachers in primary and general secondary education, university training is not required, whereas in upper secondary education, most language teachers are academics. As most EU countries have concentrated all teacher training at the university level, Austria is thinking about revising its system accordingly.

All teachers are regularly offered in-service training programmes which are carried out by Pedagogical Institutes situated in each provincial capital. Also, there is a state-funded Centre for School Development focusing on new teaching methods, as well as a number of private associations, agencies and institutions offering training courses, lectures, information and materials for teachers (for example, the British Council and the Amerika Haus).

Links and exchanges

Because intercultural learning is currently a priority in educational policy, the Ministry of Education actively supports exchange programmes. The main types of contacts are class-to-class exchanges including Intensive Language Weeks in target language countries, school partnerships, and programmes for individual students. In 1994–95, for example, about 3,000 students from ages 15 to 19 at the upper secondary level (5% of the overall school population in this sector) visited an English-speaking country. Efforts are being made, as well, to add school links and exchanges to the national curricula for the lower secondary level. At the tertiary level, about 2,000 students go abroad on study visits each year. Compared to the annual number of graduates, which is around 10,000, this is a relatively high figure; thanks to the initiatives of the EU, the figure is still rising.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Recent global trends increasing international contact as well as tourist mobility are contributing to a heightened public awareness of the need to intensify foreign language teaching at all levels of education. One result of this trend is that in higher secondary schools, there is a growing pressure to replace traditional subjects like Latin and classical Greek with modern languages. Moreover, a large part of the working population regularly improve their language skills in courses offered by various public and private organisations. The most popular foreign language in adult education is English, because it has not only become the medium for global communication, but is also gradually replacing German for intranational purposes (for example, in science). Nevertheless, the demand for other foreign languages is also growing.

Since 1991, English has occasionally been used as a medium of instruction for all subjects throughout the school system. With the growing popularity of higher technical and vocational colleges, more students acquire some knowledge of foreign languages for vocational purposes (especially for tourism, trade and technical uses). At the tertiary level, optional language courses for special purposes (for example, for technicians or medical staff) are being taken by more and more students. Regular measures to enhance the quality of language education are, for example, the division of larger classes into two groups, the use of native speakers as assistant teachers and the support of contacts and exchange programmes with schools in target language countries.

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CYPRUS

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Cyprus was declared an independent state in 1960, its constitution recognising Greek and Turkish as official languages. The Greek spoken and written in Cyprus is the standard Panhellenic Demotiki, as used in Greece; this is the language of education and everyday communication among the Greek majority. The language for religion is an archaic version of modern Greek, the origin of which dates back to the third and second century AD. Local dialects vary slightly from region to region. The Greek Cypriot dialect is closely related to standard Greek, posing no problems of intelligibility among speakers of either language. The dialect incorporates more archaic elements, retained from ancient Greek, than does the standard Panhellenic Demotiki.

The Turkish community uses Turkish in everyday communication, education and religion. Prior to the forceful separation of the Greek Cypriot majority and the Turkish Cypriot minority after the Turkish invasion in 1974, there were numerous cases of Turkish–Greek bilingualism among the Turkish community. The official language of the Maronite minority is Greek, which is used in education, religion and everyday communication. The Armenian population comes the closest to being truly bilingual, speaking both Armenian and Greek. Armenian is used for religious purposes and as the medium of instruction in Armenian schools, where Greek is also taught.

Since the first years of the young republic, English has remained in demand, it being the principal language within the public service, where most official forms and documents are in English. Moreover, the language of the Courts has long been English; only very recently has the translation of Cypriot laws into Greek been commissioned.

Foreign language education

The languages taught in primary and secondary education are English from the fourth year of primary (age 9) then English, French, and German in secondary education. The system is very sensitive to foreign language teaching. Cyprus maintains close ties with Europe and participates in various programmes of the Council of Europe. Moreover, a sizeable part of its economy is highly dependent on tourism or services to off-shore companies; trade is also conducted mainly through the medium of English.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Cyprus' education system is centralised in terms of administration, policy making, and decision taking. It is a common practice for the three departments of education (primary, secondary, and technical) to submit suggestions regarding policy through the Permanent Secretary to the Minister for approval. If the nature of the decision requires further consideration, it is then submitted to the Council of Ministers for legislative purposes. The implementation of educational policy affects curricula, methodological approaches, teacher training, and materials.

Foreign language instruction begins in the fourth year of primary education (age 9). It is an obligatory subject, taught on average for two 40-minute periods per week. The textbooks used are produced locally and are regularly revised by the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Education. The teaching of English in primary schools is monitored and evaluated by two inspectors of English language who visit schools for both appraisal and guidance purposes. The inspectors maintain close links with the Department of Secondary Education to ensure consistency and a smooth transition from primary to secondary schools. In addition, an interdepartmental committee reviews language curricula, methods and approaches to ensure overall consistency.

The foreign languages taught in the lower cycle of secondary school are English and French. The teaching of English and French begin in the first year of secondary school (gymnasium) at age 12 with four 45- and two 45-minute teaching periods per week respectively; this continues up to the third year (age 15). English and French are both compulsory subjects. Four inspectors monitor the teaching of English, visiting schools and classrooms to observe lessons, providing guidance and assistance to teachers regarding pedagogical methods, syllabuses and approaches. Moreover, the inspectors assess teachers according to their teaching performance and other factors such as participation in school life, human relations, and extra-curricular activities. The teaching of English and French continues in the upper cycle of secondary school (lyceum) with the addition of German. The allocation of teaching hours or periods in the upper cycle depends on which of five curricular strands pupils opt for: Classical, Science, Economics, Commercial, or Foreign Languages.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The Ministry of Education assumes sole responsibility for the design of curricula and choice of teaching and learning materials. The present curriculum attempts to close the gap between the two educational levels and thus to ensure a smooth transition regarding method, approach and content from primary to secondary schools. The present curriculum is not based on any particular school of thought regarding either the nature of language or the

nature of language learning, opting instead for an eclectic approach. The Unified Curriculum for English aims to enable learners to communicate efficiently in numerous situations and to sensitise them to language appropriateness. The curriculum stresses the primacy of oral/aural skills in the development of reading and writing. Communicative and linguistic competence in English is defined as the ability to communicate not only fluently but also accurately in both oral and written modes. For instructional progression, an integrated or global approach is recommended, emphasising speaking and listening at the initial stages of language learning.

For the Lyceum, the present curriculum and syllabus is distinguished from the more controlled approach of the Gymnasium cycle by: a cognitively based approach, based on the rationale that as learners progress in age they are inclined to seek more responsibility for their own learning; increased emphases on creativity and on accuracy in the language; and exposure to unknown language, encouraging learners to develop their inferential and deductive abilities. The overall aim is to enable students to communicate efficiently in English in various situations, ranging from the very informal to the very formal, through the use of appropriate idiomatic and authentic language both in the oral and written modes; moreover it is to prepare learners to meet certain demands placed on them by society regarding their choice of profession. Teachers commonly use a wide range of material resources to supplement textbooks, including audio and visual media, as well as supplementary handouts related to the tasks at hand.

Assessment of students

Pupils in primary schools are not assessed, as a matter of policy, in terms of passing or failing in any school subject. Assessment is mainly diagnostic for provision of feedback, student revision, and determination of remedial work and pedagogic planning. The most common form of assessment in the Gymnasium cycle is that of continuous assessment, which considers pupils' participation in lessons and classroom communication, emphasising fluency rather than accuracy, and diligence regarding homework and project work. Formal testing is conducted at least twice every term using tests designed by the teacher in cooperation with colleagues, and is under the supervision and guidance of the Coordinator Deputy Headmaster in each school, who in turn receives advice from the school subject Inspector. The approach employed is a mixture of norm- and criterion-referenced procedures; the results are used for purposes of promotion, although the possibilities of student failure are very low. The assessment of students in upper secondary schools is conducted externally by the Ministry of Education, although students' final marks are an aggregate of marks resulting from continuous and school-based assessment in conjunction with the external criterion-referenced examinations conducted by the Ministry. Because assessment is in line with the curriculum, weights are apportioned accordingly, emphasising skills of reading, writing, and listening (speaking is not formally tested), as well as knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to slightly different extents at each level of schooling.

Teacher qualifications and support

The prospective language teacher, either for the public or private sector, needs to possess a degree in the subjects the person wishes to teach. In the case of foreign languages, a BA or MA degree in the particular language or a degree in linguistics taught in that particular language is required. In the recent past, candidates were appointed with diplomas only. All language teachers obtain their first degrees abroad (e.g., in Greece, England, the USA, France, or Germany). Only recently has a university been established in Cyprus; its first graduates will graduate in 1996.

None the less, there is no shortage of language teachers, but rather a surplus, many of whom are privately employed, either by coaching centres or self-employment.

Links and exchanges

Many longstanding links exist between Cyprus and other countries. A large proportion of students in tertiary education study abroad, and many secondary school students visit other countries to improve their foreign languages. Such visits are organised mostly by the students themselves or by the British Council, the Fulbright Commission, the French Cultural Centre, and the Goethe Institut.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The demand for foreign language teaching and learning reflects its very high status in Cyprus. It is also reflected in the time allotted to foreign language teaching and learning, in the educational investment made by the government, and through the participation of the Ministry in various functions of the Council of Europe and the European Union, focused on language teaching and learning.

The school curricula contain a number of recommendations for language teaching and learning: promoting the teaching of language for academic purposes; integrating language skills; actively involving learners; pitching instruction to facilitate students' comprehensible input in listening and reading; sequencing texts from scripted realistic to semi-authentic then authentic materials with inherent interest for students; emphasising use rather than usage in the spoken language; emphasising fluency, while not neglecting accuracy, particularly in writing, which should also involve the student creatively.

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THE CZECH REPUBLIC

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Although constitutional laws do not declare the use of any specific language as official, Czech is used exclusively for administrative and legal purposes throughout the country. However, national and ethnic minorities are guaranteed the uses of their languages for relations with governmental bodies, in legal affairs, and in education. The proportion of national minorities in the population is very small — Czech is the mother tongue of 95% of the population. The principal minority languages are Slovak, Polish and German. Smaller numbers speak Hungarian and Ukrainian. Most speakers of these languages are bilingual both in speech and literacy. The recent break-up of Czechoslovakia meant the end of natural bilingualism within the populations of the Czech and Slovak Republics (which used both languages in the media and tertiary education).

Second language education

Citizens belonging to national and ethnic minorities are guaranteed by law the right to education in their own languages. Schools or classes with a minority language as a medium of instruction can be established in places where the minority population reaches certain minimum numbers. Consequently there are several Polish-medium schools, but it is difficult to establish schools for the Slovak or German minorities, which are scattered in smaller populations throughout the country.

Foreign language education

Legislation requires all students in lower-secondary schools to study one foreign language from the age of 10. At the upper secondary level (age 15 to 19) the study of two foreign languages is compulsory. Until November 1989 the first compulsory foreign language was Russian, which was also compulsory in upper secondary education. With recent democratic changes in the society, students now have the right to a choice of a foreign language, from five at lower secondary school (English, French, German, Russian, Spanish) and six offered at upper secondary school (in addition Italian). However, this choice is limited by the staffing possibilities of a given school.

Legislation prescribes the structure and content of language teaching. According to the 1995 Amendment of the Education Act, starting in September 1997, the first foreign language will be obligatory from the age of nine, that is, starting in primary school. Foreign language teaching is provided in state

schools according to curricula elaborated by a team of specialists including teacher trainers and experienced teachers and approved by the Ministry of Education. The curricular documents also contain guidance for teaching and assessment criteria.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Within the present system of compulsory education (age 6 to 15) the primary level consists of four grades and the lower-secondary level of five grades (which together form a basic school). All students have to take one foreign language from the beginning of lower secondary. However, within compulsory education a specific form of study exists in selected classes with extended foreign language teaching: this offers study of a first foreign language in the third grade of primary school, and where a second foreign language is obligatory from the fifth grade (age 10).

The 1995 Amendment of Education Act has restructured compulsory education into five years of primary level and four years of lower-secondary level. The start of compulsory foreign language study has been brought down by one year, as a result of which, starting in September 1997, all primary school students will have started their first foreign language by the age of nine. The actual choice of the first foreign language is balanced between German and English because knowledge of these languages influences professional career opportunities. Therefore, in upper secondary school, most students study the other of these two languages they had not previously studied. French is taken in upper secondary education, especially in gymnasia, by about 4% of the total student population as a second or third foreign language. The situation of Spanish is similar, the proportion being somewhat lower than French. The study of two foreign languages within full upper secondary (ages 15 to 19) is compulsory, and so is the Maturita Examination in one foreign language.

The vast majority of schools teach foreign languages as a subject. In 1990 a statutory arrangement was created for establishing, within upper secondary schools (gymnasia), classes with most subjects taught through the medium of a foreign language, although the overall student population participating in this arrangement is still small. At present there are English, German (and Austrian), French (and Belgian), Spanish and Italian classes; differences in their pedagogical orientations relate to some extent to differences between the educational traditions of the target language countries, from which the respective schools receive both professional assistance and native-speaking teachers. However, all of these schools have to meet the requirements set by the Czech National Curriculum for general secondary education and prepare the students adequately for entrance examinations to Czech universities.

The allocation of time for foreign languages is decided by schools within regulations set by the Ministry of Education. In compulsory education, the minimum instruction prescribed by the new curricula is 135 minutes per week, the recommendation for initial foreign language teaching in grades four and five (ages 9 to 10) being 180 minutes. In most secondary schools the average instruction time for the first foreign language is 135 minutes, 90 minutes being the minimum. An important organisational condition states that large classes must be divided for foreign language instruction, both in compulsory and upper secondary education.

Most institutions of tertiary education require all students (except those in language programmes) to take a course and an examination in one foreign language (and for some programmes a specific language is prescribed). In higher education over 7% of the students follow degree courses in one or more foreign languages. The demand is actually far higher, but all universities and colleges have limited entrance quotas and strict entrance procedures.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The Czech Republic publishes curriculum documents separately for each level of schooling (i.e., primary, lower, and upper secondary). However, the new curriculum for modern languages within compulsory education was conceived as an inseparable six-year cycle. At the upper secondary level there are several curricular documents reflecting the difference between general secondary education and job-oriented, specialised secondary schools. Nevertheless, the curricula have the same underlying principles. The curriculum documents for modern languages have a general part dealing with common aspects of the teaching of modern languages and prescribing standards of attainment for listening, speaking, reading and writing. This includes lists of topics and communicative functions and notions, and it outlines the principles of communicative teaching methodology, including the development of students' language awareness and cross-cultural competence. The teacher's awareness of typological differences between the students' mother tongue and the target language is stressed as beneficial for minimising cross-lingual interference, especially where foreign course books are used. Language-specific parts of the curriculum list the structural elements to be mastered and contain detailed specifications of those features of the particular foreign language that are difficult for the Czech learner. Teaching is carried out in state schools according to these curricular documents, but the Ministry of Education states that up to 30% of the curricular content may be modified by the teacher to adjust it to the learners' needs and local conditions. The curriculum for basic education stresses mainly oral communication with considerable attention paid to the development of clear pronunciation. The upper secondary curriculum balances its emphases proportionally between oral and literate skills as well as stressing the use of appropriate styles and registers.

The 1990 Amendment to the Education Act guarantees teachers and schools freedom of choice in the selection of course books and other teaching materials. At basic schools the choice is influenced by the List of Recommended Textbooks published annually and updated by the Ministry of Education, on the grounds of which basic schools are obliged to provide free textbooks for each subject. Within this prescribed list the teacher has an opportunity to choose between three or four course books. Each pupil receives textbooks on loan for the whole school year. The teacher may also reach agreement with students' parents on the use of another textbook that they are willing to purchase. At upper secondary schools students have to buy their textbooks. Dictionaries and other reference materials are widely available for classroom use. The choice of commercially produced foreign textbooks on the market is greatest for English, but it is quite large for the other foreign languages taught as well.

Assessment of students

All through their primary and secondary education students receive school reports with grades for each subject twice a year. So far there is no system of standardised tests for any subject. Apart from continuous assessment and short oral and written examinations, starting with the sixth grade each student should take four formal written examinations in one school year. The curricula contain general recommendations concerning the format of these tasks as well as their assessment. There is no formal final assessment in a foreign language at the end of compulsory schooling.

At the end of upper secondary school, students take the Maturita Examination, in which a foreign language is one of the compulsory subjects. Its requirements are stated by the Ministry of Education but its content is specified at the school level. At present this is an oral examination lasting 15 minutes. Because this examination does not contain any objectively comparable criteria, it is difficult to compare the standards achieved at different schools. Students interested in certification of their language abilities can take an officially recognised, comprehensive examination at the State Language School, which has three levels — Basic, General and Specialised.

Teacher qualifications and support

In December 1989, as a result of the changed political situation, the choice of the first foreign language in primary and secondary education became more open. Russian, until then a compulsory foreign language, became only one of the options, and most students (or their parents) insisted on their right of free choice, demanding immediate change of a compulsory foreign language, mostly opting for German or English. This demand far exceeded that which could be met by the existing pool of qualified modern language teachers. Steps were taken to provide the necessary minimum language training to teachers unqualified in these languages who volunteered to teach them. These included various in-service training courses alongside official part-time

retraining degree courses at universities and colleges of education, most of which are still running. In full-time studies, a new three-year intensive pre-service programme, the Fast Track, was established, the graduates from which are qualified to teach English or German at primary and lower secondary levels.

There is still a critical shortage of modern language teachers, especially in basic schools. According to statistics for 1993-94 only 28% of English or German teachers had a degree qualification in a foreign language. A negligible percentage (8%) had a general certificate of language proficiency from a State Language School and the remainder, most of whom have a teaching degree for other subjects, did not have any certification for the language they taught. The situation is somewhat better in secondary education, where 53% of English and 62% of German teachers were fully qualified, and 11% for both languages had a certificate in a foreign language. There is also a great number of native speakers of English, both qualified and unqualified: 3% teaching in basic schools and 13% in upper secondary (for German the figures are 0.5% and 3% respectively).

Official support for language teachers is provided by the Regional In-service Education Centres, most of which have foreign language specialists. In the years 1990-1995 all of these activities were coordinated by the Foreign Language Teaching Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. Considerable support comes from institutions funded by the governments of Great Britain, the United States, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, and Switzerland through their resource centres, which provide library facilities, hold seminar sessions and workshops and, together with the Ministry of Education, select teachers for courses and exchange visits to the target-language countries. These activities together form a closely interlinked network supported also by modern language departments of colleges of education. Teachers of English, German, French, and Spanish have their professional associations, each of which holds its annual national conference, publishes newsletters, conducts regular specialist seminars and contributes to in-service teacher training.

Links and exchanges

Many foreign language teachers, both qualified and in retraining, have increasing opportunities for educational visits to target-language countries or to other countries with a tradition of foreign language teaching. Apart from those organised centrally, a number of activities arise from links directly between schools or twinned towns. Because there is no central registration of these activities, it is impossible to estimate the number of teachers and students participating in them. The same applies to university students. Students of German and French have a fair chance of educational visits in the target-language countries, whereas students of English exceed the number of places available.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

In the Czech Republic nobody doubts the importance of a good command of at least one foreign language. The language education policy follows the principles set by the Council of Europe, respecting the requirements of language diversity in multicultural Europe. The command of a foreign language is seen as essential for establishing and developing trade with European and other foreign countries, as well as for scientific and cultural contacts on both official and personal levels. The extension of foreign language education to primary level necessitates rapid training of primary teachers, both through pre-service and in-service courses; various initiatives along these lines are currently in progress.

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DENMARK

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Danish is the only official language for professional, administrative and legal purposes. The question of language — both mother tongue and foreign languages — is set out, not in the Constitution, but in other legislation, for instance the Act of the Folkeskole of 1993. Denmark is a very homogeneous country, with no profound differences in its cultural life. Even Danish dialects are expected to fall into disuse, given the influence of television since the late '50s.

Danish is the first language for almost everybody except the population of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, immigrants and the tiny German-speaking minority in South Jutland, where there are 16 basic German minority schools, with 1,320 students (1994/95). Today the German minority schools form part of the system of Danish Private Independent Elementary Schools. About 35–40 different languages are in use among minority groups of immigrants and refugees resident in Denmark. Significant numbers speak Turkish, Urdu, Arabic, Serbian, Croatian and Vietnamese. Other languages are used by very small groups. Both the German-speaking minority and some immigrants can be characterised as bilingual. Bilingualism outside these groups is rare in Denmark.

Foreign languages have a very strong position in professional and administrative life in Denmark. Knowledge of foreign languages is generally considered very important in view of the limited use of Danish outside national borders. Most people are expected to communicate in English and, to a certain extent, also in German. Other languages like French, Spanish, Italian and Russian are spoken by rather few.

Second language education

Second language teaching is provided for a limited but growing group of children of immigrants and refugees, legally termed bilingual children, from families who mainly speak languages other than Danish. In 1994/95, this group represented about 6% of all pupils of the Folkeskole. Supplementary teaching is offered to these children, both in their first language and in Danish. The official policy is integration into Danish society.

First language teaching in the Folkeskole is not compulsory for pupils speaking a foreign language, but local authorities are obliged to provide it as an option. The aim is to permit the pupils to maintain and develop their knowledge of their mother tongue, as well as of conditions in their home countries. The programme is allocated three to five lessons per week — usually outside normal school hours, sometimes on Saturday mornings.

The teaching of Danish to this group of children has politically a high priority. Immigrant pupils without any knowledge of Danish receive their first Danish teaching in reception or special classes. As soon as possible, and after one-and-a-half to two years at most, they are integrated into normal classes, and follow the curriculum with the help of learning support teachers. Pre-school children can receive up to three lessons of Danish daily for about two to three years. Local authorities are responsible for allocating sufficient teacher support so that every pupil can be integrated into Danish society.

Foreign language education

The need for intensive foreign language learning has a long tradition in the Danish school system. The framework of foreign language education in lower secondary was laid down by law in 1993, and for upper secondary, in 1990. This legislation lays down the structure of language teaching, as well as the number and nature of languages to be offered. The aims of all subjects are determined by the Government, and the Danish Ministry of Education sets out guidelines for assessment and recommended curricula. The Danish school system is widely decentralised, so the number of lessons and the content of subjects, including foreign languages, are decided locally, and in many cases at school level.

For language teaching in the Folkeskole, the most important effect of the 1993 Act was that English began in the fourth form instead of the fifth, that French could be offered as second foreign language instead of German, and that French or German as third foreign language could be offered as optional subjects in the eight to tenth forms (age 10 to 14), instead of only the tenth. These measures reflect the importance attached to a diversified foreign language competence. Legislation passed in 1987 created a more diversified range of optional subjects. Among the consequences for language teaching was that English became the first foreign language for all students, in both mathematics and language streams. Language options were systematised and extended, so that mathematics and language students had a choice between German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese as second foreign language, and language students had the same choice for third foreign language.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Since the school system is very decentralised at the level of the Folkeskole, there is much local decision-making, often at school level, with regard to the provision and organisation of language teaching. Only the aims and overall attainment targets are prescribed centrally. English is the first foreign language and is compulsory in primary education from the fourth grade (age

10). The allocation of time is 135 minutes weekly in the fifth to the ninth grade of the Folkeskole. Second and third foreign languages offered are German or French, introduced in the seventh grade (age 13). At this level, German is studied by about 90% of pupils, and French by about 5% (1994); time allocated is about 180 minutes weekly. Years of study vary from three to six.

In general upper secondary school, English remains first foreign language for all students. In the languages stream, all students have to continue the second foreign language, German or French, started in the Folkeskole, and choose as third foreign language between French/German, Spanish, Italian, Russian or Japanese. In the mathematics stream, the students may continue the second foreign language or start a third. As third foreign language, German is studied by about 30% of students, French about 20%, Spanish about 18%, Italian about 2%, and Russian about 2%. Very small numbers study Japanese. The third foreign language is allocated 180 minutes weekly for one to three years. Latin is also compulsory in the first year of the languages stream, and afterwards optional, along with Greek, for two years. Latin usually has 180 and Greek 300 minutes weekly. The first optional year of Latin is chosen by about 17% of the students, whereas Latin at a higher level and Greek are chosen by only 1%.

All foreign languages are taught as a subject. English is used as medium of instruction, at a few secondary schools, mostly for the International Baccalaureate; German and French are used in only one school each. Upper secondary schools encompass the higher preparatory examination course and the higher commercial and technical examination courses, in which foreign language teaching is also a significant element.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

It is a Danish tradition that Parliament lays down the aims of school subjects and sends out recommended curricula. However, with the latest changes in the Folkeskole, the Ministry of Education has also provided a description of the content of subjects. Parliament has undertaken this at a time when decision-making in the educational system has been increasingly decentralised, in order to guarantee quality in education. The Ministry of Education recommends curricula for all subjects of the Folkeskole. These curricula are approved by the municipal council and individual modifications may be made by the school board. So, certain variations are possible between the curricula of different schools, even within the borders of a municipality. The curricula, however, are bound to respect both the aims and central knowledge and proficiency requirements, as well as the requirements of the leaving examinations.

The recommended curricula prescribe attainment levels in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the importance of communicative skills are underlined. The oral approach in early foreign language teaching and the dimension of intercultural awareness are recommended. Teaching materials are chosen by the teachers and approved by the school board at every school; they are free

because every child has a legal right to education free of charge. The material resources of the school include course books, books in foreign languages for individual reading, audio and visual media and also computers. Educational materials in Denmark are almost always commercially produced, and often adapted from those produced in other countries, particularly Sweden. Material resources are also available from school media centres and the educational media centre of the county.

Assessment of students

In the Danish school system there is formative assessment, carried out internally, and external examinations after the ninth (age 15), tenth and twelfth grades. The new law on the Folkeskole stresses the need for formative evaluation, in particular the regular assessment of pupils' attainment, and guidance given to individual pupils. Its role in planning teaching is also emphasised. Attainment is assessed, for external purposes, by the teacher and through examinations. Teacher assessment in the form of a proficiency mark and, in some cases, a written report is carried out from the eighth form. After the ninth and tenth forms, students can take the leaving examination of the Folkeskole in a number of subjects, including an oral test in first and second foreign languages. After the tenth form (age 16), most students can take the advanced leaving examination of the Folkeskole. The advanced test of foreign languages is both oral and written. After the twelfth form (age 18), there are final examinations: the upper secondary leaving examination, the higher preparatory examination, the higher commercial examination and the higher technical examination, most of which are written as well as oral. Written examinations are based on national question papers, produced by the Ministry, and are assessed by central examination boards.

Teacher qualifications and support

Teacher training for the Folkeskole takes place at teacher training colleges, and consists of two parts of two years each. Part I includes a range of basic subjects, and part II comprises two main subjects — general didactics and a special subject in education. It is possible to study English, German and French as main subjects. Upper secondary teachers are trained through university studies of three to five years for the main subject, and one-and-a-half to two years for the subsidiary subject. All foreign language teaching is carried out by teachers with academic qualifications or, in a few cases, approved equivalent qualifications from other countries

An evaluation of teacher availability by the Ministry of Education has shown that, among teachers teaching English at the Folkeskole in the school year 1989–90, 54% had professional qualifications (English as main subject in teacher training), 10% other English qualifications, and 36% other backgrounds. There appears to be a sufficient number of qualified teachers at this level available, but, for pedagogical reasons — particularly the principle of the class teacher following the same group of children from the first to the

ninth grade (age 7 to 15), and that of limiting the teaching of a class to as few teachers as possible — the teaching of foreign language is sometimes carried out by teachers with other main subjects. Teacher supply for foreign languages in upper secondary is on the whole adequate.

The in-service training of language teachers is supported by local centres for teaching materials, by teacher training colleges, by the Royal Danish Academy of Educational Studies with its eight regional centres, and by the language associations, which also act as information centres. In-service training is, partly or totally, supported by governmental, regional and municipal funding. Language teachers have an opportunity to participate, on average, in one course about once in each year.

Links and exchanges

Links and exchanges with other European countries are considered of great importance, even if they do not yet reach the level of internationalisation in all sectors of education aspired to by official policy. Most activities are managed by the government agency ICU (Informationscenter for Studie- og Udvekslingsrejser). This centre is the Danish link to the relevant EC projects, and it plays an important role in the exchange of students, as well as of teachers.

It is estimated that in the university sector about half of all language students spend about one term, as a part of their training, in a country of the target language of their main subject. Foreign language students in teacher training colleges have much more limited opportunities. A small number of language teachers participate in summer courses, some of them supported by national institutes.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Increasingly high levels of communication within Europe, and the growing need for competence in foreign language skills, are currently the greatest challenges for the educational system. The implementation of the 1993 Act on the Folkeskole referred to above is one response to this situation, and there has been discussion of an extension to it which would allow for an earlier introduction of the first foreign language and strengthen the position of second foreign languages. In upper secondary education, the quality and intensity of foreign language teaching is also under discussion. There has been a considerable decline, for example, in support for French, as a consequence of the restructuring of the curriculum. It is obvious that the Danish public takes a great interest in the quality of educational matters. The area of foreign languages is among the most important.

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ENGLAND

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

English is the recognised official language for professional, administrative and legal purposes, though this is not enforced by a written constitution. Other indigenous languages are still in use elsewhere in the UK (Welsh in Wales, and Gaelic in Scotland), but the only variations in the spoken language in England are English dialects found in the regions. Other languages are sometimes used in the public domain, in official documents, published by local authorities, or issued by community groups representing linguistic minorities. Nearly 200 different languages are in use among minority groups resident in England. Significant numbers speak Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, Panjabi and Cantonese; smaller numbers speak Greek, Hindi, Italian, Spanish and Turkish; other languages are used by very small numbers. Bilingualism, characterised by varying degrees of oral proficiency and literacy in English and the home language, reaches significant proportions in some parts of the country. For example, bilingual students can make up between 10% and 50% of the school population in areas where linguistic minorities are concentrated.

Second language education

The policy for second language education has shifted from 'assimilation' (teaching ethnic minority children English in special language or reception centres), to 'integration' (providing support for English and mother tongue). There have also been recent initiatives in multicultural education. Provision for second language is made sometimes through special classes in school, but mostly through the use of learning support teachers assisting students following the mainstream curriculum. Such provision is to be found in between 1% and 2% of schools nationally. In rare cases a heritage language may be selected as a part of the mainstream foreign language curriculum. However, mother tongue teaching is more often provided in the community by minority groups setting up their own institutions and networks.

Foreign language education

Until recently there was no statutory provision for foreign language learning in any sector of education. However, legislation introduced in 1991 requires all secondary students aged 11 to 16 to study at least one foreign language, and prescribes the structure and content of language teaching, as well as the languages that can be offered. A central government agency sets out the curriculum content and assessment arrangements for all National Curriculum subjects (including languages), in documents sent to schools. Non-statutory

guidance is also provided for teaching and assessing. Examination board syllabuses must also conform to nationally prescribed criteria for assessing students at the end of compulsory schooling. Central government supports the diversification of foreign language learning in schools and in about a half of all secondary schools it is now possible for students to study a language other than French as their first foreign language. Nevertheless, only very small numbers are offered languages other than French, German and Spanish. National Language Standards (NLS) for the use of languages at work were first accredited in 1993. NLS criteria provide the basis of National Vocational Qualifications for languages, available in education as well as training.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

There is no statutory provision for foreign language teaching in the primary sector. However, between 5% and 10% of primary schools, most concentrated in a few local authorities, provide some language teaching, usually oral skills, and nearly always French. The effect of the 1991 legislation is that the proportion of students aged 11 to 16 in secondary schools, studying a first foreign language, will soon approach 100%. Estimates suggest that for every student of Spanish there are three of German and between eight and nine of French, with about 25% studying two foreign languages. Figures for other languages are not significant nationally.

All foreign languages are taught as a subject, and as medium of instruction in only isolated cases. Although there are statutory arrangements for the content of language teaching, the organisation of the foreign language curriculum and teaching methods are decided at the school level. The allocation of time to languages is also decided by schools. Students aged 11 to 14 receive on average 120 minutes instruction per week for the first foreign language; students aged 14 to 16, 90 minutes. This represents about 8% and 6%, respectively, of all curriculum time; the proportion of curriculum time taken by all foreign languages is about 10%.

The study of foreign languages in upper secondary is optional. In advanced level examinations at the end of upper secondary about 10% of students take at least one language, while languages represent about 7% of all subject entries. In higher education the numbers decline further: only about 4% of students are following degree courses featuring the study of a foreign language.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The National Curriculum prescribes attainment targets in listening, speaking, reading and writing; it also provides a framework for programmes of study, listing topics and communicative skills. Teachers in schools use the outline programmes of study to produce detailed schemes of work, which also need to take account of eight attainment level descriptions laid down for purposes of reporting students' progress. The new arrangements have underlined the recent curricular emphasis on oral communication and the use of languages for personal use and for leisure and travel: they have also made explicit the need for target language to be used by teachers and students for all classroom communication.

The content of teaching is governed substantially by the use of commercially produced course books, providing a comprehensive coverage of foreign language curriculum from age 11 to 16. Course books are usually available for all students, either on temporary loan, or as a classroom library resource. The choice of course books is greatest in French, and diminishes in proportion to the participation rates, for other languages. Teachers commonly draw on a wide range of material resources to supplement the use of course books. These often include audio and visual media as well as information technologies.

Assessment of students

School-level assessment of students is an established tradition. National Curriculum arrangements will in the future ensure that teachers' assessments conform to national criteria and reflect the eight attainment levels. From 1997 students' attainment at 14 will have to be formally reported. At the end of compulsory schooling (age 16), students sit for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Criteria for the GCSE are governed by the National Curriculum, and examination syllabuses are produced by the five examination groups. Students are assessed in all the language skills through terminal tests and some coursework. Small numbers of students at age 16 seek accreditation through other national or regional tests, often with a vocational orientation.

At the end of upper-secondary school, students following routes into higher education are normally assessed by the Advanced Level (A) General Certificate of Education. Advanced Supplementary (AS) courses are also available, equivalent to half of an A level. Examination boards produced their own A and AS syllabuses, comparable in level of difficulty but sometimes with variation in content. All language skills are assessed by terminal examinations. General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ), featuring units in languages, have recently been introduced for students at this level, as alternative accreditation.

Teacher qualifications and support

The expansion of student numbers, accompanying the introduction of the National Curriculum, has increased teacher shortages. In 1993 languages was one of the subjects with the highest teacher vacancy rates — 18% of all vacancies.

About two-thirds of French teachers have a degree qualification, the majority studying language as their main subject. The remaining third are either certificated teachers or professionally trained as language teachers, having taken a degree in a different academic subject. Among teachers of all other languages the proportions are about three-quarters and a quarter. Surveys of language teachers suggest that between 10% and 15% are native speakers of the language which they teach.

Language teachers are supported by two government agencies. The Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT), along with affiliated regional centres, provides library and information services, promotes dissemination and organises teacher training. The Central Bureau administers schemes for international links and exchanges for both teachers and students. Other institutions supporting language teachers include the National Council for Educational Technology (IT in languages), the cultural institutes, funded by the governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal (information and training), and the Association for Language Learning (ALL) which holds an annual conference for its 7,000 members and publishes journals.

Links and exchanges

Cultural and intercultural awareness is one of the aims of the National Curriculum. However, the tradition of links with other countries, for language learning and cultural exchange, is a long one. Group visits, including home-to-home exchanges, involve substantial numbers of students in secondary schools. Such visits are organised by the Central Bureau and at school level. Links are also sustained through the exchange of materials and, as the new technologies become available, by electronic mail. About 1,600 students in higher education are placed each year in French, German and Spanish schools, as assistants. Three times that figure, including many students who are not studying languages, are supported by European Union programmes for study visits abroad. Other contacts are organised by individual institutions.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Closer ties and increased trade with other European countries have exerted a positive influence on views of the usefulness of language learning and led to many promising initiatives, for example those promoted through the collaboration of education and industry. However, the attitudes of most English speakers are still likely to be governed by the knowledge that English

is an internationally used language. The introduction of compulsory foreign language learning in secondary schools has enhanced its status as a school subject, but there remains uncertainty about the impact this will have on promoting foreign language competence. The demands of the National Curriculum in schools have also restricted opportunities for second and third foreign languages.

There is a widely held view that the base of foreign language learning needs to be widened in other sectors of education. Some argue for an extension of language learning at primary level, though there is currently no policy commitment in this area. A policy option which is more likely to be adopted is the introduction of language learning as a core study for students in post-compulsory education, aged 16 to 19, following both academic and vocational courses.

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FINLAND

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Finland is officially a bilingual country; of 5.1 million inhabitants, 93.1% are Finnish and 5.8% are Swedish. These two language groups both have a constitutional right to administrative, cultural and educational services in their mother tongues. The Sami language, spoken by a few thousand speakers, has recently obtained official status in the regions where it is used. All other language groups are small, numbering a few thousand speakers each at most, but their numbers are increasing.

High levels of bilingualism are not common among Finnish-speaking Finns, although Swedish is a compulsory school subject in basic education. But many Swedish-speaking Finns know Finnish very well. Bilingualism is most common on the western and southern coast (for example, the Helsinki region) where most Swedish-speaking Finns live. In general, the older generation of Finnish-speakers is not likely to know other languages, whereas practically the entire younger generation knows at least one additional language, though with varying degrees of proficiency.

Second language education

The first official curriculum for Finnish and Swedish as second languages was introduced in 1994. Until the late 1980s, the number of immigrants and refugees was fairly small; thus the need for second language instruction has arisen only recently. Second language education varies greatly depending on the municipality responsible for organising the instruction and on the availability of trained teachers. Typically, about two hours of instruction per week is provided for pupils who need it, but even this is not always possible. Instruction of the various mother tongues of the immigrants also varies depending on the resources available, amounting to two hours per week typically, where such teaching is available.

Foreign language education

Prior to the introduction of the nine-year comprehensive school in the 1970s, foreign language (FL) teaching was confined to academically oriented lower and upper secondary schools (Grades 5 to 9 and 10 to 12), where only a minority of the population studied. All pupils now study two obligatory languages, one of which must be the other official language of the country: in general, most students begin their first FL in Grade 3 (age 9) then the second one in Grade 5 or 7. Pupils can choose a third, optional language

usually in Grade 8 (age 14), and another one if they proceed to an academic secondary school. About 90% of the pupils choose English in Grade 3 as their first FL. Attempts have been made to diversify this choice, but with only limited success. Being a relatively small country with a language seldom understood outside its borders, Finland finds it important to teach foreign languages extensively in her educational system. The country's official bilingualism also affects its orientation to languages.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Subjects taught in school are regulated by educational legislation. The government determines the allocation of lessons, which in recent times has meant a shift from a uniform system to a system where only the minimum number of lessons is prescribed, and municipalities and schools can prioritise subjects as they wish within the framework of the elective lesson quota. The National Board of Education, an agency that reports to the Ministry of Education, prepares the framework curricula. The municipalities and schools prepare locally adapted curricula within the national framework. All foreign languages are taught as a subject at all levels of education. Using the FL as a medium of instruction is becoming more popular in Finland, but it is still fairly rare and subject to debate.

Pupils have to study at least two other languages besides their mother tongue in the compulsory nine-year comprehensive school. One of these must be the other national language (i.e., Swedish for the Finnish-speaking Finns, and Finnish for the Swedish-speaking Finns). English is also compulsory for all Swedish-speaking pupils. The Finnish-speaking pupils can choose the other language from a number of alternatives; the choice depends on the school and municipality. The first FL starts typically in Grade 3 (age 9), and the second either in Grade 5 or 7. For about 90% of the Finnish-speaking pupils, the first FL is English and the second Swedish, and 44% of them (60% in the Swedish-speaking schools) also take a third language in Grade 7 or 8, usually German or French. The first FL is usually allocated 90 minutes of instruction per week in all grades, the second, 90 minutes in Grades 5 to 6 and 135 minutes in Grades 7 to 9, and the third, if chosen, 90 to 135 minutes. FL instruction constitutes about 9% of all instruction in the comprehensive school in Grade 3 when FL teaching normally begins, but rises to at least 17% in the final grade (9), or even 30%, if the pupil takes a third language.

Foreign languages are also compulsory in secondary education. The academically oriented upper secondary schools (ages 16 to 18) have two compulsory languages, one of which must be the other national language. These two languages are also compulsory subjects in the nation-wide school-leaving examination, the Matriculation examination. More than 90% of the

students study English as a compulsory subject (and in the Swedish-speaking schools all must study English). Students can also choose up to two additional languages: usually German (chosen by about 50% of all students), French (by 18%), or Russian (by 5% or less). Students receive on average 150 minutes instruction per week in the first FL in all grades and 100 or 150 minutes per week in the other languages. FL instruction constitutes at least 20% of all instruction, but this may be 30% to 40% if the student takes one or two optional languages. In principle, evening schools offer the same education with the same goals as day time schools, but the number of contact hours is smaller, typically 100 minutes per week for any language.

Vocationally oriented upper secondary education (Grade 10 onwards) has less FL teaching, but there, too, it is compulsory to study the other national language and at least one other FL for a year or more, depending on the field of studies. Almost all (98%) have at least English and Swedish or Finnish in their first year. The average number of minutes per week is 68 for each language, and the share of foreign languages among all teaching time is considerably smaller than in academic upper secondary schools. However, certain academic and professional fields have more language education than others.

Foreign languages are also compulsory in almost all programmes of higher education. Non-language majors have to attend LSP (Language for Special Purposes) courses on a language used in their own field of study. The number of languages and the length of courses vary greatly from field to field; often the courses last one or two terms and consist of one to two hours of instruction per week.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

A recent policy decision to reduce the centralisation of the educational system and to devolve decision making to the municipalities and the schools has meant a major change in how schools in Finland are run. The new 'framework' curricula (1994) are fairly general, providing guidance about the orientation of school activities, specifying the minimum number of lessons or courses that students must study, and outlining in broad terms the objectives and contents of teaching. Language teaching in schools in Finland has a general uniformity throughout the country, without formal control, for various reasons: the national framework curriculum, a uniform system of teacher education, the availability of only a few textbook packages in each subject, regular in-service education, the strong influence of the Matriculation examination, the fairly small cultural variation and weak social stratification, the relatively small variation between schools, and long-standing traditions of language teaching.

Textbooks and other language teaching materials are almost always produced in Finland, even after the cessation of formal inspection of textbooks a few

years ago. Such books are typically produced by teams consisting of language teachers, teacher-educators, native speakers, and an occasional applied linguist. The range of different textbooks for each grade is fairly limited: two or four possible sets at most. Most present textbooks contain a variety of stimuli and of exercises, though the different textbook packages tend to resemble each other, and any major divergence from current established practices entails a risk of limited sales.

Assessment of students

Most assessment of students takes place in the schools by teachers, who have great freedom to choose the content and form of assessment, often using tests designed by themselves or provided in textbook materials. Also, some language teachers' associations sell language tests to be used, on a voluntary basis, at the end of the lower stage (Grade 6) or the upper stage (Grade 9) of comprehensive schools. Continuous assessment is also widely used, and complementary methods, such as portfolios, are gradually becoming more popular. The purpose of assessment is usually to give marks or grades for school reports, and less often to gather diagnostic or formative information.

There is only one externally administered examination — the Matriculation examination, designed by an independent examinations board — at the end of academically oriented secondary schooling (age 19). This exerts a great influence on testing practices in secondary schools and in their textbooks. The foreign language tests in the Matriculation examination cover reading (23% of the overall grade for the language tested), writing (33%), listening (23%), grammar (7%), and vocabulary (7%). There is no test of speaking, which is correspondingly given less importance in the schools, although new voluntary tests of speaking are now used in many secondary schools in the final year, and speaking is also emphasised in the new curricula.

Teacher qualifications and support

Since 1973, all teacher education has been provided by universities. There is an over-supply of qualified language teachers, such that there are some problems getting a tenured teaching post. Almost all tenured language teachers in Finnish and Swedish speaking schools (who constitute about 85–90% of all language teachers) have both academic and professional qualifications in the lower secondary (Grades 7–9) and upper secondary schools (Grades 10–12). At the primary level, the qualifications are not quite so high: in the Finnish-speaking schools 83% of teachers of English are fully qualified, and the remaining have only academic qualifications. In the Swedish-speaking schools the respective percentages for primary level English and Finnish are even lower: 51 and 49. Well over 90% of the tenured teachers have spent some time in a country where the language they are teaching is spoken.

Language teachers are supported by the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland (and its affiliates like the Association of Teachers of English in Finland) and by the Continuing Education Centres of several universities. These arrange in-service conferences, short seminars, and occasionally more extended courses on such topics as new developments in curricula, testing, and didactics. Foreign cultural agencies and similar institutions play a limited role in Finland as far as formal language teaching is concerned. An exception is the Nordic Language and Information Bureau, which regularly organises courses for teachers of Swedish.

Links and exchanges

Several organisations, schools, universities and other institutions organise visits and exchange programmes for secondary and tertiary level students. Annually, about 2,500 tertiary level and 2,500 to 3,500 secondary level students go abroad on extended visits. Half of them go to English-speaking countries (typically the USA and Britain), but Sweden and Germany are also fairly popular.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Major recent national innovations in language education are: increased emphases given (a) to the teaching and also testing of oral skills, (b) to culture and cross-cultural communication, and (c) to autonomous learning and learning to learn; as well as (d) the reform of the high-stakes national Matriculation examination (which reduced the proportion of multiple-choice test items and introduced a variety of more open item types, including open-ended questions and summary writing). In Finland it is a general policy to view language learning and teaching from a lifelong perspective. With this in mind, in adult education, in particular, the new national foreign language certificate system will probably prompt more adults to pursue language studies, and to do so in a planned manner, and to have their proficiency tested in a nationally validated examination.

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FRANCE

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

French is the official language for professional, administrative and legal purposes; this applies also to the territories (for example, Polynesia), and to administrative Departments overseas (for example, Guadeloupe). Other languages are not officially recognised in public affairs: indeed recent legislation condemns the use of foreign words, even in advertising, when French equivalents are available. This measure is inspired less by a distrust of other languages than by a concern to preserve the quality of the French language. For example, words adopted from other languages are only very rarely gallicised — written, that is, according to French spelling conventions.

However, some regional languages remain alive: Alsatian, near the German border, Basque in the south-west, Breton in the west, Corsican on the island of Corsica, and Occitan in the south. Speakers of all these languages are genuinely bilingual since they have complete mastery of French. This may not be the case, however, with speakers of languages such as Tahitian and Creole, in the overseas Departments and Territories. Nor is it the case with first, second and even third generation ethnic minority groups, among whom Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, different forms of Arabic, and Polish are still very often spoken, with sometimes adverse effects on standards of French.

It is very difficult to estimate the number of speakers of the languages of immigrant groups, since questions leading to the identification of ethnic origin are not permitted by law. The number of foreigners residing in France can be established, but all children born in France are assumed to be French, and French-speaking, although it is known that French is not always spoken in the home, even by second generation immigrants. The IEA Reading Literacy study demonstrated that this was the case for more than 9% of children in CM1 (Grade 4, age 9).

Second language education

Children in compulsory schooling, at primary level, who do not speak French, are placed in special classes to help them make rapid progress in the language. The aim is to integrate them as soon as possible into the groups best suited to their educational level.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Secondary schools

In lower secondary (Grades 5 to 8 of the collège, age 11 to 15) two foreign languages are compulsory, and in some sections of upper secondary (Grades 9 to 12 of the lycée, age 16 to 18) a third foreign language is optional. All students in upper secondary are required to learn at least one foreign language — often a continuation of their study of English. At the beginning of Grade 6, age 11, students have to choose their first foreign language. Most choose English (87.9% in 1994); German is the second most popular choice (11.1%), followed by Spanish. Very small numbers choose other languages, for example Italian, Literary Arabic, Chinese, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese or Russian. At the beginning of Grade 7, age 14, students have to choose a second foreign language, most often Spanish (57%), German (23%), English (14%), or Italian (5%). The remaining 1% choose the less common languages from among those listed above as first foreign languages. The choice of languages is extremely wide in theory, but in practice most schools offer only English, German and Spanish, with an additional option which is usually Italian, Portuguese or Russian. There are three hours on average of foreign language teaching each week, or five hours for students taking the intensive language option. This allocation of time constitutes about 8% of curriculum time for each language learnt.

Primary schools

In 1989, foreign language learning was introduced into primary schools (Grades 1 to 5, age 6 to 10). 28% of schools in the state sector, and 48% of private schools provide this option; and, where it is available, 56% of pupils in CM2 (Grade 5) and 27% in CM1 (Grade 4) are involved. At both these levels, pupils undertake normal language learning (not just language awareness), with a time allocation of one-and-a-half hours per week. The teaching is carried out by qualified language teachers, and the funding is provided by the local authorities.

In 1995 there was a plan to introduce pupils in CE1 (Grade 2, age 7) to a foreign language through daily audio-visual presentations lasting a quarter of an hour. The cost of this initiative, and for its continuation in the primary sector, is to be borne by the state. In 1994-95, 72% of primary pupils learning a language studied English, 23% German, 3% Spanish and 2% Italian. 42% of teachers in this programme are at present primary trained. Before 1994-95 secondary teachers were in a significant majority, but the transfer of responsibility to primary teachers is now expected to gather pace.

Foreign languages as medium of instruction

In some cases, foreign languages are taught as the medium of instruction, mostly in upper secondary. One example is the European schools, established for children of parents who work for the European Community. The curricula

are quite distinctive and lead to the European Baccalaureate, a qualification which is recognised throughout the European Union. There are similar programmes set up also through the Franco-German lycées (one in France, the other two in Germany), where the curriculum is taught in French and German, and accredited by a Franco-German Baccalaureate, recognised in both countries. There are also three lycées in France and three in Germany where an exchange of teachers allows for the teaching of language, literature, history and geography in the language of the other country. This, through a combined curriculum, leads either to the baccalauréat or to the Abitur.

Finally, there are special sections in some mainstream secondary schools, where foreign languages are the medium of instruction. In a small number of cases international sections have been created. These cover 10 different languages. Curricula have been modified to accommodate the teaching of literature, history and geography by foreign teachers, using their own language. These courses normally lead to the French baccalauréat which qualifies candidates seeking entry to universities in partner countries. They can also lead to the International Baccalaureate. In 1992, European sections were created to extend these opportunities. In this case, teachers and students are French, but a foreign language is used for non-linguistic subjects, including science. Students in these programmes get a special credit in the baccalauréat. In 1994–1995, 450 secondary schools were taking part in this scheme, which, at that time, featured nine foreign languages.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Heads of schools and teachers are obliged to adhere to the weekly allocation of time and the curriculum objectives for languages, laid down nationally by government. Nevertheless, teachers are free to exercise choice within this statutory framework, with regard to teaching methods, course books and other material resources. Teaching materials are produced commercially, often in consultation with the school inspectorate. In primary and lower secondary schools, books are lent to pupils, so schools make the choice; in upper secondary, students buy their own books and their choice is influenced by the decision of individual teachers.

Reading, writing, listening and speaking are the main objectives of the foreign language curriculum, but the emphasis varies according to the language. In English course books, used in lower secondary, listening, speaking and grammar are stressed most; reading, writing and communication strategies are quite important; and spoken transactions, conversation and vocabulary are least important. In German, writing, listening, speaking and grammar have most emphasis; conversation and vocabulary have some emphasis; and reading and communication strategies, none. In Spanish, reading, listening and speaking (conversation and communication) are stressed — writing, vocabulary, and grammar a little less so.

Assessment of students

Individual teachers assess their students' attainment in the spoken and written language, on a continuous basis, but this is not usually coordinated at the school level. There is no examination with a language test at the end of lower secondary; in upper secondary, languages are always tested, although oral and written papers may not always be set at the same time. It is not easy to describe the different pattern of examinations for each type of baccalauréat, but, generally speaking, the four main skills are tested, frequently with an assessment of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and translation.

Teacher qualifications and support

Language teachers in secondary schools are language specialists: their minimum qualification is a university degree, followed by two years' professional training in a teacher training institute. Part of their training is accredited through a competitive examination, set nationally. About 10% are auxiliary teachers, with university diplomas.

The in-service training of teachers is arranged, either by the Ministry of Education, or by the professional associations, of which the major one is the APLV (Association des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes), with a membership of 3,000. In-service training is not compulsory, but can be recommended in individual cases by the school inspectorate. It is organised locally, outside school hours, and consists of modules for which teachers can register if they wish.

Links and exchanges

Many schools organise exchange visits, mostly to neighbouring countries and occasionally to the USA. Teachers also take part in post-to-post exchanges, usually to teach French in other countries.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Currently, the main trend is the growth of foreign language teaching in educational sectors which formerly made little provision: in primary schools, where the early learning of foreign languages is growing rapidly, and in professional and technical contexts, where language learning is seen to promote mobility of labour within the European Union.

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HONG KONG

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Hong Kong's geography makes it a predominantly Cantonese-speaking society, Cantonese being the dialect spoken by most of the inhabitants of the Pearl River Delta where Canton, the provincial capital of Guangdong, is located. According to the 1991 census, 88.7% of the population speak Cantonese as their usual language; another 10.3% speak as their usual language one of the following Chinese dialects: Chiu Chow, Hakka, Fukienese, Putonghua Shanghainese, and Sze Yap. It is of interest to note that only slightly over one per cent of the population speak Putonghua, the national (oral) language of China, as their usual language; altogether only 18.1% claim that they are able to speak it, compared with 95.8% in the case of Cantonese.

Although Hong Kong has been governed by Britain for about 154 years, the spread of English has been restricted to the local elite who acquire the language mostly by way of formal education. While the 1991 census reports that 29.4% of the people of Hong Kong are able to speak English, the percentage of people who have developed a firm grip on the language remains small; only 2.2% of the population speak English as their usual language. Following the practice within both Britain and its empire, there was no statutory provision for what constituted the official language(s) in Hong Kong between 1842 and 1974; English was by practice the sole language used for all official matters within all three (executive, judicial and legislative) branches of the government during the period.

In 1974, however, the government, under immense public pressure, enacted the Official Languages Ordinance which declares the English and Chinese languages 'the official languages of Hong Kong for the purposes of communication between the Government or any public officer and members of the public.' It also declares that the 'official languages possess equal status,' and, subject to the provisions of the ordinance, 'enjoy equality of use.'. In spite of extensive dialectal divergence within the Chinese language, the government chooses not to specify what constitutes the official variety of Chinese in Hong Kong. Instead, it leaves it to be determined pragmatically. Given the sociolinguistic situation in Hong Kong, Cantonese becomes the most often used verbal medium of official communication in practice. Although Modern Standard Chinese is claimed to be the norm in written communication, the variety of Standard Written Chinese in Hong Kong is slightly different from that used in China or Taiwan. It has been developed as a result of socio-cultural changes such as the emergence of an indigenous identity and modern western influence.

Although the past two decades have seen an increase in the use of Chinese in official transactions, the move towards equality in status and use has been slow. To a great extent, English remains the principal medium for intra-governmental written communication and records; it is still the language of the high courts; to a great extent it is the medium of assessment and examination for most educational institutions at secondary and tertiary levels; it is also the preferred language for written contracts and records in the commercial sector.

Second language education

For historical and political reasons, second language is mostly understood as English language education in Hong Kong. Its provision takes two forms. First, English is part of the core curriculum which defines the compulsory subjects in primary and secondary education (age 6 to 17), in other words it must normally be taught as a subject in all primary and secondary schools. Second, English is also, by choice, a medium of instruction in about 10% of the schools at primary level, and over 80% of the schools at secondary level. However, in many of these English-medium schools, Cantonese is used to a varying extent together with English in classroom instruction, although textbooks and assessments are mainly in English.

Foreign language education

The teaching of foreign languages as a subject is not part of the core curriculum for primary and secondary education. If taught at all at these levels, therefore, they are taught mostly as electives and French is usually the language offered. Courses in learning French, German and Japanese as foreign languages are offered by a few universities, but the scale of these programmes is relatively small.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Both Chinese and English are taught at each and every level to all students during primary and secondary education, with little variation within the system. The only major variation in terms of organisation is in the schools' policy on the medium of instruction. In the Chinese-medium sector, English is taught as a subject. Whereas in the English-medium sector, English is taught, at least in principle, as a medium of instruction.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Schools in Hong Kong are not required by law to follow a particular language curriculum. In principle, schools may devise their own language curricula according to their own needs and aspirations, so long as their locally developed curricula have the endorsement of the Director of Education. However, in practice, very few schools develop their own Chinese and English curricula. Instead, they mostly follow past, established practices within the professions, which have been heavily influenced by public examinations, and also, to an extent, the advice of the Advisory Inspectorate of the Department of Education, and curricula guidelines and syllabuses produced by the Curriculum Development Council. The present Chinese syllabuses for Primary One to Secondary Five (age 6 to 17) were introduced in 1990. The English syllabuses for Primary One to Primary Six (age 12) were introduced in 1981, and those for Secondary One (age 13) to Secondary Five were introduced in 1983. The Chinese syllabuses are written with the assumption that the language is the mother-tongue of the students, whereas the English syllabuses are written largely within the framework of a communicative approach to learning English as a second/foreign language.

The curriculum for both language education and other subject areas is being reformed in Hong Kong. The Target Oriented Curriculum is being promoted by the government and, if fully implemented, will embody these features: learning targets; learner autonomy; communication; intellectual content rather than knowledge; and criterion-referencing in favour of norm-referencing. The materials for teaching and learning in schools, for both English and Chinese from Primary One to Secondary Five (age 6 to 17), are mainly textbooks produced by the educational publishers in Hong Kong under the guidance of a textbooks committee in the Education Department. These textbooks are normally selected from the approved list issued by the Department of Education. At post-secondary level, course materials used in the sixth form (or Secondary 6 and 7 for age 17 to 19) are considered as reference materials. The materials are usually developed by lecturers or experienced teachers and language experts. Like the reference materials used by university undergraduates, these course materials are not advised by the Education Department. The average Chinese/English teachers very rarely produce materials for learning Chinese/English at any levels, even though the Education Department encourages school-based development through a special award scheme. If such materials are required, they are usually procured directly from the market-place.

Assessment of students

During the first nine years of free and compulsory education—Primary One to Secondary Three (age 6 to 12) — there are no formal assessments of students' proficiency in English and Chinese. The only measures that come

closest to formal assessment during this period are the Hong Kong Attainment Tests which are administered by the Department of Education to a random sample of students to monitor academic standards in Chinese, English and Mathematics. For most students, assessment for their Chinese and English is provided on a regular basis by their teachers. The frequency of such assessments is decided by the school. They may occur two to six times a year and are normally in a written format. At the end of Secondary Three (age 15) and Secondary Five (age 17), standardised, norm-referenced and centralised assessment of students' language proficiency is conducted by the Junior Secondary Education Assessment and Hong Kong Certificate of Education examinations, respectively. For students who aspire to tertiary education (age 19), their proficiency in Chinese and English is again assessed by the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations.

Teacher qualifications and support

Broadly speaking, there are two categories of teachers in Hong Kong. Non-graduate teachers are those who do not have a government-recognised university degree. Normally, they are qualified to teach only after completing successfully their training at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. Entry to the Institute requires only a sufficient number of passes at the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (the public examination for students completing secondary education around the age of 17). Graduate teachers are holders of a government-recognised university degree, and by virtue of their graduate status are permitted to teach in schools even if they do not possess teacher education qualifications at the time. However, in time, they are expected to enrol on education diploma courses offered by the universities, and they would usually major in one subject and minor in another. Chinese and English majors almost always teach the senior levels in the secondary school.

Support for language teaching has been much improved in recent years. For example, in 1994, the Language Fund with an immediate initial allocation of US\$38.5 million dollars was set up to provide additional resources for improving language education, including upgrading support for language teachers. Regular in-service training for language teachers, for improving oral English proficiency or developing self-access materials, is provided by the language centres of the Advisory Inspectorate, the Curriculum Development Institute of the Education Department, and The Hong Kong Institute of Education. Postgraduate courses on language education are also available at most local tertiary institutions. In recent years, the British Council in Hong Kong has developed close collaboration with the government in the running of a wide range of activities in support of English teaching. Major, recurrent programmes

send English teachers to Britain for six weeks each summer to improve their English skills, and Putonghua teachers to Beijing. Major infrastructural supports include the setting up of the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre in 1989 to promote professionalism and a sense of unity among teachers. There are also educational television programmes and a territory-wide computing network for English and Chinese teachers.

Links and exchanges

Except for the usual links and/or affiliations between professional bodies in language education world-wide, structural links between local and overseas language teaching institutions and regular exchanges are still rare. One such rare instance was a trilateral agreement of collaboration, signed in the fall of 1996, by the Free University of Brussels, the Universiti Brunei Darussalam and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University to promote exchanges in bilingual education.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

China will regain sovereignty over Hong Kong in July 1997, after which Hong Kong will become a Special Administrative Region. The Basic Law of the Special Administrative Region, promulgated in 1990, defines the official status of Chinese and English as follows: 'in addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.' Although English is at present the primary language in commerce and government, it is anticipated that it will probably become an auxiliary language after 1997, to be used basically for international communication and academic study at tertiary level. Since 1990, the Education Department has adopted a policy to encourage schools to use Chinese, as the basic medium of instruction in schools. There has been significant resistance to the policy among schools. Accordingly, 'firm guidance' from the government will be given to all schools in 1998 regarding the appropriate medium for them, based on information about the language proficiency of their Secondary One intakes obtained through the Medium of Instruction Assessment exercise. The target is to have 30% of the children at age 12 entering English-medium secondary education and the rest entering Chinese-medium secondary education. If the policy is successful, the English-medium sector in secondary education will be reduced to one-third of its present size, whereas the Chinese-medium

sector will be seven times bigger. The Target Oriented Curriculum, if successfully implemented, will lead to long-term changes to the teaching and learning of languages in Hong Kong. Another potential major change is that, as Putonghua was made a part of the core curriculum in 1995, students' Putonghua proficiency will be assessed in the Hong Kong Certificate of Examinations of 2001. Together with the impending political changes, it is expected that the teaching of Putonghua will soon take up a significant share of school time.

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HUNGARY

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

In Hungary, Hungarian has been the recognised official language for administrative and legal purposes since 1867. About 1.5% of the population consists of minorities resident in Hungary, among whom the major groups are: Gypsies, Swabs, Croats, Slovaks, Romanians, Serbs and Slovenians. The minority population living in Hungary is mostly bilingual.

Second language education

There are a limited number of educational institutions providing mainstream education in German, Romanian, Serbo-Croat and Slovakian (18 kindergartens, 23 primary schools and seven secondary schools). Second languages can also be chosen as main subjects at most universities.

Foreign language education

In Hungary, in primary level education, students have to study one foreign language. This number increases to two in the secondary level. For political reasons, Russian was the compulsory first foreign language until 1988; the second foreign language was a free choice from among those offered by the school. Since the political changes in 1989, the choice of foreign languages depends only on the provision made by individual schools.

At the end of secondary school education, as part of the final examination, students are assessed in one foreign language. The written part is a nationally constructed, criterion-referenced test, while the oral assessment is norm-referenced, set by individual schools according to nationally prescribed criteria. At tertiary level, to obtain a degree in any field, a knowledge of two foreign languages is required: at university, one at intermediate and one at basic level; in the colleges, one at intermediate or two at basic level.

There is a national, three-level system for the assessment of foreign languages (State Examinations). The assessment of the institution, and the examinations taken, provide the basis for nationally accepted qualifications. Language teaching is available in out-of-school training, as well as in mainstream education. More recently, use of international language examinations has widened the direction of both school and out-of-school education.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

At primary level, the learning of one foreign language is compulsory for all students. At secondary level, every student has to study two foreign languages, usually one at advanced level (in most cases the one the student studied in primary school), and one other. All foreign languages are taught as a subject, and as medium of instruction only in a limited number of dual-language schools. The choice of languages is decided at school level. The content of language teaching, the foreign language curriculum, and the allocation of time to languages are determined centrally, although schools have some flexibility in increasing the number of lessons. Students aged 14 to 18 receive on average 180 minutes instruction per week; this represents about 10% of all curriculum time.

The study of foreign languages at tertiary level is optional. An increasing number of students in higher education study foreign languages for a degree. Others have the opportunity to study them as optional subjects, which can form part of the State Language Examination, necessary for obtaining a degree of any kind. Although there are central arrangements for the content of foreign language teaching, the organisation of the lessons and teaching methods are decided by individual teachers. The allocation of time to languages is decided at school level. Students aged 6 to 14 receive an average of 150 minutes foreign language instruction per week; students aged 14 to 18, 180 minutes. This represents about 17% and 11%, respectively, of all curriculum time.

The study of foreign languages in academic and vocational secondary schools is compulsory; in trade schools it is optional. The final examination at the end of secondary schooling includes a written and an oral examination in one of the foreign languages studied.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Hungarian education is in a transitional period. A new National Core Curriculum (NCC) came into force in October 1995. It determines about 50% of the subject matter, leaving the rest for local curricula. A framework of study, broken down into two-year periods up to the end of compulsory schooling (Grade 10 — age 16), sets out goals for communication and grammar, but with no restriction on teaching materials or methods. At present, schools have to write their own curricula and switch over to the NCC within three years. The previous version of the National Curriculum (NC) dates from 1986; during the intervening period, Hungary went through political changes, and the old NC and textbooks became outdated. For political reasons, it took almost a decade for the NCC to be produced. During

these years, foreign language instruction was liberalised. Russian ceased to be the compulsory first foreign language, and students chose any foreign language available in their schools. Only the attainment targets prescribed in the NC remained; teaching materials and methods were henceforth decided by teachers. Final examinations are now governed also by the aims of the NCC. With the introduction of the NCC, a wide range of new textbooks came on to the market and individual teachers now decide which ones to use. They can also choose from a wide range of other material resources in both audio and visual media.

Assessment of students

The assessment of students is carried out at three levels: class level, school level and national level. Class-level assessment provides the basis for the marks given by the teacher at the end of each term. It is carried out in the form of tests and oral reports — both of them the responsibility of the class teacher. In the final examination, taken at the end of secondary education (academic and vocational secondary schools only), there are five subjects, of which one has to be a foreign language. The written part of the examination is conducted nationally, while other assessment is carried out by schools, according to centrally provided instructions. The oral test is organised by the schools themselves. Students who opt for language-major studies at tertiary level have to take an entrance examination in the chosen language. The written part consist of a centrally produced test; the oral assessment is organised by the individual universities and colleges.

Teacher qualifications and support

The abolition of Russian, as a compulsory foreign language to be studied at all levels of education, caused a shortage of teachers of other foreign languages. The capacity of teacher training courses is slow in catching up with needs, and consequently some schools have to employ unqualified teachers. A qualified teacher at primary level has to complete a four-year long teacher training course; for secondary level teachers, the course takes five years.

Links and exchanges

In the present political situation, there is a keen awareness of the need for intercultural competence in Hungary. Since, at secondary school level, there had been no tradition of links with other countries, it has had to be rapidly developed. There is at present a small but slowly growing number of students who take part in student exchange programmes. These visits are organised by the schools. A very limited number of students have opportunities for study visits abroad, since these depend on the support of scholarships and foundations.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

With the political changes in 1989, the borders of Hungary opened up and people came into living contact with the world. There was an urgent need to promote the speaking of foreign languages and this required a radical change in the arrangements for foreign language education. Unlike the old NC, where the grammar-translation method and written exercises were emphasised, the new NCC focuses on the communicative role of languages. The variety of foreign languages available in secondary schools has also grown. Apart from the most common languages (English, German, French), others have appeared among those offered by schools, for example, Latin, Italian and Spanish. More and more schools tend to emphasise languages in the curriculum, with eight or nine lessons per week. These are all signs of a new awareness of the need for foreign language competence, in a country whose language is not spoken elsewhere.

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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Iran is a multilingual country. In addition to Persian (or Farsi), which is the official language, four other major languages are spoken in different regions of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Arabic, Baluchi, Kurdish, and Turkish. Less prominent language varieties (in terms of the number of native speakers) include Armenian, Assyrian, Gilaki, Luri-Bakhtiari, Mazandi, and Turkamani. Although native speakers of these varieties use their respective languages in daily interactions, they also use Persian in formal, administrative contexts. In addition to the languages cited above, there are also many regional dialects and accents throughout the country. However, a common historical, religious, and cultural background unites all Iranians, despite this linguistic diversity.

Two languages are cited in the constitution: (a) Persian, as the language used in professional, administrative, and legal contexts; and (b) Arabic, as the language of the Holy Koran and Islamic religious practices. The reasons given for this status are: (a) the majority of Iranians are native speakers of Persian; (b) Persian has been the language of literature in Iran for at least 1,100 years; (c) throughout history, Iran has been identified with Persian; (d) Arabic is the language of the Holy Koran, the Muslim holy scripture; (e) Arabic is the language used in daily prayers and religious ceremonies; and (f) knowledge of Arabic enables Iranians to communicate with Arabic speakers, who constitute the majority of the Islamic nations. Article 15 of the Constitution states that although the formal language and script of the Islamic Republic of Iran is Farsi (Persian), the use of local languages or dialects is permitted, along with Persian, in publications and mass media and for instruction of ethnic literature in schools.

Foreign language education

Four foreign languages are taught in the schools of Iran: Arabic, English, French, and German. None of these languages is spoken widely in society. However, English is pre-eminent among the foreign languages because of the ever-increasing significance of English internationally for academic, business, and technical communications. Arabic is also important as the language of religious practices and rituals; historically it has had a great influence on Persian, particularly in terms of lexical borrowing.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

There is no provision for foreign language teaching at the primary level of education. However, most private schools provide some foreign language teaching, mainly focused on oral aspects of English. The formal teaching of foreign languages begins at the lower secondary level in reference to: Arabic, English, French, and German. Arabic is compulsory throughout the secondary level. In addition to Arabic, students have to study English from the second year of lower secondary to the final year of upper secondary. In some schools, however, provisions are made for the teaching of French and/or German instead of English. However, the percentage of students studying these two languages is rather low (less than 5%), and the overwhelming majority of students prefer English. English is also taught in hundreds of private institutes. In Tehran alone, there are 125 English institutes: 70 for female and 55 for male students.

All foreign languages are taught as a school subject, and not as a medium of instruction. There are statutory arrangements for the content of language teaching; that is, students throughout the country are expected to receive the same curriculum and instruction. Decisions regarding foreign language curriculum and teaching methodologies are made by the Curriculum Development Center of the Ministry of Education, which also determines the allocation of time to the teaching of foreign languages. Students at the lower secondary schools, aged 12 to 14, receive 200 minutes instruction per week for English and/or French and German, where one of these two languages is taught instead of English. This represents 9% of all curriculum time. Students at the upper secondary level (ages 14 to 17) receive 180 minutes of foreign language instruction per week. This is about 7% of all curriculum time. Arabic and English are also included in university entrance examinations, requiring students who wish to enter higher education to study these two languages.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Decisions concerning curriculum, syllabus and materials for the teaching of foreign languages, like other school subjects, are made by the Curriculum Development Center of the Ministry of Education. Thus, teachers in schools are expected to follow the designated syllabuses and teach from the materials assigned to them. In the last few years, attempts have been made to use the latest findings of linguistics and psychology in the development of new language textbooks, and the Curriculum Development Center initiated a major project four years ago with the aim of revising existing teaching materials, or preparing new ones for language courses in secondary schools.

The present textbooks emphasise reading skills with the objective of helping students to read scientific materials effectively. The grammar sections are presented functionally, and students learn grammatical rules contextually through speaking and writing. One section of each lesson is also devoted to

short conversations entitled Language Functions, emphasising phrases and sentences that are useful in everyday communication. Correct pronunciation is also stressed. Textbooks are available to all students throughout the country. Materials produced commercially either in Iran or in other countries are used mainly by private language institutes.

Assessment of students

The Organisation of Research and Educational Planning and the Board of Examinations of the Ministry of Education are responsible for making decisions about language assessment for the last year of the primary as well as the lower and upper secondary levels; however, for other school years, schools devise their own assessments of language proficiency and achievement.

Tests are administered three times a year, at the end of each quarter. For the first two quarters, the tests are school-based; the final examinations (at the end of the academic year) are local except for national tests, which are administered at the last year of each level (in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). After finishing upper secondary school, students who wish to pursue their studies at university must take part in a nation-wide entrance examination, which is held annually. In addition to local and national tests, certain international tests are also administered in Iran, such as the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

Teacher qualifications and support

Teachers are trained to teach at specific levels of education in Iran. Primary and lower secondary school teachers are trained in teacher training centres affiliated with the Ministry of Education, where they are offered associate degrees. Prospective teachers of the upper secondary level take a four-year BA or BSc programme at teacher training universities. They must pass 135 credits, 40 of which relate to general and educational subjects and 95 of which are in subjects related to their fields of specialisation, such as English or French. Universities provide these students with foreign language courses in three different fields: translation, literature, and teacher training. At present, there is no shortage of language teachers, but this has been a difficulty in the past, requiring graduates from the fields of translation and literature to be employed as language teachers, and the provision of in-service training courses.

During their careers, all teachers must attend short-term in-service training courses, which last 15 to 30 hours and are conducted locally, provincially, or in a centralised manner in the form of seminars, workshops, or classes, held either during the summer or on a part-time basis at education centres, coordinated by the Organisation of Research and Educational Planning. Certificates from these courses qualify teachers for promotion. Recently, revisions to the curricula for teaching languages have created changes in all areas related to foreign language teaching — teacher training and methodology

as well as testing and evaluation. To familiarise teachers with these changes, in-service training courses are held annually in Tehran. Representative teachers from all provinces attend these courses; then, after returning to their provinces, these teachers provide similar upgrading courses for their colleagues.

Links and exchanges

There are no agencies or associations in Iran to facilitate international links of language teachers or students.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Iran has long had a tradition of foreign language teaching as a compulsory subject in secondary schools; advances in telecommunications in recent decades have led to an ever-increasing interest in foreign languages, especially English. Many parents nowadays do not confine the foreign language education of their children to formal teaching in secondary schools but rather send their children to private English institutes to improve their knowledge and skill in this language. Similarly, recognition of the significance of the communicative aspects of the teaching and learning of foreign languages has led to major revisions of teaching materials, which previously were mainly based on grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, but which now emphasise the teaching of language functions for communicative purposes.

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ISRAEL

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

While Israel is highly multilingual, with a 18% Arabic-speaking minority and a large number of languages used by its enormous immigrant population, Hebrew is the dominant language for official, public and private use. Significantly, the revitalisation of Hebrew as a major component in Zionism and Jewish nationalism has guaranteed the language a status that is ideologically highly privileged. One of the concomitants of this secular Zionist ideology has been the strong encouragement of Hebrew learning and use by immigrants, and the active discouragement of public (or even private) use of the other languages known by the population.

Hebrew is the normal language of communication at places of work except in the Arab sector, among recent immigrants and foreign workers, and with tourists. Government ministries publish all material intended for the public in Hebrew. There is no specific policy, but in each Ministry, and often independently at local offices, a policy develops to provide written material, or make available clerks speaking languages for which a need is perceived, such as Arabic, Russian and Amharic.

The national language of the Jews is modern Hebrew, but only 60% of the Jewish population were born in Israel, so that for about half of the Jewish population Hebrew is not the mother tongue. For over a tenth of the Jewish population the native language was Russian; for about 8% of the Jews (coming from Arabic speaking countries) the native language was one of the varieties of Arabic or Judeo-Arabic; and for about 5% of the Jewish population (mainly older people born in central and eastern Europe) the native language was Yiddish. For many of the other Jews, a wide range of native languages exist, the major ones being: French, Rumanian, Hungarian, Polish, Persian, English, Amharic and Tigrinia, Spanish and German.

The national language of the Arabs (and of the Druze) in Israel is Arabic. The spoken language is the Palestinian variety of Arabic, which is their mother tongue. The knowledge Arabs have of Modern Standard (Literary) Arabic, and their command of it, depend directly on the number of years of formal schooling.

Language education

Over the past few years, a number of fundamental changes have been taking place in a piecemeal fashion in the policy on languages in Israeli education. These have now been crystallised in the first formal statement of a Policy for Language Education in Israel. The policy with its new features, to take effect in September 1996, covers mother tongue teaching, and second and foreign language education.

Mother tongue education

The Policy establishes literacy goals in Hebrew and in Arabic as mother tongues in the two major sectors, Jewish and Arab. It makes further provision for language maintenance in the languages of immigrants, with special reference to Russian and Amharic. There is a long-established policy permitting immigrant students and students who have been overseas for a long period, to take the school leaving examination in any language they choose to offer.

Second language education

The Policy stresses and makes provision for the teaching of Hebrew to immigrants for one year, and for developing literacy in that language. Within the Arab sector, there is provision for the teaching of Hebrew, optionally in the first grade, and compulsory from the second grade until the twelfth (the end of secondary education). For speakers of Hebrew, Arabic is a required subject from seventh to tenth grade (the fourth year has just been added in the new policy), and optional in fifth, sixth, eleventh and twelfth grades. Schools may choose to offer French instead of Arabic, and new immigrants are exempted from the requirement.

Foreign language education

English is considered the first foreign language and is optional in third and fourth grade, and compulsory throughout the rest of the school system. While the policy mentions French as an option, both popular sentiment and university entrance requirements mean it is almost never selected instead of English. French, recognised as important because of cultural, political and economic ties, and as the community language of a sizeable body of immigrants, is taught optionally (or as a required subject in place of Arabic) from fifth to twelfth grade. Russian is offered as an optional language for new immigrants (and as an alternative to Arabic or French) throughout the system.

The policy encourages students to study a third foreign language. Languages in which there exist programmes are Yiddish (also used as language of instruction and taught in the independent ultra-orthodox schools), Ladino, Spanish and German; the policy seeks to add others like Japanese. The new policy also encourages the development of special language schools.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

The new policy rationalises and modifies existing policies and practices, and in particular, sets general goals and lays down funding mechanisms for the teaching of languages in the schools. Within the Ministry of Education, responsibilities are shared by the Chief Inspectors for the various languages (under the authority of the Pedagogical secretariat), the directors of the various levels of education, and the curriculum division. Further supervision and direction are provided by local education districts. Final policy decisions are made at the individual school level.

The results therefore vary. All schools in the Arab sector use Arabic as their language of instruction, and teach Hebrew as a second language and English as a foreign language. In Jewish state schools, Hebrew is the language of instruction. All pupils learn English, many schools starting before the official third grade. Only about 50% of pupils learn Arabic for the required three years. The other languages for which there are significant numbers of students are French, Russian and Yiddish.

For each language, there is a curriculum drawn up by the chief inspector with the advice of a national professional committee, and approved by the Ministry. The curriculum also serves as the basis for the school leaving examinations. Ministry policy provides a basis of optional and required teaching hours for each language, but these hours may be supplemented by local educational districts and by schools from their own resources.

At the elementary and secondary school level, English is the language studied by all students. There is some teaching of Arabic, French and other languages at elementary school. At high school, all students in both Arab and Jewish sectors continue with English, and a large proportion in the Jewish sector add to this Arabic (about 50%), French (about 10%), Russian (2–3%), or Yiddish (2–3%).

In the school leaving examinations, all students take English, and about 10% take one or more other languages.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The earliest areas developed in Hebrew teaching were the normativistic teaching of Hebrew grammar and language, and the cultural and ideological teaching of Hebrew and world literatures. These areas are well institutionalised with university departments and formal examinations. New areas are developing. In the field of written expression, there is an examination but no provision for teaching. Interest in teaching literacy is being shown, especially in the elementary schools, and supporting courses are offered in some teachers' colleges.

The teaching of English has moved from an earlier (pre-1960, say) concern for literature and culture to a stress on English as an international language of communication. The immigration of English-speaking teachers in the 1970s means that a good proportion of the teaching, particularly in high schools, is done by native speakers. As a result, there has been a growing emphasis over the years on oral ability. More recently, a new interest has been expressed in the teaching of reading.

The teaching of Arabic to speakers of Hebrew is hampered by the difficulty of dealing with diglossia. While there are some programmes in the spoken variety, most classes are taught in Hebrew, and concentrate on the grammar and literature of the Modern Standard (Literary) language. A new French curriculum has been expected for some time. Teaching emphasis is on the cultural value of the language. The Russian curriculum aimed to capture the grammatical and literary goals of the native-language curricula in the former Soviet Union. A new syllabus is being developed to teach Russian to speakers of Hebrew, or to those immigrant children who did not attend high school in Russia.

There is a large textbook industry in English, highly sensitive to changes in the teaching and examination syllabuses, and the competition has led to relatively high quality. There are locally developed materials for Arabic and French, and some for Russian. Audio, visual and computer-based materials are available, especially in English, and including some in Arabic.

Assessment of students

At the end of high school, the Bagrut examination serves both for school leaving and university entrance purposes. The syllabuses for these examinations are often seen as the principal method of controlling the teaching in schools. The examinations are fairly traditional, and the final grades take into account school grades. Because of concerns about reliability, the universities established their own parallel Psychometric examination, which includes sections on general ability, mathematics, and English. The *Bagrut* language examinations test the various skills. English includes separate listening and speaking sections alongside the written examination. Other assessment is local or district. From time to time, there are national proficiency assessments, especially in Arabic and English.

Teacher qualifications and support

As a general rule, elementary school teachers are trained in teachers' colleges, and high school teachers in universities. The supply of trained teachers varies by subject. There is felt to be a shortage of English teachers, so that in addition to the existing programmes, the Ministry is recruiting native speakers of English with university degrees, and offering them training in speaking Hebrew, and in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

The training of teachers of Arabic to speakers of Hebrew is supported also by the Israeli Army, which conducts programmes in conjunction with the teachers' colleges for elementary and intermediate level teachers, and through the universities for high school teachers. As most teachers of Arabic in the Hebrew sector teach it for only part of their day, there remains room to expand. Few of the qualified teachers however are fluent enough to teach in Arabic. A good number of the teachers of French were trained in French speaking countries before they immigrated, or in Romania. Others are provided by the programmes in the universities. There is an abundance of teachers of Russian with university qualifications.

Language teachers are supported by Ministry and local education inspectors and advisers, although few have sufficient time (many have only part-time positions). There is a support unit, especially for the teaching of Arabic to Hebrew Speakers. The cultural institutes and attachés of the various countries involved also provide support. There is a large English Teachers' Association, and smaller and newer teachers' groups for other languages.

Links and exchanges

There are programmes for visits to France and to Egypt. The Ministry has recently initiated a scheme, through the community centres, in which native speakers of English and French run informal summer courses in the two languages.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

A major strengthening of language education programmes is presently under way. There has been a move from the traditional philosophy of monolingual Hebrew, plus English, to a more open acceptance of multilingualism and language maintenance. Increasingly, programmes are leading to a growing professionalisation in the field of language teaching. Within the Ministry, the new policy has led to steps to bring language inspectors together for the first time. The Ministry is funding a three-year study by a university-based Language Policy Research Centre.

The full potential for developing language capacity is hardly realised. The new Ministry policy acknowledges the unfortunate loss of the language potential of the large waves of immigrants who came in the 1950s and 1960s (especially French and Arabic), and aims to correct this, especially in the case of Russian. There remain as many questions as answers: Will English ultimately threaten Hebrew? Will Russian be more successful in maintaining itself than other languages? Will significant sections of the Jewish population learn Arabic? Will the Arabic minority maintain their language? How can other languages be added? In any case, the new emphasis on language education and the new policy provide an atmosphere in which these questions can be raised and discussed.

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ITALY

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

The present Constitution of the Italian Republic, promulgated in 1947, does not make explicit reference to Italian as the official language of the country. However, it does refer to the role of language in the democratic life of the country, and declares that 'the Republic protects language minorities with appropriate laws'. However, this assertion in favour of linguistic diversification is not in line with the concept of monolingualism, which has been the dominant paradigm of the language policy adopted, and more or less systematically implemented, by successive Italian governments. Political unity, which was attained in the nineteenth century through the incorporation of smaller states into one independent country, has gradually promoted linguistic unity through the formation of standard Italian as the common language of the country. Present standard Italian has in fact only very recently acquired the specific linguistic and cultural connotations of a national language.

At present, Italian is used as the official language in all administrative, legal and educational contexts. Twelve different languages — Sardinian, Friulan, German, Occitan, Albanian, Franco-Provenal, French, Slovenian, Rom/Sinti, Ladin, Neogreek and Catalan (listed in rank-order) — are used in the country by minority groups of centuries-old settlements, corresponding to 5.7% of the total population. Of the 12 languages mentioned, only French and German, together with Ladin and Slovenian in limited geographical areas, enjoy juridical recognition, thus being used in public life, in education and in administration, within perfectly bilingual, and in some cases even trilingual, contexts.

Minority groups of very recent immigration, amounting to nearly 800,000 people from South America, North Africa, Eastern European and Asian Countries, use their own mother tongues only in private contexts, and provision is not usually made for either maintenance or protection of their languages.

Second language education

Owing to her particular historical background, Italy has not developed a specific policy for second language education. Some linguists, however, consider the formation of present standard Italian, out of the literary heritage language and from the numerous local dialects, as the result of an implicit policy of second language education. In order to integrate new immigrants, special and experimental programmes have been set up in primary and secondary schools. Linguistic integration of adults is taken care of mainly by religious and lay voluntary associations.

Foreign language education

The teaching of foreign languages is prescribed by legislation at all levels of education. Since 1992, foreign language has become a curricular subject from Grade 3 (age eight) of primary education. In lower secondary schools, the teaching of foreign language has been compulsory since 1964, when comprehensive lower secondary schools were established. In upper secondary schools, the teaching of at least one foreign language has been extended to practically all types of schools. At all levels of schooling, national curricula prescribe both the structure, as well as the type and number of foreign languages to be taught. Although the demand for English from families is still very strong, efforts have been made to promote foreign languages other than English, particularly French, German and Spanish, as second foreign languages in the curricula of both primary and secondary schools. Special statutes regulating the educational laws in the regions along the border provide for the teaching of French and German, and for the teaching of Slovenian, Ladin and Friulan in some north-eastern provinces.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

In primary education, of the 40% population studying a foreign language in 1994, 73% did English, 18% French, 8% German, and under 1% Spanish. In secondary education, the proportions of the whole population in 1993 were: 55% English, 43% French, 2% German in lower secondary; 64% English, 29% French, 7% German in upper secondary. The teaching of Spanish did not reach a significant percentage. A number of experimental schools offer the teaching of minority group languages, but their number is not nationally significant. In the overwhelming majority of schools foreign languages are taught as a subject. Exceptions are schools in regions with special statutory laws, where, for example, German and French are used as languages of instruction in bilingual contexts. There are also isolated cases in which other minority languages are taught as second languages, or as languages of instruction (Greek, Albanese, Provenzale, Ladino, Rom and Sinti) on the initiative of local schools.

In 1992, foreign language was introduced as a curricular subject in the primary school, starting mainly from Grade 3 (age eight). At the present stage of development the programme includes 53% of all pupils in Grades 3, 4 and 5 (ages 8 to 10). Pupils receive on average three 60-minute periods per week. In lower secondary, a first foreign language is compulsory and is allocated 180 minutes of teaching per week. A second foreign language has also been introduced on an experimental basis in some schools. Since no comprehensive system has been implemented in upper secondary, the classical, technical and vocational schools, as well as the Academies and Schools of Art, adopt different curricula. Time allotted varies from 120 minutes to 300 minutes per

week; content may be general or for special purposes. In the first two years of upper secondary — Grades 9 and 10 (age 14 and 15) — a first foreign language is taught in all schools; in Grades 11, 12 and 13 (age 16 to 18), it is taught in the great majority of schools. In some types of technical and vocational schools two, or even three, foreign languages are an integral part of their curricula.

Curriculum and syllabus

The national curricula contain a statement of aims, based on the Constitution, and a list of objectives for disciplinary areas and each subject, as well as guidelines on teaching and assessment. No strict prescription of topics constrains the teachers, except for a general list of contents, within which each teacher can exercise choice. A common paradigm, running across the four levels of education, from pre-primary through elementary and lower secondary to upper secondary, is represented by the concept of 'educazione linguistica' (language education), meant not only as a specific disciplinary objective, regulating the mother tongue and foreign language, but as a cross-curricular unifying goal. Language education is seen as the privileged instrument in all areas of the school curriculum.

As well as prescribing the allocation of time, the national language curricula define standards for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, focusing on communicative competence, broken down into language skills (individual and integrated) and socio-pragmatic abilities. Two additional concepts run across the three programmes: literary education and cultural awareness.

The new curriculum for primary schools states only very general aims which have, however, been elaborated in numerous curriculum development projects. These aims relate to cognitive development, to communicative proficiency, and to intercultural competence. The lower secondary school curriculum stresses the goal of communication, in general terms, and more specifically in terms of language use, and the need to harmonise foreign language learning with other school subjects, especially Italian. Although upper secondary remains the only level of education which has not changed its formal structure for several decades, the expectation of reform has produced a number of innovations over recent years. For example, a good number of courses linking school and employment, have offered up to three foreign languages, focusing on language awareness, principles of linguistics and language use.

Assessment of students

At the end of primary and lower secondary school, pupils have to sit for school-based examinations, which are designed, administered and evaluated by a committee of teachers. At the end of upper secondary and vocational schooling, external evaluation is carried out by national examining boards of teachers, appointed by the Ministry of Education. Students sitting for the

final state examinations are not assessed in all the subjects of the curriculum; those choosing to take the foreign language examination are usually assessed in oral only, while students specialising in foreign languages are assessed also in their written performance.

Teacher qualifications and support

Access to teaching in Italy is based on university qualifications, except for the primary school sector where, so far, teachers require only an upper secondary 'educational school' diploma. Other language teachers must attain a degree, either in foreign languages, or in any discipline in the humanities group, provided their study plan includes linguistics and one or more foreign languages. To obtain a teaching qualification, and eventually tenure, teachers have to succeed in a competitive professional examination. Initial training for language teachers is not part of the institutional structure in Italy, though there are initiatives in pre-service and in -service training.

Since 1978, the PSLS Project — Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere — has provided in-service training for nearly 80% of language teachers, through 50-hour courses covering the fields of methodology, theory of language learning and second language acquisition, as well as culture and language improvement. It is estimated that most of the remaining 20% have taken part in local initiatives, or in programmes for language teachers abroad. In-service training courses for teachers implementing the new primary scheme vary from a minimum of 100 hours to a maximum of 500 hours, according to the needs of the teachers. A substantial contribution to training is also made by foreign agencies, from the US and Europe, which provide opportunities through courses, seminars and conventions.

Links and exchanges

At the institutional level, programmes of exchanges and links with other countries are set up by the Cultural Exchanges Directorate of the Ministry of Education, either supported by the European Community, or solely organised by the Directorate. In the course of 1993, 21,103 students participated in school exchanges with the following countries, in rank order according to the length of stay: France, Germany, Ireland, Austria, Great Britain, Ireland, USA, Denmark, Spain and Algeria. Visits are also organised at school level by headmasters and teachers. Other exchanges are the responsibility of individual institutions, especially foreign cultural agencies operating in the country, to support the professional development of teachers, as well as to provide a cultural experience for students, schools and the general public.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

A favourable attitude towards internationalism and multiculturalism is strong in Italian society, and is shared by policy makers and the general public. The influence of the European Community's economic and educational policy, as well as a long tradition of exchanges in commerce, tourism, culture and the arts, have been crucial in developing these attitudes. The introduction of foreign languages in elementary schools and a second foreign language in many lower secondary schools, and a policy to promote language diversification and improve school exchanges with other countries, are the most visible results of the enhanced status of foreign language as a subject.

Although the scenario seems to be decidedly positive, some areas of uncertainty still remain. First of all, the impact of foreign language in primary education will have to be evaluated, not only in terms of results, but with respect to curriculum continuity in the Italian school system. The outcome of language learning in secondary high schools, where foreign languages have been introduced either as a new discipline, or as a second and third foreign language, will also need to be evaluated more thoroughly. The change of attitude towards foreign language learning and use in a society, which has so far been dominated by a strong monolingual paradigm, may ultimately be a difficult process, much harder than expected, and one in which external conflicting forces — political, ideological, social and economic — may converge to slow down the pace of progress.

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LATVIA

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Latvian is the official language in the Republic of Latvia. Article 3 of the Republic's Language Law determines the use of the Latvian language and other languages in the spheres of national economy and social life, rights to language preference, and the protection of languages. This legislation relates to the demographic situation: 52% of Latvia's inhabitants are Latvian, whereas 48% of the people living in Latvia are of other ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, the situation of the Latvian language was undermined by Russification during the Soviet occupation (from 1940 to 1990), which promoted the use of Russian in state institutions. In 1988, while Latvia was still a republic of the USSR, Latvian was declared the state language. Other languages are sometimes used in the public domain and media, notably Byelorussian, Estonian, German, Gypsy languages, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish.

Most people in Latvia are bilingual: About 65% of the non-Latvian population (e.g. Byelorussians, Russians, Ukrainians) use Russian as their language for routine communications and can understand Latvian, but only a quarter of non-Latvians living in Latvia speak Latvian. More than 80% of ethnic Latvians are fluent in Russian.

Second language education

All inhabitants of Latvia have the right to education in the official state language or in the individual's native language, as stipulated by the Languages Law of 1988 and the Education Law of 1991, although it is mandatory to acquire Latvian in all educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Latvia. Therefore, Latvian as a second language is a compulsory subject in all schools which have a different language as medium of instruction. In these schools, Grade 1 students receive one to two hours of Latvian language instruction per week, then in Grades 2 to 9 Latvian classes are held three to four times a week, which amounts to 120 to 160 minutes. Graduates of secondary schools must undergo a mandatory examination in the Latvian language. Latvian is the basic medium of instruction beginning with the second year of instruction at institutions of higher education that are financed by the state, although students must also be able to understand lectures in at least two other languages.

Foreign language education

At least one foreign language is compulsory in schools for students from age 11 to 15, following a prescribed curriculum for the structure and content of foreign language teaching. The Ministry of Education and Science supports the diversification of foreign language learning in schools. English is the preferred first foreign language in schools (taught in 1994-95 to 80% of students in Grade 12). German is the most popular second foreign language (taught to 56% of Grade 12 students in 1994-95). French and Scandinavian languages are also taught in some schools. There is a growing interest in Japanese and Chinese.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

In Latvian-stream schools, the first foreign language, normally a choice from among English, German and French, is introduced at Grade 3 and a second foreign language is chosen at Grade 5. As students in the Russian-stream schools have to study Latvian as the state language, their first foreign language is chosen in Grade 5 (though they may start at Grade 3), and the second at Grade 7. It is also possible for students to start learning a third foreign language in Grade 10 if the school is able to provide a teacher for the subject. The number of contact hours has recently been increased for the study of languages and more emphasis put on communicative and functional skills. For all students a first foreign language is a compulsory subject, whereas the second and third foreign languages are optional. The time allocated for a first foreign language is 120 minutes a week on average over Grades 3 to 12, but it may be 160 minutes per week in Grades 3 to 4. For the second foreign language, it is 160 to 200 minutes a week in Grades 5 and 6 then 120 to 160 minutes a week in Grades 7 to 9. Those students who choose a third foreign language devote 120 minutes a week of instructional time to it. Students aged 9 to 10 are taught foreign language on average for 16% of their whole curriculum time; for students aged 11 to 15 the average is 21%, and for students aged 16 to 18 it is 25%. These figures assume the school is able to provide teachers in the appropriate languages and students choose the options of second and third foreign languages. All foreign languages are taught as a subject, except in the case of schools specialising in languages, where they may also be used as a medium of instruction.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Educational policy in Latvia is realised through laws, State Standards on Education, teaching materials, and examination materials. The level of general secondary education is defined by standards for each subject of study in the form of a regulatory document stating the objectives and tasks for basic courses of study, the curriculum, the required results (in terms of knowledge,

abilities, and skills) and types and methods of evaluation. The Centre of Content of Education and Examinations (operating under the Ministry of Education and Science) is responsible for working out the curriculum and assessment arrangements for language education students from Grades 3 to 12. Work began recently to design a new foreign language curriculum, which will reflect international teaching trends and educational philosophies, while retaining national and individual components. Its national standards for foreign languages will be realised when the current Grade 3 students leave school in 2003.

Among other projects promoting the teaching of the Latvian language for non-Latvians, the Centre of State Language was recently founded to provide Latvian language teachers with methodological support and to organise the creation of modern Latvian language textbooks. Although many foreign language textbooks can be purchased in Latvia, imported books are usually too expensive to be financed by schools, local authorities, or most parents, and they lack national and local features relevant to Latvian students. There is a lack of suitable, locally based teaching materials. Teachers commonly create teaching materials to supplement the use of course books and make use of audio and visual media as well as information technologies in teaching foreign languages. Many schools have libraries which lend textbooks without charge.

Assessment of students

The curriculum in foreign languages prescribes levels of attainment in listening, speaking, reading and writing; it also provides a framework for programmes of study, listing topics and communicative skills. The contents of the school-leaving exam have recently been changed. In 1993–94 this exam was compulsory for all school leavers, testing all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). In 1995, a new foreign-language examination was introduced experimentally in 15 schools; it was administered in 73 schools in 1996 and will eventually be introduced as a national examination.

Teacher qualifications and support

Latvia has a dramatic shortage of qualified language instructors. As the market economy has rapidly expanded, competent foreign language teachers are being lured away from schools to jobs such as translating and interpreting, which often pay three to five times the equivalent of teachers' salaries. Therefore an increasing number of non-specialists are being co-opted to teach foreign languages. Official figures indicate that the ratio of non-specialists to specialists is about 60:40. These non-specialists predominantly teach at the lower grade levels. Teachers in schools are overloaded with teaching hours, as the more hours they teach, the larger their pay packets are — an important consideration in times of inflation and rising unemployment. In 1992–93, 54% of English language teachers in Latvia's schools had only a professional qualification, 46% had both academic and professional qualifications, and

about 1% were qualified native speakers of English. Similar trends held for teachers of German, 57% of whom had only a professional qualification, 43% had both academic and professional qualifications, and about 0.5% were qualified native speakers.

Professional support for language teachers is provided by the Centre of Support of Teachers' Education, which offers library and information services, promotes dissemination of materials and ideas, and organises teacher training. Cultural institutes, funded by the governments of France, Germany, Great Britain, and the USA also provide information about the culture of these countries and organise language studies, cultural events, support programmes for language teachers, exchanges for students and teachers, teaching materials, and methodological support by developing locally based foreign language textbooks.

Links and exchanges

Schools and school boards regularly organise students' visits to countries where languages being studied are spoken. The most frequently visited countries are: Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and England. After a long period of isolation from the world, the young generation of Latvia is keen to learn foreign languages and visit foreign countries to expand their outlook on the world and their experience. Therefore group visits and home-to-home exchanges involve increasing numbers of Latvia's students, despite the relatively high cost of such programmes for an average family.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

After independence, Latvia rapidly increased international contacts in all spheres of public life, trade and industry. This step has changed attitudes to the learning and teaching of foreign languages in society. Other key trends in language education in Latvia include: an early start to foreign language education, increased contact hours for language studies, communicatively oriented teaching, an intercultural approach with national features, an increase in the range of foreign languages studied, perceptions of foreign languages as useful for various purposes (for example, intercultural understanding, academic studies, professional as well as personal use, leisure and travel). Another important trend in teacher training is the integration of different programmes, for example English with German, German with Danish or English with Danish.

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THE NETHERLANDS

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Dutch is the recognised official language for professional, administrative, legal and educational purposes. Dutch is spoken by more than 90% of the population. Frisian has an official language status in Friesland, one of the 12 provinces of the country. Many more than 100 different languages are spoken among members of minority groups in The Netherlands. Major ethnic groups have come from many different parts of the world: from the former Dutch colonies (Indonesia, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles); through labour migration from Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Turkey, Spain, Italy); and from other Western European countries (Germany, France, England, Belgium). More recently, refugees from conflict areas in Africa and Europe have also arrived in The Netherlands.

Besides Dutch, many other languages are used in the public domain. Speakers of minority languages use their languages for communication, within their own communities, for broadcasting and in newspapers. In schools, Dutch is used as the language of instruction. Only very small numbers of schools use languages other than Dutch. Especially in the major cities, a significant proportion of the population is multilingual. In certain city districts, up to 50% of the school population may have a mother tongue other than Dutch. The processes of social and economic segregation have created a growing number of schools which are populated almost exclusively by students from linguistic and ethnic minority groups.

Second language education

Policies for second language education are dominated by the concern for the learning of Dutch as a second language. Special provision has been made for the education of students from linguistic and ethnic minority groups, including a system whereby schools receive a substantially higher than normal budget for these students, to provide special lessons in Dutch as a second language. Teaching methods, specifically designed for learning Dutch as a second language, are in use in many schools that contain significant proportions of minority students.

In recent years, there has been a tendency towards the integration of the teaching of Dutch as a second language and Dutch as a mother tongue. There is a general recognition that, apart from the early stages of language acquisition,

many minority students and mainstream students have similar educational needs in language, as well as in other subjects. Special provision for Dutch as a second language remains necessary, however, for students who enter the educational system without any command of the Dutch language, especially refugee groups.

Over the last decades, the teaching of mother tongues of minority students has held a marginal position. Resources for mother tongue education, for example materials, teacher training, and curriculum documents, have never been adequate and the quality and effects of the teaching questionable. Due to recent changes in the government's educational policy, the position and status of mother tongue education for minority students is likely to deteriorate in primary education. In secondary education, there is an improvement in the position of minority languages, which may be accepted as one of the foreign languages that schools offer students. Teacher training and school leaving examinations will now be developed to take account of the new role of minority languages in mainstream language learning.

In schools, and within the broader educational community, the importance of multicultural and intercultural education is recognised. Many projects and initiatives have been launched with the aim, for example, of improving inter-ethnic communication, changing stereotypes, or adapting the content of learning materials. In spite of such efforts, the educational condition of linguistic and ethnic minority groups is generally seen as one that is associated with disadvantages and problems. Minority group communities are beginning to set up their own educational institutions, especially primary schools, but only on a very small scale.

Foreign language education

There is statutory provision for foreign language education in both primary and secondary education. In the two final grades of primary education, English as a foreign language is a compulsory subject. In the lower stage of secondary education, English is compulsory for all students. In this stage, all students are further obliged to study at least a second foreign language (German or French). In the upper stage of secondary education, English is compulsory for a large proportion of the student population. German and French are compulsory to a lesser extent than English. Foreign languages other than English, German and French have only a marginal position; these include Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Arabic and Turkish. The government sets out attainment targets for foreign language teaching for the end of primary education, and the end of the first stage of secondary education. There is also a national specification of the content of the final examination in foreign languages, for the upper stage of secondary education.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

At the end of primary education, students have studied English for two years, and have on average received some 50 hours of instruction. In the lower stage of secondary education, all students study English and at least one other foreign language (German or French). At the end of the upper stage of secondary education, the proportion of students taking a final examination varies with school type. In lower vocational schools, 80% of the students take an examination in English, 14% in German and 2% in French. In lower general secondary schools, the English examination is taken by virtually 100%, German by 60% and French by 25%. In higher general secondary schools, virtually 100% of the students take the English exam, 40% the German and 30% the French. In academic secondary schools, the figures for English, German and French are, respectively, 100%, almost 50% and almost 40%. For other languages the figures are insignificant.

The position of foreign language education in schools for intermediate and higher vocational education varies considerably. In economic and administrative sectors, foreign languages hold a strong position. Academic study of foreign languages is taken up by 5% of university students. Taken together, Dutch universities offer some 40 languages to their students. In schools, all foreign languages are taught as a subject. There is a call for strengthening foreign language teaching by using foreign languages as the medium of instruction, but this is practised in a very limited number of secondary schools. A few primary schools are experimenting with an earlier start to foreign language teaching, but this is also on a very small scale. For each type of secondary school, the minimum number of teaching hours is specified according to the foreign language. Schools are free to distribute these hours across grades, and they may provide more than the minimum allocation.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Attainment targets are specified for the end of primary education and for the end of the lower stage of secondary education. The targets at the lower secondary stage emphasise communicative competence in foreign languages, including reading, listening, speaking and writing. There are also targets referring to compensation strategies and sociocultural competence. New proposals for the content specification for the final examinations in foreign languages, at the end of the upper secondary stage, also emphasise communicative competence.

Apart from the attainment targets and the final examinations, there is no central prescription, or control of curriculum and syllabus content. The content of programmes is a matter of school policy. In practice, commercially produced course books have a major impact on the content of teaching and

learning. There is a large choice of books, and publishing houses assiduously follow new policies and trends. The recent emphasis on communicative language teaching is reflected in course books currently available.

Assessment of students

Throughout their school careers, students are normally assessed at classroom and school level. Centrally developed tests of foreign language are available to support classroom and school assessment. At the primary school level, students' achievement in English as a foreign language is assessed on a sampling basis, through the national assessment programme. At the end of the lower secondary stage, a nation-wide testing programme, focusing on the attainment targets, has recently been implemented. A common test for each subject is given to all students. Schools are responsible for the timing and the organisation of this assessment. The final examinations at the end of upper secondary education are partly centralised and partly school-based. The central part, reading comprehension, is developed and administered by the national testing institute. Schools conduct their own examinations of oral and writing skills, and of foreign language literature.

Teacher qualifications and support

In primary schools, English is taught by the classroom teacher. Primary school teachers have no formal training to teach language. In secondary education, the vast majority of foreign language teachers have a degree qualification. Teachers are trained in higher education institutions. The teacher training colleges of the universities prepare teachers for the upper stage of secondary education in the high school sector. Institutes for professional education prepare teachers for secondary and the lower stages of high schools. Generally, teachers have studied the language they teach as their main subject or second subject.

Language teachers are supported by institutions that make up the educational support system. Institutes for school counselling, curriculum development, testing and educational research provide information, resources and services that are of help to language teachers. Teacher training institutes provide in-service training. Cultural institutes, funded by foreign governments, also provide support and information. The Association of Language Teachers organises conferences for its members and publishes a journal.

Links and exchanges

There is a tradition of links and exchanges with schools and students in other countries, but the scope of this is rather limited. Travel abroad by groups, individual exchanges and contacts through writing are now supplemented by electronic mail communication between schools and individual students.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

There is a long tradition of foreign languages in Dutch schools. This can be understood from The Netherlands' position as a small trading nation with powerful neighbours. In spite of the strong position of foreign language teaching there has been considerable concern in recent years because the supply and demand of foreign languages seems to be out of balance. The Ministry of Education has therefore supported a national action programme, in an attempt to strengthen the position of foreign languages in education.

In foreign language pedagogy, the concept of communicative competence has attracted much attention, and it seems to have changed the content of teaching to a considerable extent. A recent and new pedagogical trend is reflected in ideas about metacognition and learning how to learn. Changes in foreign language education take place within the context of broader changes in the content and structure of secondary education. In the lower stage of secondary education, common attainment targets for all students have been specified. Ongoing reforms in the upper stage of secondary education have introduced a reform of the final examination, and a whole new educational concept, with a strong emphasis on students' responsibility for their own learning.

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NORWAY

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Both Norwegian and Sami have recognition in law as official languages in Norway. The two written forms of Norwegian — Bokmål and Nynorsk — are regarded as having equal status by all governmental bodies at the national, provincial and municipal levels. In practice, the majority of municipalities have opted for Bokmål as their official variety. Nynorsk is used by less than 20% of the population, normally in the rural areas of western Norway. Sami is estimated to be spoken by at least 16,000 speakers, concentrated in six municipalities in the north of Norway. In these municipalities, Sami is recognised as an official language alongside Norwegian. Immigration in recent years has led to an increasing number of languages being used by bilingual speakers and minority groups. These languages include other Scandinavian languages, as well as Vietnamese, Spanish, English, and a wide range of Asian, middle and eastern European, and north African languages.

Second language education

An estimated 21,000 students (representing about 75 different language groups) in compulsory schooling do not have Norwegian as a first language. The decision on how to provide and organise the teaching of Norwegian as a second language to these students is made by individual municipalities. Non-Norwegian speaking students normally attend school in the ordinary way, and are given extra lessons in Norwegian and their mother tongue. Support teaching is also offered in the upper secondary school. In many areas, students newly arrived in Norway attend a reception centre prior to integration into normal school. In the Sami districts, students have the right to be taught in Sami as the medium of instruction. Where this occurs, Norwegian is taught as a second language. Furthermore, the municipalities have the right to establish the teaching of Sami as a second language for Norwegian-speaking students during compulsory schooling.

Foreign language education

English is a compulsory school subject in the primary (age 6/7 to 13), lower secondary (age 13 to 16) and early stages of upper secondary school (age 16 to 19). Since 1992, the municipalities have been able to decide whether to lower the grade at which English is introduced, from the fourth grade (age 11) to any grade below this. The teaching of second foreign languages is offered in the lower secondary school, but is not obligatory. In the upper secondary school, a second foreign language is compulsory in the non-vocational courses.

The curriculum for all levels of schooling is documented and updated regularly by the central authorities. The documentation mainly covers content and aims of the curriculum, with some guidelines on teaching and evaluation. The individual municipality, school and teaching staff may adapt the content and teaching methods to suit their own needs and conditions. Official (external) examinations in foreign languages are conducted by the State Examinations Department. In the lower secondary school, only English is examined.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

All students in the compulsory, and at least part of the upper secondary school, learn English. The starting level is gradually dropping to the third grade (age 10) or below, in line with the primary and lower secondary school reform which will take effect in 1997. While second foreign languages are not compulsory in the lower secondary school, they are chosen by about 65% of students. Of these students, about 80% study German and 17% French, while a handful study other languages, which may be geographically determined, for example Russian and Finnish. Restrictions on second foreign languages studies, due to lack of qualified staff, have caused concern, as has the status of second foreign languages generally. There have been recent moves towards improving the status and diversity of second foreign languages in the secondary school. The only non-Norwegian language used as a medium of instruction is Sami. About 1,400 students are at present being taught in the Sami language. All other languages are taught as subjects. The school itself makes decisions regarding the organisation of the curricula and teaching methods.

The total allocation of time to individual subjects is largely laid down centrally, although the schools have some freedom in the distribution of class time. On average, students in lower secondary school receive about three lessons a week in English teaching and two in the second foreign language. This represents 10% and 7%, respectively, of all teaching time. In the non-vocational courses in upper secondary school, there has been an increase to four or five lessons a week for all foreign languages, which is between 13% and 16% of all teaching time. In the upper secondary school, the study of a second foreign language is compulsory during the first and second years of non-vocational courses. English is compulsory in the first year. Both English and second foreign languages are kept on as optional subjects by about half of students until the end of the three-year school course. In the vocational courses, English is compulsory during the first two years, and may be studied further as an option. Little second foreign language teaching is offered. Exact figures on the state of language study in the upper secondary school are not available, as reforms are currently being phased in.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The curriculum documents for all levels of schooling prescribe the overall aims and objectives for language teaching, providing fairly detailed objectives within the domains of speaking, listening, writing and reading. Topics and language functions are exemplified in some detail. Objectives are prescribed for different stages of the school system, but not for individual grades. Teachers set aside time whenever new curricula and policies are introduced, to decide how best to implement these in their school. On the whole, there is a close relationship between policy and practice. Existing curricula underline the importance of oral communication. In the upper secondary school, interdisciplinary project work has recently been given prominence. Literature is being given renewed status in language classes in Norway.

Commercially produced course books govern the content and planning of language teaching to a great extent. A highly competitive range of books is produced for English, French and German, normally in conjunction with curriculum reforms. Books are frequently developed and written by teachers, often together with teachers in higher education. Students normally have their own copies of course books. Teachers draw on a wide range of material to supplement course books, often including audio and visual media. While course books are produced in Norway, supplementary material from the target language countries are often brought in and made available to students.

Assessment of students

School-based formal assessment takes place at all grades in lower and upper secondary school, usually two or three times a year, and it combines course work and internal tests. At the end of compulsory and upper secondary schooling, official grades are given. These are awarded on the basis of the school assessment, supplemented by an examination grade, if the student has been included in a sample to take an external examination. External examinations are devised centrally, along with guidelines for evaluation. Samples of students are drawn for either oral or written examination. Teachers are given some limited guidelines for the internal assessment of some aspects of the curriculum. In the lower secondary school, formal grades are not given for second foreign languages. In the case of English, however, a single grade is given, combining oral and written language. In the upper secondary school, all languages are formally assessed, and official grades are awarded at the end of all course modules. Separate grades for oral and written language are awarded at the higher levels of the school.

Teacher qualifications and support

Shortages of qualified language teachers occur principally in northern and rural districts, leading to the employment of under-qualified teachers, and restrictions on languages offered. Teachers of German and French tend to be highly qualified, with over 70 per cent in the lower secondary school having

language degrees and pedagogical training, rising to 80 or 90 per cent in the upper secondary school. In the case of English, over half of teachers have these qualifications in the lower secondary, and around 80 per cent in the upper secondary school. However, these figures drop to below a quarter in the primary school. Since English is not a compulsory subject at teacher training colleges, many primary school English teachers have no education in English beyond a school leaving qualification.

Teachers receive considerable professional support through trade unions, which issue periodicals and arrange meetings and courses. State-run organisations such as the National Educational Resource Centre track the needs of teachers, and keep them informed. Language teachers receive support additionally through organisations such as the National Association of Modern Languages, which arranges annual seminars for teachers. The most commonly taught languages are also supported by the cultural institutes of foreign countries which have branches in Norway.

Links and exchanges

Organisations such as the Goethe Institut, the British Council and the Bureau de Coopération Linguistique et Educative are instrumental in advising on and arranging visits and exchanges for students and teachers. Language students on higher educational courses in Norway are not obliged to spend time abroad as part of their studies. However, roughly a third of first degree course language students spend some time abroad before completing their courses, and, at higher levels, students are increasingly taking advantage of studies abroad offered by European Union programmes.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Norwegians are very conscious of the importance of foreign languages, and the current internationalisation of work, study and leisure has heightened this consciousness. This is reflected not only in the concern to improve the standard of English, for example by lowering the age at which the first foreign language is learnt, but also in attempts to improve the opportunity for second foreign language study.

The recent waves of immigration have awakened an awareness of Norwegian as a second language, and of the plight of non-Norwegian-speaking pupils, whether of overseas or Sami origins. There is concern that all pupils, regardless of mother tongue, should have equal rights to education as the law prescribes. This has led to an emphasis on mother tongue and second language Norwegian teaching in schools.

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THE PHILIPPINES

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

The ratification of the 1973 Constitution made a provision that the national language of the Philippines be based not only on Tagalog but on Philippine languages and that it be called Filipino instead of Pilipino. The same constitution provided for the use of both Filipino and English as official languages for communication, as well as the media of instruction in education. This became the legal basis for DECS Order No. 25 (1974) providing for a Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) for all schools in order to 'develop a bilingual nation competent in the use of both English and Filipino'. The implementing guidelines explicitly assigned the use of English and Filipino for teaching specific subject areas, while maintaining the teaching of these two languages as curricular subjects at all levels of education.

Linguistic diversity is a distinctive feature of the sociolinguistic context of the Philippines. There are eight major languages, spoken by at least half a million people: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Hiligaynon (Ilonggo), Bikolano, Waray, Pampango and Pangasinan. There are also 156 minor languages. Most Filipinos are effectively bilingual.

Second language education

Students' home languages or the vernacular are used as auxiliary media of instruction in the first grades of elementary school. As stated in Article XIV, Section 7 of the Philippine constitution: 'For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino, and until otherwise provided by law, English. The regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction.'

In the professions and technical fields, English is used to gain access to information which is often available only in English. Language is learned for oral and written communication, for intercultural understanding, for academic study, and for work. For these reasons, many educated Filipinos strongly support the view that English should be maintained for pragmatic and instrumental reasons beneficial to the economic development of the country. The commitment to English and Filipino as second languages means that there is no *foreign* language teaching in mainstream education. Both languages are taught as a subject and used as medium of instruction from the first to the fourth year of high school, in the public and private sectors.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Elementary education provides for the development of functional literacy in the languages as basic tools for further learning. English and Filipino provide for the development of competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing. English and Filipino are taught as subjects to all pupils from Grades 1 to 6 in public and private schools. English is taught daily for 80 minutes and Filipino for 60 minutes.

Language education at the secondary school level, on the other hand, aims to develop competencies in listening, oral interaction, speaking, study skills, comprehension and communication skills, literature and writing. English and Filipino as subjects are taught to all students from Year 1 to Year 4 in both public and private secondary schools. Students are, for example, expected to develop metacognitive and socio-affective skills during this time.

Virtually 100% of the population receives instruction in language subjects, either in public and private schools. English is taught 400 minutes per week in elementary schools and 200 minutes per week in secondary schools. Filipino is taught 300 and 200 minutes per week in the elementary and secondary school levels, respectively. Not only is the teaching of English allotted more time compared with the teaching of Filipino, but more time is allotted for language teaching at the elementary level than at the secondary school level.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

A specific set of target learning competencies has been developed at the national level for both elementary and secondary education. These competencies form the bases for the development of textbooks and teacher's manuals. Public schools have a free, single-textbook scheme, whereas in private schools, students buy their books and multiple textbooks are adopted. Audio-lingual (oral-aural) and situational approaches are two examples of instructional methods commonly used in teaching languages in the Philippines.

Assessment of students

To determine the achievement of pupils, school-based assessments of oral and written proficiency are conducted regularly. Tests are also administered at the district, division, regional and national levels. There is no difference in the process of monitoring and evaluating language education between the elementary and secondary schools. Notably, however, English is one of the subjects tested in the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) for pupils leaving elementary schools and in the National Secondary Assessment Test (NSAT) for students leaving secondary schools.

Teacher qualifications and support

The preparation of language teachers is through formal training obtained on degree courses in education. The minimum requirement to become a language teacher is a Bachelor in Elementary Education for an elementary school teacher and a Bachelor in Secondary Education majoring in English or Filipino, for a secondary school teacher. Elementary school teachers are generalists, whereas secondary school teachers are specialists. 71% of elementary school teachers and 29% of secondary school teachers teach a language. The certification of teachers for government service, whether at the elementary or secondary level, is done through the Professional Board Examination for Teachers. This test covers general and professional education; 10% of the items are on English and Filipino proficiency. Language teachers' professional development is mostly done through in-service training programmes organised at the school, district, divisional, regional, national and even international level.

Links and exchanges

In the Philippines many international contacts among teachers are created through links and exchanges. For further upgrading of English teachers' competencies, scholarships are available to attend the SEAMEO Regional English Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore, and they go to the United Kingdom with the support of the British Council. The US Peace Corps Volunteers have also been deployed in various regions of the country to assist teachers in the preparation of instructional materials and to conduct in-service training. There are also a number of professional organisations which aim to improve English language teaching.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

A current trend in language education in the Philippines is towards developing students' communicative and interactive competence. Content-related materials are needed to attain mastery in writing, listening, speaking and reading skills — an essential condition for academic language development. Resourceful and creative teachers try to enhance the academic language development of learners through developing academic vocabulary in different content areas, using key visuals and posing higher level questions.

The Bilingual Education Policy is a distinct point of controversy. Many people believe that the use of two media of instruction has somehow led to a decline in standards of English. On the other hand, it is argued that the issue is not about learning English but rather concerns the use of English as a medium of instruction, which imposes on students the burden of learning a second or even a third language, and doing so to learn academic subject matter. This situation is aggravated by the lack of access to effective models

of English and the limited contacts with native speakers of the language. None the less, the Bilingual Education Policy will continue and efforts will be made to improve its implementation, for example through the Zamboanga Language Experiment, which aims to gather baseline data on the use of English as the sole medium of instruction.

Another issue is the perceived unacceptability of Tagalog-based Filipino in some areas of the country. For example, in the province of Cebu, there is a court order prohibiting the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction, based on the perception that many technical terms and research findings are in English, and these have no equivalents in Filipino.

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PORTUGAL

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Portuguese has such an unquestioned status and role as the official language in nearly all societal domains that Portugal's constitution makes little reference to the Portuguese language. Linguistically independent since before the tenth century, Portuguese has been spoken within some of the most ancient fixed frontiers in Europe. Through subsequent expansion, Portuguese was introduced to territories under colonial rule throughout the globe, where it is often still recognised as the official language, after independence. Patterns of emigration have been a longstanding structural phenomenon of Portuguese society. However, changes in the politics of Portugal since April 1974, along with international economic changes, have prompted the return of a significant number of former emigrants, creating a corresponding flux in Portugal's population, consisting not only of people with Portuguese nationality but also those of differing ethnicities and cultures from the ex-colonies.

Correspondingly, data on students enrolled in Portugal's schools show increasing cultural diversity, with ex-emigrants from Portugal the most numerous, followed in frequency by people from Cape Verde, Angola, the European Community, Mozambique, Guinea, Brazil, S. Tomé e Príncipe, India, Timor, and Macao, as well as Gypsies in significant numbers, among others. Bilingual communities have thus become noticeable over the past few years. In some schools, mainly in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, the number of Africans reaches 30% of the total school population. Besides Portuguese, some of these minority groups also speak different Creoles according to their ethnic backgrounds.

Second language education

The traditional migratory movements of the Portuguese people led to an official policy providing for Portuguese language instruction to emigrants' children resident abroad. Within Portugal, however, there has been no tradition of acting as a host country for immigration, so the increasing numbers of minority groups in schools in recent years have been integrated within mainstream schools (where Portuguese is used as the medium of schooling). These students are consequently subject to national syllabuses in all school subjects, including a uniform Portuguese first language programme. However, special arrangements addressing unique student needs may be made at the level of individual schools. Second language instruction is sometimes offered through special classes, but mostly through the use of learning support teachers assisting students who follow the mainstream curriculum. Recently, several multicultural or intercultural projects have been undertaken by educational agencies and universities to cater for this

school population. Similarly, certain schools where minority groups are concentrated have developed innovative programmes, and some have made provision for Portuguese as a second language teaching a major concern. A few private schools administer bilingual programmes with statutory recognition, parallel to state schools, in terms of exit criteria and qualifications. These schools tend to be in urban areas and are attended not only by immigrant children but also by Portuguese students from families of high economic and social status.

Foreign language education

English and French (and in some cases, German) have traditionally been compulsory foreign languages in Portuguese secondary schools, not only for instrumental reasons in relation to business and industry, employment and mobility, but also because the study of foreign languages is considered valuable for personal development as well as intercultural understanding. Prior to the 1970s the study of two foreign languages (French and English) was compulsory, but after 1974 only the study of one of these remained compulsory, although students could choose another language (including German) as an option. In the late 1970s, the curriculum again included the compulsory learning of two foreign languages: one from the age of 10 and the second from age 12. All students are now supposed to continue studying foreign languages until the end of their schooling (Grade 11).

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Provisions for foreign language in the first cycle of basic education (age 6 to 9) is optional, and dependent on resources available. Most private schools provide some language teaching, usually oral skills, and nearly always English. Curricular reforms (starting in 1989) have meant that the learning of one foreign language is compulsory from the age of 10 to 17. In the second cycle of basic education, one foreign language is compulsory from the age of 10, then the learning of a second foreign language can be chosen at the beginning of the third cycle (age 12), in parallel with technological education and music. The study of a second foreign language is compulsory in secondary education from Grades 10 to 12 (age 15 to 17) whenever it has not been chosen in basic education. Efforts have recently been made to expand the range of languages taught, though English, French and German still predominate. All foreign languages are taught as a subject.

In spite of these recent policy reforms (shifting the study of a second foreign language from compulsory to optional), the number of students studying foreign languages has not decreased significantly. All students enrolled in state and private schools in 1994–95 aged 10 to 15 studied a first foreign language and about 71% studied a second foreign language. In 1994–95,

87.5% of the pupils enrolled in the second cycle of basic education (age 10 to 11), chose English as their first foreign language, 12.5% chose French, and only very small numbers studied German; in the third cycle of basic education (age 12 to 14), the first choice of a second foreign language was French (73%), followed by English (27%), German (0.6%) and Spanish (0.1%). In higher education, 8% of students studied a foreign language as a major element of their course. In basic and secondary education the allocation of time is determined at the national level: 200 minutes per week for the first two grades of the first foreign language programme, and for the second, only in secondary education when compulsory; 150 minutes per week for all other grades and for the second foreign language. These allocations represent 8.3% and 11.1%, respectively, of all teaching time.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The Basic Law for the Educational System (issued in 1986) sets forth an overall framework for curricula in basic and secondary education. In 1989, new curricular plans for both levels of schooling were proclaimed through Act 286/89. Different task forces designed and experimented on a small scale with new syllabuses for all subject areas, implementing these for English in 1995–96. These new syllabuses prescribe the aims, objectives and content of language education, providing also a framework for teaching methods and student assessment. The new syllabuses for almost all foreign languages taught follow a communicative approach, emphasising cross-cultural communication and intercultural awareness as well as extended reading.

Decisions about teaching materials and course books are made at the school level, following general regulations defined centrally. Commercially produced textbooks are usually chosen, forming the main guidelines for language teaching. Courses in English and German create a great demand for foreign publications, particularly for the second and third cycles of basic education. The content of the syllabus for secondary education favours the adoption of books produced by Portuguese publishers. Students have to purchase course books, but in the case of low income families these are provided free. Students are also strongly advised to buy support materials such as dictionaries, grammar books, and workbooks. Teachers, individually or in teams, also design supplementary teaching materials, using audio and visual and information technologies.

Assessment of students

The assessment of students is governed by general principles and rules defined centrally. Three purposes of evaluation predominate. Formative evaluation (the responsibility of teachers in conjunction with counselling services) aims to establish intermediate goals to increase student achievement, and for decisions on differentiated instructional practices and remedial education. Summative evaluation (based on performance tasks or written

tests developed by schools) informs students and parents about learners' attainment in reference to the curriculum, as well as informing decisions about promotion between grades and entry into specific programmes. Monitoring (the responsibility of the Ministry of Education) aims at controlling the quality of the educational system locally, regionally and nationally. Summative evaluation is expressed in quantitative values on a five-point scale in basic education and on a 20-point scale in secondary education. There is a national exam at the end of Grade 12.

Teacher qualifications and support

Language teachers in Portugal are trained in a manner similar to teachers of other subjects. Their initial education takes place either in Schools of Education (polytechnics) for teachers aiming to work in the second cycle of basic education or in universities for those intending to teach in the third cycle of basic education or secondary education. Both academic and professional qualifications are required for teaching positions. For language teachers, this means academic qualifications in the main language they will teach and professional qualifications related to pedagogical theory, the target language, and practical aspects of teaching and learning. About 93% of French teachers in the second cycle of basic education have relevant academic and professional qualification, whereas 82% have these in the third cycle of basic education and secondary education. For English teachers, about 87% have these qualifications in the second cycle and 77% in the third cycle and in secondary education. Only a very small number of language teachers are recruited among people without complete academic qualifications. In some areas of the country, there is a shortage of teachers of English for the third cycle of basic and secondary education and in other areas, a surplus, due to teachers' preferences for particular locations.

The right to continuous education for all is recognised in the 1986 law related to education. For teachers, this law not only helps to assure the completion of qualifications and the widening and updating of knowledge and professional skills, but also facilitates career mobility and progression. However, guidelines for in-service teacher education were not established until 1992, making attendance at in-service training courses obligatory for teachers seeking promotion, with minimum commitments specified according to their career structures (for example, 25 hours per year over a three- or four-year period). In addition to university and polytechnic schools (both public and private), other institutions also carry out in-service training: teacher associations, school associations and educational administration services. A general framework regulates the content and methodologies of teacher training as well as the recruitment of training staff. The state is responsible for financial support of in-service training according to pre-defined priorities. However, this does not meet all needs of language teachers. Thus, they also look for support from cultural institutes funded by the governments of France, England and Germany as well as from professional associations in Portugal.

Links and exchanges

Prior to Portugal's entry into the European Union, there were few exchanges, organised mostly at the initiative of individual teachers or schools. After admission to the EU, the situation changed, and with the support of European funds, many students have visited or received visiting students from various European countries. In 1993–94, about 1,200 secondary students were supported by the LINGUA Programme for study visits abroad. Portuguese participation in ERASMUS is increasing. Teacher education institutions have participated in Inter-University Cooperation Programmes (ICPs), coordinating some for initial as well as postgraduate education. Portuguese teacher-education institutions also participated in 12 out of the existing Réseaux d'Institutions de Formation (RIFS), acting as the coordinating institution for two.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Ongoing educational reforms have affected all sectors of the educational system, directly influencing language education as well. It is too early to draw conclusions about the effects of recent policies redefining second foreign languages in secondary education. New syllabuses for all languages taught in basic and secondary schools are now in the process of implementation.

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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Throughout the territory of the Russian Federation, Russian is the official state language for all purposes specified in the Constitution. Federal Republics have the right to preserve their own languages. They are used in the state agencies and institutions of the republic, along with the state language of the Russian Federation. More than 110 languages are in use among minority groups living in Russia. Languages of the Federal Republics are spoken by significant numbers of people, living not only in their territories, but also in other parts of Russia. A great number of citizens of the Russian Federation are bilingual.

Second language education

The policy on language education is regulated at all levels: federal, republic, national/regional, local and institutional. The state regulates educational initiatives by statute and this forms the legal basis for the development of education in the Russian Federation. Russian is recognised as the state language, but all other languages spoken by the people of the Russian Federation have an equal position, according to the concept of linguistic sovereignty. Citizens of the Russian Federation may receive their primary general education in their native language and many national communities which are well-populated create primary schools with a language of instruction other than Russian. People also have the right to select the language of instruction from the range of options provided by the educational system. In these cases, Russian is taught as the second language. The languages used in secondary and high schools are determined by the state and republic. However, most non-Russians still speak good Russian and use it in Russian-medium, post-school educational institutions. There are considerable variations of the policy on language education at local and republic levels .

Foreign language education

Traditionally, foreign language is one of the compulsory subjects in general secondary school. Legislation requires all secondary students aged 10 to 15 to study at least one foreign language. The general aims of foreign language education, and the attainment targets, are prescribed by the State Standard on foreign languages, the final version of which is expected to be adopted in 1996-1997. The Ministry of Education sets out the content of the state curriculum and examination arrangements for all compulsory subjects, including foreign language and the Russian language.

Students choose between English, French and German as the first foreign language. Most prefer to start with English (about 60%) and to take other languages as second foreign language. In some regions, schools offer Spanish, Chinese, Finnish or Japanese. There is also a significant number of mainstream schools offering foreign language from the first or second year of schooling (age six to seven). In cities and towns these schools are quite numerous. A second foreign language is available as an option in some schools. In upper school, students also have a foreign language option. High schools offer one foreign language as a compulsory subject during the first two to four years.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Systematic foreign language (FL) teaching starts in the first year of general secondary school (age 10) and lasts for five years until the end of compulsory schooling. However, according to recent legislation, schools have the right to start FL teaching in those primary schools which are attached to secondary schools. As a result, a considerable number (between 20% and 30%) of primary schools (age six to nine), and even some pre-school institutions (age four to six), offer foreign languages. The state FL policy is assisting this process by developing curriculum variants in foreign languages for primary school and pre-school levels, by publishing federal and regional programmes and textbooks, and by training FL teachers for the primary level.

The three main foreign languages taught in mainstream schools are English, German and French, chosen by 60%, 25% and 15% of secondary school students, respectively. The second foreign language is normally offered to students at age 12, but only in a rather limited number of mainstream schools. All foreign languages are taught as a subject. They are used as medium of instruction only in special language schools. General goals and the broad content of foreign language education are formulated in state and curriculum documents. Variations of content, allocation of time to FL, and teaching methods are decided at regional and school levels.

The minimum teaching time (according to the State Standard) for the first FL is 120 minutes per week, though it may be exceeded on the decision of the school administration. This represents about 8 to 10 per cent of all curriculum time. The study of FL in upper school (age 15–17) is optional and regulated at school level. At present, nearly 98% of upper school students take at least one foreign language. The allocation of time in upper school varies considerably (from 90 to 240 minutes per week). In higher education one FL is obligatory for two to four years, depending on the institution. Foreign language is one of four compulsory subjects examined in postgraduate courses leading to a doctorate in any humanities or science discipline.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The State Standard on FL education and the Federal Curriculum on FL prescribe the goals and attainment targets in terms of learning skills, and the four communicative skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The Federal Curriculum provides a list of general topics and areas of experience. The goals and aims of FL education, offered by the State Standard, are derived from the notion of language as a means of communication, at least within some limited areas of experience. The level of FL competence, described in the State Standard, is called 'a basic level'. It is compulsory for all students graduating at age 15 from general secondary school of any type, after five years of FL study.

All regional and local programmes are based on the State Standard. Variations are allowed in the level of communicative skills development, in the size of FL vocabulary covered, and the choice of the areas of experience and topics. Teachers usually use regional/local programmes. They choose their own teaching strategy and methods. The content of teaching is in practice regulated by the Federal Curriculum, and sets of textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, teachers have a wide choice of textbooks and supplementary material (published in Russia and abroad). Basic textbooks used in schools are free, and students receive them on temporary loan from the school library. Some teachers use commercially produced supplementary materials, covering parts of The Federal Curriculum. They also use audio and visual media, if available in school. Many teachers write and use their own teaching materials.

Assessment of students

At present, the assessment of students in foreign language at the end of compulsory schooling is not obligatory. However, FL is often chosen for the final examination, which consists of three obligatory and two optional subjects. The FL exam is organised by schools at the end of compulsory schooling (age 15). It consists of a reading task, conversation on the text for reading, and conversation on a chosen topic. The school-leavers who do not choose the exam in FL are assessed by a teacher on the basis of observation and/or testing.

In 1996-1997, the final draft of the State Educational Standard on Secondary Education will be officially adopted, and arrangements for summative assessment will be changed. It is expected that the state mainstream school exam in FL will include tests of reading, speaking, listening and writing, as stipulated in the Standard. For other types of school, where the conditions for FL study are better (more teaching time, school exchanges, audio and visual media), the attainment targets are expected to be more demanding than in normal schools.

Teacher qualifications and support

The growing number of schools offering the first FL at primary level, and the second FL in middle school, and the great demand for foreign languages in the developing Russian economy has led to teacher shortages. As a result, FL teachers currently working in schools have a variety of qualifications. Some have both professional and academic qualifications in language, some have one or the other, and some may have been trained to teach other subjects. Schoolteachers are supported by the state, and regional educational authorities provide in-service training in both teaching practice and in language.

Each large city has an in-service training institute which serves the city and the region. Programmes include lectures (methods of teaching FL, psychology, linguistics), workshops, language practice, and courses on computer training and classroom practice. There are programmes lasting eight or four months. The Ministry of Education has initiated an alternative model of FL teacher in-service training in 10 territories of the Russian Federation: teachers gather four times a year for a week-long training during vacations. Both models can exist in parallel. International agencies (the British Council, the Goethe Institut and others) offer their support for in-service teacher training, including opportunities for teacher exchanges. The Federal Journal *Foreign Languages in Secondary School*, supported by the Ministry of Education, regularly informs FL teachers about changes and trends in FL policy, and provides samples of teaching material.

Links and exchanges

Links with other countries for language learning and cultural exchange have been established intensively during the last 10 years. Aims and methods of implementation differ. Most schools have continuing programmes of home-to-home exchanges, providing opportunities for all types of activity: attending lessons; participation in competitions, concerts and discussions; exchange of materials; and sightseeing for cultural awareness. A rather limited number of students make contact through correspondence by electronic mail, or on a computer network. These contacts are usually initiated by individual FL teachers, and sometimes supported by local educational authorities and by state officials.

Some secondary school students organise exchange visits through agencies during their holidays (in summer and winter). Agencies offer foreign language classes and a cultural programme, but few students can afford this type of exchange. There are also exchanges completely supported by foreign country foundations for Russian children. For example, every year about 1,000 upper school students are sent to study in the USA for a year; this operates within the framework of the Freedom Support Act. Higher schools use their own resources and links to organise student exchanges.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Positive changes in relations between the Russian Federation and other countries, expanding international contacts, the spread of FL into various spheres of social life, economics, science and culture have made foreign languages a vital tool, needed for intellectual and practical participation in national and international affairs.

The position of FL among other school subjects has become stronger. As a result, a set of basic documents regulating FL education at the Federal and local levels has been developed. Among the most important and practical innovations in school FL education can be mentioned: an obligatory standard of communicative competence for all students in mainstream schools; an approach to FL teaching which balances linguistic and communicative competence; an early start to FL teaching; provision for the second and third foreign language in mainstream schools; pre-tertiary professional orientation of some optional courses in the upper school; and the development and publishing of alternative textbooks (to provide a free choice for teachers). Further research into FL teaching is expected to include a systematic study of FL in the upper school, the assessment of all students' attainment of the State Educational Standards at the end of compulsory schooling, and the modification and production of up-to-date teaching materials.

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SLOVENIA

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

In Slovenia, a country of two million inhabitants, 90% of the population are Slovenes and speak Slovenian which is the recognised, official language for professional, administrative and legal purposes. Two autochthonous, ethnic minorities are officially recognised — Italian (0.16% of the population) and Hungarian (0.43%). The provisions of the national constitution define the rights of both minorities. Both languages, Italian and Hungarian, are also used in official documents of local authorities. Italian, Hungarian and bilingual schools are organised for both minorities. Besides local media in the respective minority languages, the Italian minority has a TV channel which can be watched nationally.

Due to labour immigration in the past four decades, 2.76% of the population are now Croats, 2.44% Serbs, and 1.36% Muslims but these groups have not yet established their own schools. Children of these residents follow the national curriculum.

Second language education

The circumstances of the country mean that second language education is effectively first foreign language education. At age 10/11 a second foreign language is obligatory in the bilingual regions of Primorje (Italian) and Prekmurje (Hungarian) for native Slovenes, and Slovene for the minority language speakers. This remains compulsory in upper secondary education. Children whose mother tongue is not Slovene, Hungarian or Italian are integrated mostly into mainstream schooling. Extra teaching in Slovene is provided for those whose limited proficiency in the language makes it impossible for them to follow the curriculum. Children whose mother tongue is not Slovene also have the right to be taught in their own language. However, this right has not been exercised to any great extent: there are two or three schools with classes in Serbian and Croatian and one school in English.

Foreign language education

Slovenia's compulsory education in the past 40 years has been characterised by centralisation and very little diversity. This uniformity was based on the idea of providing equal opportunity for everyone to have a basic education, necessary for entry into upper secondary schools. Public education in Slovenia is funded through the state budget, and schools are financed directly by the Ministry of Education and Sports, according to norms which are set and

controlled by the Ministry. In the 1980s, there was a tendency for individual schools or teachers to introduce different educational approaches and even subjects. Thus, many schools offer optional second foreign language instruction. The Education Act passed in 1996 now requires all schools to provide this option.

Presently, there is no statutory provision for foreign language teaching in the primary sector (7- to 11-year olds). However, some schools (less than 5%) provide some English (or German or Italian) teaching, usually oral skills. Legislation requires all students aged 11 to 15 in the compulsory public education system to study at least one foreign language.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

The foreign languages most frequently taught are English (82% of all first foreign languages), German and Italian. The allocation of time to languages is the same for all schools. Students aged 11 receive 180 minutes instruction per week, 12-year olds 135 minutes, 13-year olds 90 minutes, and 14-year olds 135 minutes. This represents 16%, 11%, 7%, and 10% respectively, of all curriculum time.

Gymnasia are in principle comprehensive but some emphasise science in the curriculum, some humanities and some languages. All students must study two foreign languages (usually German and/or French are added to English — less commonly Italian, Spanish, Russian or Hungarian). The five-subject baccalaureat consists of three compulsory subjects — mother tongue, mathematics, and a foreign language and two elective subjects. The same foreign language requirement applies for the baccalaureat after completion of a four-year technical (professional) school. In vocational schools also students take at least one foreign language. For example, students at a school for waiters have to take two languages, while for hairdressers the requirement is one. In vocational schools there is no external or national assessment.

Foreign languages are taught as a subject, and used as a medium of instruction for other subjects in only very few cases. However, it is not uncommon for teachers teaching foreign language to use the target language for 100% of the time in the last grades of secondary education.

In the universities of Slovenia in 1994/95, about 4% to 5% of all students were following degree courses featuring the study of a foreign language. Degrees in the following languages are offered: Croatian, Macedonian, Serbian, Russian, French, Italian, Spanish, English, German, Latin, Greek, Chinese and Japanese. In most other faculties (for example, technical studies, law and business), a one-year course in one foreign language is offered and assessed according to the needs of the main field of study.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

While universities are fully autonomous, the educational system from pre-school to tertiary level is centrally governed and administered by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The autonomy of educational institutions at these levels is restricted by the prescription of curricula, the number of periods per school year, the highest number of students in a class and the allocation of time to different subjects. All text-books must be approved by the National Council for Pre-university Education. The Council is a permanent advisory body, appointed by the Ministry of Education and elected by Parliament. It is a body of over 20 members who represent different institutions involved in some way with education. The Council gives advice to the minister on the content of curricula and will set out assessment arrangements for all national curriculum subjects (including languages) when the new Education Act is implemented. Meanwhile, assessment is still largely in the hands of individual teachers. There is considerable freedom as far as instructional approaches are concerned, and in the selection of text-books if there is more than one textbook available.

The new National Curriculum will prescribe attainment targets in various aspects of language learning. Presently, these goals are defined through nationally approved textbooks. Teachers in schools produce detailed schemes of work and have traditionally made their own arrangements for assessing students' attainment. There was therefore no standardisation until 1991 when the first external examinations were introduced at the end of Grade 8 (age 14), in order to provide equal opportunities for all students wishing to enter their first-choice upper secondary school. The introduction of the matura or baccalaureat has performed the same function for entry into university.

The curriculum claims to emphasise oral communication and the use of languages for personal use, leisure and travel. Nevertheless, it also stresses the study of grammar and writing, so that students in practice often focus on grammatical rules rather than on fluency in the spoken language. Instructional practices in public schools can vary, but are determined by teacher training which is carried out in the universities, either within the faculties of education or other faculties offering studies leading to teaching degrees. In Slovenian schools and universities, oral communication is not highly valued and class teaching, with little feedback from students, is still widespread. This also affects language classes, but many teachers are now adopting new practices which often include the use of a wide range of materials and audio and visual media, to supplement the use of textbooks

The content of teaching is governed substantially by the use of commercially produced textbooks. Teachers can choose from a range of textbooks, recommended by the National Council for Pre-university Education. Textbooks are not provided by schools students are obliged to buy their own. The books are relatively expensive, although for lower income students books are subsidised. The choice of books is greatest for learning English.

Assessment of students

The assessment of students' progress in all subjects is carried out in the classroom by teachers. Students are examined in all grades; at the end of 8th grade there is a first external assessment, which does not include foreign language as a compulsory element, for those competing for places in upper secondary schools. At the end of secondary school, students opting to enter university are assessed by the baccalaureat which includes at least one foreign language.

Teacher qualifications and support

There is a constant shortage of language teachers in pre-university schools. Better paid jobs in commercially run language schools, foreign firms, firms in exporting business and government services have attracted many good language teachers and interpreters. The majority of language teachers have a degree qualification, studying language as the main subject (usually in conjunction with a second foreign language or a humanities subject).

Other institutions supporting language teachers are the cultural institutes funded by the governments of France (Centre Culturel Français), USA (American Centre) and Great Britain (The British Council).

Links and exchanges

There are some grants available for students to study abroad. Contacts are made mostly on the initiative of the candidates themselves (usually students at the university). These grants are distributed by the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Open Society Fund, or by governments of other countries. Information on the opportunities available is distributed by the student organisation of the University of Ljubljana. Exchanges and links between teachers are mostly conducted at school level.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Slovenia is a small nation, so there exists a constant need to learn foreign languages in order to be able to communicate with the rest of the world. Therefore, quite a lot of attention (and time) is being paid to teaching and learning languages. However a question about communicative ability remains: is the time spent on learning languages reflected in the standards of spoken language proficiency achieved?

There remains a need to improve the effectiveness of foreign language teaching and learning. Conventional university education alone does not produce the desired levels of communicative ability among students, and it is likely that more extensive changes in language teaching and learning will be required.

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SOUTH AFRICA

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Before 1994, English and Afrikaans were the only two official languages in the Republic of South Africa. However, in 1963 various African languages were given geographically limited official language status, within the formerly independent and self-governing homeland states. In 1994, the new constitution came into effect, in which it was affirmed as a basic human right that '*... every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice, and the right to use and to be addressed in his or her dealings with any public administration at the national level of government in any official South African language of his or her own choice*'. This Act has led to a reappraisal of the status of the indigenous languages. They are being used to an increasing degree in the civil service. The official languages at national level are: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu. Each of the nine provinces will probably determine which of these languages (a smaller number) will be the official languages at provincial level.

More than 11 languages are actually used in South Africa. Over two-thirds of the population use one or other of the nine African languages listed above, and 30% use Afrikaans and/or English. At least 12 other languages, including six European and six Asian languages, are also spoken by between 2% and 3% of the population.

First language education

According to the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) (WPET), educational policy endorses two principles: every person's right to instruction in the language of choice where reasonably practicable; and the principle that the diversity of languages should be protected and promoted. In November 1995, the Department of Education released a discussion document on language in education.

Among the issues being debated is the role of language as medium of instruction (MOI). The WPET proposes that multilingualism should be promoted. New language education policies still have to be worked out, but will clearly be based on a voluntary MOI model. The following MOI policies have previously been in effect. Mother tongue education (English or Afrikaans) was prescribed for white pupils from the first to the tenth school year (Standard 8). Thereafter a choice was allowed but seldom exercised. For so-called coloured pupils, the MOI was the home language (English or Afrikaans) from the first to the last school year. For Asian pupils, the MOI was the

official language known best at each particular school — *de facto* this was English from the first to the last school year. Act 100 of 1991 determined that parents dependent on the former Department of Education and Training (DET) (Africans) were allowed a free choice of MOI in schools of the DET; this affected most black pupils outside the self-governing and independent areas. Most schools of the old DET have retained the status quo. Pupils are taught through the medium of the vernacular language, chosen by schools, until the end of Grade 4 (Standard 2), and thereafter through the medium of English.

Another issue is the choice of first languages to be studied. Until now (but the situation is currently under review), the following policies have prevailed. For English- and Afrikaans-speaking pupils, mother tongue was a prescribed subject from the first to the last school year. For African language-speaking pupils, an African language was compulsory from the first to the ninth school year. This was usually but not necessarily the mother tongue. The nearest available school might not necessarily have offered the pupil's mother tongue, either as a subject or as medium of instruction. The new (provisional) education policy makes provision for all 11 official languages as possible language options throughout primary and secondary schooling, where practicable. The principle that multilingualism should be promoted is a clear statement of policy. In the senior primary phase (Grades 4–6), the following options are also available where practicable: Arabic, Gujerati, Hindi, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu (mainly languages of Asian origin).

Second language education

Existing policy, which is currently under review, prescribes Afrikaans for English-speaking pupils, as the second official language, and English for Afrikaans-speaking pupils from the first, second or third to the last school year. For African language-speaking pupils, English is taught to a substantial proportion in Grade 1 (42.5%) and most pupils study it from Grade 2 onwards; Afrikaans is taught to most pupils from Grade 3 onwards.

Foreign language education

Teaching foreign languages is basically a matter of providing educational opportunities where there is sufficient demand. There is no legislative requirement for such subjects. In the secondary phase (Grades 8–12), the following language options are available where practicable (in practice only at selected schools and with very limited numbers of learners): Arabic, French, German, Greek and Modern Greek (only Grades 10–12); Hebrew, Latin, Portuguese, Italian (only Grades 10–12), Spanish (only Grades 10–12). Policy makes provision for the offering of these languages as subjects at the levels indicated.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education in schools

The majority of pupils in South Africa study three languages: the vernacular first language (i.e. an African language), as well as English and Afrikaans as second languages. Time devoted to the three subjects is typically about 650 to 720 minutes per week, from Grade 3 to Grade 12, with greater time spent in the lower grades. For Grades 1 and 2, the figures are about 810 and 920 minutes per week respectively, with greater time devoted to the vernacular. Most of these pupils use the vernacular as medium of instruction in the first four years of school, and most of them switch to English at the beginning of Grade 5. This switch is probably more theoretical than real. The *de facto* situation is that most of the pupils receive a type of bilingual education at least until Grade 7 — the end of the primary school phase. A significant minority (about 10%) make the switch to the medium of Afrikaans instead of English.

Those with English or Afrikaans as mother tongue usually take only two languages for most of their school careers. Time allocated to these two language subjects together is usually about 415 minutes per week in Grades 9–12, 530 minutes per week in Grades 1 and 3–8, and 570 minutes per week in Grade 2. For communicative purposes only, most of these pupils take an African language as a non-examination subject in Grades 5–7. About half continue with this for a further two years to Grade 9. A very small number take an African language for examination purposes, as a third language in the secondary school (Grades 8–12).

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), which consists of the Directors-General of Education of each of the nine provinces, plus the (national) Department of Education, is the main coordinating body for education in South Africa. The 41 National Curriculum Committees were created by this body to develop and revise core curricula, including languages. These committees are coordinated by a representative Coordinating Committee for the School Curriculum. Provinces may adapt the core curricula to their particular contexts. There are 14 curriculum committees for languages, one for each of the 11 official languages, and one each for modern languages, classical languages and Eastern languages. The core curricula describe aims, and some give a general indication of the scope of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills which should be developed.

Pupils are supplied with approved text books — approved, that is, for purchase with state funds. It is the list of approved commercially produced books that largely defines what teachers do. Many teachers and schools supplement these books with their own audio and visual materials. This does not apply to state-aided (Model C) schools, who choose and buy their own books. No school or teacher is restricted absolutely to the list of approved books — provided that they do not use state funds for such purchases.

Assessment of students

Pupils' progress is assessed in a variety of ways, but essentially by their teachers throughout their time at school. Only in Grade 12 is there an external school-leaving examination, currently conducted by the former education departments, or a body nominated by them, but from the end of 1996, the new provincial departments will be responsible. This examination also qualifies students who meet the defined criteria for university entrance. The frequency and thoroughness of internal school assessments vary widely across schools.

Teacher qualifications and support

Teacher qualifications for teachers of English as a second language (as in any other subject) are quite varied. Most primary school teachers have a Teacher's Diploma, after obtaining a school-leaving certificate, based on a two-, three- or four-year course of study. Teachers in the senior primary phase (Grades 4–6) become specialist language teachers, more as a result of selective experience and in-service training than as a result of specialised prior training. Teachers in the junior primary phase are class teachers who teach all subjects to their classes. There is a small minority of primary school teachers with educational degrees. A much higher proportion of secondary school teachers have degree qualifications than is the case with primary school teachers. There are also many teachers, including language teachers, without degrees who hold a specialised subject teacher's diploma.

Links and exchanges

Because of South Africa's geographical remoteness from English-speaking countries, only a very small proportion of the population benefit from direct contacts and links. There is a Rotarian student exchange program (less than 100 students per year), and some teachers organise occasional overseas tours for students able to participate. The numbers involved are likely to be very small.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Much time has been and is devoted to language teaching in the curriculum. The aim of bilingualism has long been established and the awareness that this should include one of the African languages led to the introduction of these languages in the senior primary phase (Grades 4–6) in the 1980s. The pressure to learn other languages is also likely to increase. This is abundantly clear from the latest discussion document *Towards a Language Policy in Education*, and the new government's support for multilingualism, exemplified by the proposal that all schools should be encouraged to offer more than one language as medium of instruction. The fact that the majority of students have to use a language other than their home language, as a medium of learning for

the greater part of their school careers, and for all their tertiary studies, highlights how crucially important language learning is, and the high priority it receives.

It is recognised that the question of language in South Africa is a complex and sensitive area, and has been the cause of civic unrest in the past. The new discussion document on language in education makes a number of proposals. The most important of them include: an encouragement to introduce two languages as medium of instruction from Grade 1; a second language, optional in Grade 2 and compulsory from Grade 3; an optional third language from Grade 4; promotion in school on the basis of performance in the home language; and promotion of the official languages of the republic as second and third languages studied.

These proposals attempt to meet many conflicting needs; they aim in particular to promote multilingualism and to remove all forms of linguistic discrimination. It is intended that the policy should be applied with flexibility and local consultation, although it is recognised that even the core aims may initially be beyond the means of both schools and students. It is also important to recognise that students may be motivated in their choice of language study as much by its utilitarian value in a vocational context as by its contribution to social integration.

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SPAIN

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Spain is constituted by 17 different autonomous communities, roughly equivalent to the states of a federal union. Spain has a semi-federal political structure and, from 1978, has been engaged in the process of decentralising political power, including the management of education.

Spain is a multilingual state; therefore, there are different *Spanish languages*: Castilian (usually and internationally known as Spanish) is the official language for the whole state; Basque, Catalan, Galician and Valencian (the name given to Catalan in the autonomous community of Valencia) are official languages in the autonomous communities of the Basque Country, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Galicia and the Valencian Country respectively. The constitution of 1978 asserts these separate rights and the cultural value of linguistic diversity. All autonomous communities having their own language have also promulgated Statutes of Autonomy, which establish 'the right to know and use' the relevant native language, and its status as an official language in the territory, together with Castilian. The Statutes also make the public authorities responsible for normalising use of the respective languages in all spheres of life, particularly in administration, education and the media. Thus, all *Spanish languages* are official and first language for a larger or smaller part of the population.

Second language education

Autonomous governments have approached the promotion and use of their own language in education in different ways, all seeking to adapt the statutory mandate to the social and sociolinguistic reality of the population. In some communities, the native language is the main means of instruction throughout the school system; in others, the language of instruction distinguishes different school systems; and finally, there are cases where the teaching and learning of the native language is compulsory, but taught as a subject.

Arrangements for the integration of immigrant children into the school system have to take account of many different factors: age, country of origin, level of maturity, language skills and school background. The process is known as 'late incorporation'. Individual cases are resolved by a team of teachers with advisory and material support from the education authorities. Additional support comes from compensatory education programmes, designed for all children with special needs.

Foreign language education

There is a statutory obligation on primary schools to provide for the teaching of a foreign language. This applies to pupils from Grade 3 (age seven/eight). The foreign language remains compulsory in lower secondary (age 11/12 to 14/15), and a second foreign language becomes optional in lower and upper secondary. Throughout the country there are schools presently introducing the teaching of a first foreign language in the initial cycle of primary education (Grades 1 and 2), on an experimental basis.

In foreign language teaching, the national policy for compulsory education is to generalise the teaching of English (although there is a significant 10% of the school population taking French as first foreign language), and to offer a second foreign language on a voluntary basis — most often French, German, Italian or Portuguese. The national policy on diversifying language education is exemplified through the network of 165 publicly funded *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* (Official Foreign Language Schools), teaching from between four languages in the smaller schools to 17 in the bigger schools. Courses at these schools can be attended by students age 14 and over, and by adults.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Foreign languages are taught as a subject, and as medium of instruction in only isolated cases. Although there are statutory arrangements for the content of language teaching, the organisation of the foreign language curriculum and teaching methods are decided at school level.

The allocation of time to foreign languages may vary by up to 10% to 12%, depending on the number of hours prescribed by the educational administration. Students aged 7/8 to 10/11 receive between 120 to 180 minutes instruction per week; students aged 12 to 13 receive between 120 to 180 minutes instruction per week; and students aged 14 to 15, between 150 and 180 minutes instruction per week. The proportion of curriculum time taken by the first foreign language in primary education is between 9 and 11% of the total, and the proportion of curriculum time taken by foreign languages (first, or first and second) in compulsory secondary education, between 10 and 12%. As long as the minimum teaching requirements are covered, the final allocation and distribution of time is decided by the schools.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The 1990 educational reform established a nation-wide core curriculum which specified the general objectives of each educational stage, the curriculum areas to be taught, the blocks of subject content, and guidelines for teaching

and assessment. Modifications are made by the autonomous communities to take account of local conditions and culture, and schools develop and adapt it to make it relevant to the needs of pupils. Individual teachers refer to the school curriculum to produce schemes of work, appropriate to the classes which they are teaching. In compulsory secondary education, the emphasis of the foreign language curriculum is on communication, appropriate language use, and the development of independent learning. There are no official teaching materials, but the different educational administrations have to approve school textbooks; they also have to provide schools with exemplary teaching material, reflecting the principles of the reform. There are no examination syllabuses.

Assessment of students

There is no regular external assessment of proficiency. Assessment throughout primary and compulsory secondary education is continuous, based on systematic observation, analysis of pupils' work, and oral and written tests. The basic rules of assessment are decided at national level; standards of attainment are prescribed by the autonomous communities, and teachers are responsible for conducting end-of-term, or year tests, and for keeping records of pupils' progress. Assessment is criterion-referenced. Policy documents prescribe standards of attainment, which include both the minimum teaching requirements, and the levels of proficiency students are expected to achieve. The process is similar in upper secondary, but there are more formal end-of-term and final examinations, reflecting the summative nature of assessment at this level, in contrast to the earlier stages, at which formative purposes receive greater emphasis. Assessment for purposes of certification takes place at the end of compulsory school and the end of upper secondary.

Teacher qualifications and support

In order to qualify as a teacher, it is essential to have a university degree (three years for primary education and four/five years at other levels), as well as teacher training. There is also an examination which must be passed by those wishing to teach in state schools.

Language teachers are supported by in-service teacher training services, teachers' centres, university institutes of education, and lifelong teacher training services belonging to the different educational authorities. Teachers' associations are also very active in providing seminars and conferences, aimed at the professions throughout Spain. Private professional institutions, and very often publishers, organise teacher training seminars and conferences, and sponsor those organised by other institutions. Spanish teachers also benefit from various EC programmes. At present, most training is directed by the educational administration, which has its own teacher training staff, based in the teachers' centres.

The policy for the professional development of foreign language teachers provides different programmes, including language improvement abroad, language courses in the state language schools, and university Master's degree courses. The educational authorities also provide individual grants for professional development, study leave, and funds for teacher conferences.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

School-level reforms currently being implemented place greater emphasis on communicative uses of language and its relevance to learners' interests. The reforms make explicit the need to recognise different learning styles and to make foreign language learning an integral part of students' development. Organisational changes include: a new role for technology resources in language teaching and learning; the introduction of an optional second foreign language; new funding for visits and exchanges; and, in adult education, an extension and diversification of provision through the network of Official Foreign Language Schools and distance learning.

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SWEDEN

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Swedish is the only national language used in Parliament, by official bodies and in the media. Finnish and Samish (Lappish) are the only indigenous minority languages, used by small groups of people in the northern part of the country. Over the last 30 years or so, large numbers of refugees and other immigrants have, however, increased the number of languages used daily in Sweden to more than 100. The most commonly spoken languages are Finnish, Serbian, Croatian, Spanish, Persian, and Arabic. Interpreter services are guaranteed in hospitals and other social institutions. English has been a compulsory subject for all children since the 1950s, and has almost taken on the status of a second language. It is used as a 'company language' in many export companies, and textbooks in English are compulsory on many university courses, which means that good reading comprehension in English is essential for higher education students.

Second language education

Swedish as a second language is a compulsory subject for immigrant children. It has its own syllabus (objectives and criteria for grading), different from Swedish as a mother tongue, and its status has recently increased. While there is an obligation for schools to offer Swedish as a second language (SSL), and for the pupils to attend, it is optional for students to study their home language; but under certain circumstances, schools have to make provision if there are students who choose this option. Almost 100 home languages are being taught and for more than 10 years immigrant teachers have been trained in about 25 different languages. This training includes home language learning and SSL, as well as subjects such as didactics and psychology.

Foreign language education

Sweden is, in many ways, a highly centralised country. This means, among other things, that educational policy is laid down by Parliament and that the same national curricula apply to all schools. However, the new curricula, implemented in 1994 and 1995, give regional and local authorities more freedom to take important decisions.

English as a first foreign language has been a compulsory subject in Swedish schools for more than 40 years. It is now studied by almost 100% of all students throughout the comprehensive school system. In recent years, most schools have offered English from Grade 3 or 4, but, starting in 1995, it will

probably be introduced in many schools as early as Grade 1 or 2 (age 7 or 8). Local authorities are free to choose the starting age as long as a total of 480 hours is offered before the end of Grade 9. A second language, known as the B language, usually German or French, is often introduced in Grade 6 (until 1995, Grade 7) as an option, but expected to be taken by 80–90 % of the age cohort, and studied as a rule over a period of four years. From Grade 8, and then in the upper secondary school, a C language can be chosen, most commonly Spanish, French, or German, but Finnish, Italian, Chinese, Russian, as well as a number of other less commonly taught languages, are offered in some schools. A communicative and functional view of foreign language forms the basis of the curricula, grading criteria and national tests.

The prescribed number of teaching hours of English in the comprehensive school corresponds to 7.2% of the pupils' total number of lessons over the nine years (but unevenly distributed). In addition, there is a language option allocated 4.8% of curriculum time — compulsory for the pupils, but with a free choice of one or two more foreign languages, usually French or German, or extra English. In the upper secondary school, compulsory English is allocated 5.1% of the total number of hours, and the extra course for the 'academic' programmes, an additional 2%. The second or third foreign language takes 8.8%. The total percentage of foreign language study is thus 12% in the comprehensive school and between 5.1% and 15.8% in the upper secondary school.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education in schools

The foreign language education system is in a state of transformation. The old curricula from 1980 and 1970 respectively will be valid for some grades for another two years, whereas new ones have been introduced in 1994 and 1995 at most levels. The B languages have been allotted more time; they can be started earlier than before and they are expected to be taken by more students. English will probably start earlier, but what the effects will be is uncertain, the total number of study hours being almost the same. In the upper secondary school, there is a risk that many students, among them the most gifted, will be given, or will opt for, fewer hours than has been the case until now.

The national curricula prescribe only the number of hours that should be offered, and the objectives that should be aimed at. The distribution of time within the week and the school year is for the school to decide, both at comprehensive school and at upper secondary level. The National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) is responsible for the production of curricula and national tests, following instructions from the Department of Education. Local boards and, in practice, school principals decide on matters such as what languages to offer, when to start studying different languages, how to

distribute hours, and timetabling, while the teachers choose textbooks and other materials. A number of upper secondary schools are experimenting with 'bilingual education' – the teaching of certain subjects in the medium of English. The use of English course materials in different subjects is also increasing.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Objectives and criteria for grading are laid down in the national curricula, referred to as *Lpo 94* and *Lpf 94* respectively. Very little is said in the curricula about the content or the methods to be used by the individual teacher. These things can be incorporated, however, in the local syllabuses, produced at each school by teachers. A large variety of textbooks is available and teachers choose which ones to adopt, sometimes in cooperation with the students. Other materials, such as newspapers and magazines, radio and TV programmes are used as complements to, or instead of, textbooks. An increasing number of schools are providing computers, either to assist language learning, or to allow communication via the Internet with schools in other countries.

Assessment of students

End of term grades have to be given from the autumn term of Year 8 (age 14) — no formal grades are given in Years 1–7. In the upper secondary schools, where, until now, grades have also been given every term, grades will instead be given at the end of each course, for example English A, comprising 110 hours and perhaps spread over one to two years. In English (as well as in Swedish and mathematics) national tests are produced for Grades 5, 7 and 9 in the comprehensive school, as well as for English A and B in the upper secondary school. The only test teachers are obliged to administer is the one for Grade 9. To help teachers grade students in subjects without national tests, resource banks are being prepared in, for example, French and German as second foreign languages in the upper secondary school. The tests are produced under the auspices of the National Agency for Education. These are all proficiency tests with all four skills included. The very best students can take — and are increasingly encouraged to sit for — various international tests like TOEFL and the Cambridge tests of English.

Teacher qualifications and support

In Grades 1 to 6, English is taught, as are all other subjects, by the class teacher, trained to teach English, but not a language specialist. From Grade 7, foreign languages are taught by specialists. Two new categories of comprehensive school teacher — those trained to teach grades 1–7 and those Grades 4–9 respectively — have graduated over the last few years. In the former group, some 25% have been trained to teach English; in the latter group there are also subject specialists, who usually teach two or three subjects only. The Grade 1–7 teachers have what corresponds to half a year

of language study, spread out over a much longer period. Those for the higher levels have studied the target language for at least one year, including a stay in the target language country, but often one-and-a-half years or more, plus a year of didactics and teaching practice in schools. Participation in in-service training is part of a teacher's regular duties (at least eight days a year for different aspects of training). Courses are arranged by regional in-service training bodies, often in cooperation with the British Council, the Goethe Institut, the Alliance Française and other similar agencies.

Links and exchanges

Intercultural awareness and understanding is an important goal of foreign language study in Sweden. It is quite natural, therefore, that language classes quite often correspond with students in the target language country, and exchange visits are sometimes organised, even for fairly young children. Individual study periods of up to a year, especially at high schools or colleges in the US, have been quite popular among Swedish students for many years. Experiments with computer contacts via the Internet are being carried out in some schools at upper secondary level.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

In a small country like Sweden, with a language used by less than 10 million people, the command of one or more foreign languages has always been highly regarded. Good proficiency in English, oral as well as written, for understanding and production, is now considered a necessary requirement for most jobs; German and French have also acquired a renewed importance after Sweden joined the EU. English is on the verge of becoming a second language in areas such as information technology. There has been much talk of a strengthened language programme, but in reality the increase in the numbers of teaching hours is quite limited. For many purposes, for example in higher education and international business, a good command of English, and of one or two other languages, is often expected.

There is an ongoing discussion on a number of language-related issues and policy trends. Should SSL be taught as a language in its own right or should immigrant students be placed in regular Swedish classes as soon as possible? Should society offer teaching throughout school in a hundred or more immigrant languages, or should this be the responsibility of private organisations? Should foreign languages, usually English, be taught from Grade 1 (age 7), or is it more effective, since the total number of hours allocated is the same, to wait until Grade 3 or 4? Should the study of a second foreign language be made compulsory or remain optional? Is it a good idea to let students study one or more subjects through the medium of English, or will this be detrimental to learning the subject or to command of Swedish, or even to attainment in English, if the subjects are taught by teachers who are not language specialists? Is it possible or reasonable to let *all* school students

take the same course, working towards the same goals, and being graded in relation to the same criteria? What are the implications of using test banks to standardise and support teacher assessment? The future is likely to be characterised by efforts to seek answers to these questions.

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SWITZERLAND

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Due to its geographical location between the French, German and Italian language regions of Europe, Switzerland has been a multilingual and multicultural country throughout its historical development. In the Swiss constitution, German, French, Italian and Romansh are recognised as national languages, but only German, French and Italian are also official languages. In addition, two unwritten and somewhat contradictory laws govern language policy: one is the individual freedom of language, and the second is the so-called principle of territoriality, meaning that the official language in an area is the language of the majority in this area (the only possible exceptions being areas with a large, native minority of another language).

The constitutions of individual cantons (states) also determine language policy within their domains of legislation. Most of the 26 cantons are monolingual cantons and their constitutions implicitly or explicitly recognise only one official language, although the four bilingual or trilingual cantons recognise two or three official languages. But at the level of municipalities, even in these bi- or trilingual cantons, in most cases there is only one language recognised as the official language, in accordance with the principle of territoriality.

In the twentieth century and especially since World War II, Switzerland has become a country of immigration. Today about a sixth of the Swiss population are immigrants, most with a mother tongue that is not a Swiss national language (e.g. Slavic, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, English, Albanian). Even Italian immigrants mostly live in regions of Switzerland where Italian is not an official language. Many of the immigrant language groups are numerically greater than the native language minority of the Romansh-speaking people. But no special language policy exists at present concerning these immigrant languages, except for certain limited provisions in the school system (described below).

The language used in administrative and legal contexts is the official language as defined by the regulations explained above. So the need to be proficient in another language in administrative and legal contexts exists mainly in the bi- or trilingual cantons and at the level of the federal state. For most jobs in the federal administration, proficiency in two or three national languages is a requirement. Proficiency in foreign languages is also an important qualification for many jobs, for various reasons: the extensive trade and exchanges among regions of Switzerland; Swiss industries are strongly export-oriented; tourism plays an important role in the Swiss economy; and, in business and international relations, English has distinct importance in addition to the national languages of German, French and Italian.

A unique situation exists in the German-speaking part of Switzerland due to the relationship between Swiss German and the German standard language. The mother tongue of the native people in the German-speaking part of Switzerland is one of the dialects of Swiss German. Most Swiss German dialects are so closely related that speakers of different dialects can normally understand one another without problems, but a speaker of Standard German cannot usually understand Swiss German without having learned it in some way. The common language of oral communication in the German-speaking part of Switzerland is Swiss German (except for a few formal occasions). The official language of instruction in schools, on the other hand, is Standard German. So students learn to read and write only in the foreign language, Standard German. Therefore the language of written communication is almost exclusively Standard German.

Second language education

One important consequence of these language policies is that the language of instruction is ruled by the principle of territoriality. Certain decisions by the Federal Court of Justice make it virtually illegal to use as the language of instruction a language other than the official language of the corresponding political area, even in private schools. As a consequence, national migrants tend to be assimilated by the local language majority. Moreover, this principle poses certain problems for current approaches to language instruction such as 'immersion', although some bilingual schools have been established in recent years.

The policy towards internal migration also influences the policy towards immigration from other countries. Immigrant children follow mainstream schools, possibly after spending some time in special introductory classes with an emphasis on learning the language of instruction of the area. Under certain conditions, immigrant children may also follow lessons on their mother tongue and on the culture and history of their country of origin. In general, the policy of education for immigrant children has changed over the years from the principle of assimilation to the principle of integration and finally to the principle of multicultural education. The immigrant population tends to be concentrated in industrialised areas. As a consequence it is quite usual for schools in these areas to have classes with 40% or more of their students representing several different linguistic minorities.

Foreign language education

Nearly all students in Switzerland are instructed in at least one 'foreign' language. In all cantons, the first 'foreign' language taught to students is another national language. In the German and Italian regions of Switzerland, this is mostly French, and in the French and Romansh regions, it is German. The second 'foreign' language taught is either a third national language or English. Depending on the canton and students' academic stream, some students are not instructed in a second 'foreign' language and others are instructed in a third foreign language.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

Although education falls mostly under the jurisdiction of the individual cantons and therefore the educational system differs more or less from canton to canton, average numbers for language programmes can be estimated for the main language regions. In the German part of Switzerland about 90% to 95% of the students are taught French from Grades 5 to 9 (age 11 to 15). In upper secondary school (Grades 10 to 12/13), about 50% are taught French. In Grades 8 and 9, about 70% are taught English. In the upper secondary grades, about 50% continue to learn English. Italian is mostly taught in the upper secondary grades to about 10% of the students.

In the French part of Switzerland, 100% of students in Grades 4 through 9 (age 9 to 15) are taught German. In the upper secondary level (Grades 10 through 12/13), about 50% of the students continue to be taught German. Instruction in English begins for about 70% of the students as a second foreign language in Grade 8. In upper secondary about 60% of the students continue to learn English. About 20% of the students learn Italian in Grades 10 to 13. In the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, almost 100% of the students in Grades 3 through 9 (age 8 to 14) are taught French. In the upper secondary level (Grades 10 through 12/13), about 60% of the students continue with French. From Grades 7 to 9, almost 100% of the students are taught German as a second 'foreign' language. In the upper secondary level, about 60% continue with German. English is mostly taught in some streams of the upper secondary level to about 40% of all students.

The time allocated to language lessons varies greatly from canton to canton and for different streams of schools, making it very difficult to estimate the average time spent learning specific languages. This is especially so as some language courses are mandatory and others optional. Languages are generally taught as subjects, but there are some experimental instances of using a foreign language as a medium of instruction. Apart from the languages taught and learned in mainstream schools, language learning plays a distinct role in further education. About 40% of the adult population follows a further education course each year. The most popular subject is languages — about one-fifth of all further education courses.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

Because education in Switzerland is mainly under the legislation of the cantons, the federal state has practically no influence on language education in compulsory schooling. There exists a national conference of the cantonal ministers of education, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education, which can issue recommendations to the cantons on matters of education. For example, in 1975 it issued a recommendation to begin instruction in the second national language in the fourth or fifth grade of primary schools. Before this, the instruction in the second national language usually began only in lower secondary schools. Twenty years later the vast majority of

cantons have implemented this reform and most other cantons are still in the process of introducing it. The recommendation of 1975 and later recommendations also set down the general aims and the time allotment for instruction in the second national language, stressing the priority of oral communicative competence. Curricula and syllabuses are issued by each canton, mostly in accordance with these recommendations.

In upper secondary education the situation is different. For most vocational schools, the curricula and examination syllabuses are set by the Swiss Federal Office for Industry and Labour. For schools in the academic stream, a regulation enacted commonly by the Swiss Federal Government and the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education sets the principles for the official recognition of these schools and of their leaving certificates. The curricula for schools in the academic stream are none the less issued by each canton. In primary and lower secondary schools, the cantonal or regional authorities decide which textbooks are used. Students receive these textbooks on loan in most cantons. In upper secondary schools, individual teachers, groups of language teachers, or a school administrator decide which textbook is used, and students usually have to buy these for themselves.

Assessment of students

The teaching of a second national language in primary school was introduced under the explicit condition that this subject should have no selective function for relegating or streaming students into lower secondary education. So officially, evaluation of language learning in primary schools may only have a formative function. At the end of lower secondary school, the students receive a diploma in many cantons, based partly on teachers' tests (including those for foreign languages) in classroom contexts. At the end of upper secondary, there are examinations controlled by regional or national boards, although the importance of foreign language assessment in these examinations varies greatly for the different types of vocational or academic schools.

Teacher qualifications and support

In primary schools, there are usually no specialised language teachers, although teachers at this level have relevant professional qualifications. Lower and upper secondary schools have specialised language teachers. In lower secondary schools, about 95% of the language teachers have only professional qualifications, and the remainder have professional and academic qualifications. In upper secondary schools, about 90% of the language teachers have academic and professional qualifications, and about 10% are native speakers of the languages they teach but they do not have formal qualifications; these are teachers mostly in small vocational schools.

Language teachers receive professional support from the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education and from the cantonal departments of education. Teachers in vocational schools also get support from the Swiss Federal Office for Industry and Labour. Various specialised societies and institutions also offer language teachers professional support.

Links and exchanges

Due to the multilingual and multicultural nature of Switzerland, there are numerous opportunities for contact with other language communities. It has been a long tradition in Switzerland for young people to spend a year in another language region of Switzerland. There are also private organisations for organising exchanges or visits to other countries for the purpose of learning a language and getting to know foreign cultures. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education officially encourages exchanges of students, classes and teachers.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Although considerable resources are invested, for politically obvious reasons, in language education in the Swiss school systems, there is a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of language education. This dissatisfaction is partly linked to the special language situation in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. French-speaking and Italian-speaking students learn Standard German in school, a language that is rarely spoken in everyday life in the German part of Switzerland. One proposition to remedy this situation is to add some courses on Swiss German to the language education of the French- and Italian-speaking Swiss students. On the other hand, English is very popular as a foreign language in all parts of Switzerland, and may thus eventually become the common language of the country.

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THAILAND

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

Thailand has only one official language, Standard or Central Thai, which is used for all official communication purposes. The term ‘Thai’ commonly refers to Thai dialects and languages spoken in Thailand, whereas ‘Tai’ refers to the whole family of Tai languages and dialects spoken in Thailand, Laos, the Shan States of Burma, North Vietnam, Southwest and Southeast China, and Assam in India. Within Thailand, there are four regional Thai dialects: Northern Thai (Kam Mueng, Yuan), Northeastern Thai (Isan, Lao), Central Thai (Standard Thai) and Southern Thai (Pak Tai).

Second language education

Standard Thai is the main language of instruction in all Thai schools in the country; it is compulsory for all levels of primary and secondary education, and students are required to take Thai language tests in their university entrance examinations. To better integrate minority language groups into the main stream of Thai society, the Thai government recommends that the Thai language be their major avenue to national integration at all levels of education, fostering national identity and unity. Officially there are no second languages in Thailand. In practice, however, two commonly used foreign languages — Pattani Malay and Chinese (Tae Chiu) — nearly attain the status of second languages in certain parts of the country.

Foreign language education

Demands for the study of modern foreign languages have increased since Thailand’s economic boom of the 1980s, creating a need for individuals who are not only qualified in their chosen area of professional expertise, but who can also communicate with foreign colleagues or customers orally and in writing, with a reasonable degree of fluency. Thus, English has become more than just a tool to gain access to modern technology but the key to professional advancement as well. Recently, several international schools have begun using English as the medium of instruction. The other foreign languages taught in Thailand are, ranging from the most to least popular: Chinese (Mandarin), French, Japanese, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Korean, Arabic, and Vietnamese.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

The structure of Thai education follows a 6-3-3 plan, whereby a six-year primary school is compulsory, followed by a three-year lower secondary and a three-year upper secondary school, meant for those who are bound for specific vocations as well as those who are college-bound. Standard Thai is the most important language in education. In addition to being the medium of instruction in all levels of education, Thai is taught and learnt as a subject: in terms of skills, subject matter, and cultural heritage. The curriculum is normally divided into three streams: language skills, literature, and linguistics, integrating career education with liberal and humanistic education.

According to the 1992 Thai National Scheme of Education, foreign languages are optional from Primary 5 through the upper secondary level. The primary school curriculum offers two elective foreign languages — English and Chinese — but the majority of students select English, and some even begin in Grade 3. English is by far the most popular foreign language in the secondary schools and universities: it is also a compulsory subject in all vocational education.

The allocation of time to languages is generally the same nation-wide. Primary students take five classes of English (in 20-minute periods), whereas lower secondary students take four classes (of 50 minutes per period), and upper secondary students take eight classes (of 50 minutes per period). The ratios of English time and total instruction time are 1:15, 2:15, and 4:15 respectively. The percentage of students taking English rises from 80% in the primary level to 95% in the secondary level.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The foreign language curriculum may be classified in three main categories: language and skills for communication, literature for arts and humanistic values, and linguistics for the scientific study of language. Foreign language education is in three streams: liberal education, humanistic education, and career or utilitarian education. General English and literature courses are in the first and second streams whereas English for Special Purposes courses are in the last stream. English is the most widely used international language for both academic and occupational purposes.

Schools generally adopt commercial textbooks as teaching materials, mostly those approved by the Ministry of Education. Some supplementary materials are teacher-made. Recently, self-study materials have been provided in the language learning resource centres throughout the country. Audio and video materials form a widely-used aspect of course materials as well.

Assessment of students

Teachers and schools are responsible for evaluating student progress and achievement so most language assessment is school-based, conducted at mid-term, at the end of the term, and at the teachers' discretion. The purposes of testing, besides determining student achievement, are to improve the teaching and learning process, to maintain records to report on student progress, to obtain remedial information, and to promote students. For primary and secondary education a common grading scale from 0 to 4 is used: 0 = remedial — below the set standard (0–49%); 1 = fair — passing minimal requirements (50–59%); 2 = average to quite good (60–69%); 3 = good (70–79%); and 4 = very good (80–100%). The passing grade is 1.

Teacher qualifications and support

Most teachers have Bachelor's degrees and regularly attend in-service training programmes offered either by the Ministry of Education and other governmental and private agencies or by universities and teacher colleges. Many language teachers have been supported by such regional and international bodies to be trained overseas at the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre in Singapore, the British Council, Australia's AIDAB, and the Canadian International Development Agency.

Links and exchanges

Thai students have been involved in various programmes of exchange, such as the Japanese Youth Boat programmes, the American Field Service, and homestays in Canada and Australia. Teachers also engage in educational enrichment programmes offered through the embassies of nations such as the USA and France to broaden their language and teaching experiences in the target-language countries.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Thailand is experiencing a rapid increase in the use of English. English classes are offered at a growing number of private institutions outside the public educational system as students feel that their English skills are insufficient for competing in the university entrance examinations or for employment. Telecommunications have increased the use of English in homes across the countries, as witnessed by the popularity of CNN News and IBC entertainment and information channels, both in the mother tongue and in English. At the same time, Thailand's role in Indochina has become increasingly more important with the democratisation of the political systems in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and possibly Myanmar, and Thai businessmen and academics have been participating in the affairs of these neighbouring

countries by serving as business investors, partners, and advisers. At present English is used as the medium of communication in most of these situations, but there is a growing perception that knowledge of the languages of these neighbours may be crucial in enhancing better cross-cultural understanding, a perception that may have a future effect on policies for language education in Thailand.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

LANGUAGE POLICY

Languages in society

There is no reference to language in either the Declaration of Independence (1776) or the United States Constitution (1789), the two foundation documents of the nation, reflecting an ideological acceptance of languages other than English in the early years of the country's history. None the less, English rapidly became the language used in all aspects of American government, education, commerce, and daily life. Today, English plays an all-pervasive role throughout the society. Although English has no official status on a national level, in recent years several proposals have been made to amend the Constitution to name English as the official language. On the State level, five of the 50 States make reference to language in their constitutions or amendments thereto: Colorado, Florida and Nebraska name English as the official language; Hawaii names English and native Hawaiian as official languages; and New Mexico names English and Spanish as official languages. An additional 17 States have resolutions or statutes declaring English the official language. Alternatively, three States have passed resolutions in favour of English Plus, a philosophy which acknowledges the importance of English proficiency, but also advocates the preservation of other languages and cultures.

According to the 1990 census, about 31 million, or 13% of persons five years or older, spoke a language other than English at home. This percentage is increasing rapidly. These languages, variously called 'minority', 'heritage', 'ethnic' or 'native', including the Native American languages, usually play roles limited to home, church, community or tribe. The exception is Spanish, which is widely used in Florida and the Southwest, and whose speakers have developed a degree of political power. Spanish is spoken by almost 8% of the population five years or older, or over half of the non-English-speaking population. Other languages with over a million speakers are French, German, Italian and Chinese. Languages with over 500,000 speakers are Tagalog, Polish, and Korean.

Second language education

In all States, English is *de facto* the medium of instruction. However, federal legislation and court interpretations of that legislation encourage the giving of federal monies to programs (State or local) which provide all students with equal opportunity for education. In many cases, this equal opportunity includes offering access to bilingual education, i.e. the use of a language other than English as the medium of instruction to help minority students master subject matter skills while learning English. Most bilingual education programmes are Spanish/English. There are often not sufficient numbers in

a school or district of children speaking a single language other than English to make bilingual education programmes feasible in that language. In such cases, second language education is accomplished via English as a Second Language (ESL) programmes. In these programmes, children of other language backgrounds whose English is not sufficient to allow them success in regular English-medium classrooms are grouped together in ESL classes, and sometimes ESL/content classes, until they are ready and able to benefit from regular classroom instruction in English.

Responsibility for maintaining the home/community language is in most cases taken on by the community. There are hundreds of mother tongue ethnic classes and schools which teach the community's language and culture to children and adults. These privately funded schools aim primarily to maintain the group's language and culture. They often meet only one day a week, on Saturday or Sunday, and are supported by community or church groups.

Foreign language education

There is no official federal policy on the teaching of foreign languages, a reflection of the fact that responsibility for education is in the hands of the individual States. However, federal legislation which offers monies to States and local educational agencies for teaching and study of foreign languages encourages States to place more emphasis on foreign language teaching than they might if such funding were not available.

Relatively few primary schools offer foreign language education. All 50 States include foreign languages in their secondary school curricula, though no States include foreign language study as a requirement for graduation. Forty States have laws requiring that public school students have at least two years of foreign language study available to them, usually on the secondary level. Ten States have laws which require that college-bound or honours secondary school students study a foreign language.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of language education

The US educational system is decentralised, with responsibility for education firmly placed in the hands of the individual states. The usual pattern of foreign language study is that a student interested in studying a foreign language (about half of the total secondary school population) will do so during the ninth and tenth grades, which are the first and second years of secondary school. The language most frequently offered is Spanish, which is studied by 4.5% of primary students (age 6 to 12), 17% of middle school students (age 13 to 14), and 25% of secondary school students (age 13 to 14). French and German are also studied in primary schools (by 1.5% and 0.2% of students

respectively), middle schools (by 5.9% and 1.2% of students respectively), and secondary schools (by 10.5% and 3.3% of students respectively). Russian, Italian, and Japanese are the next most frequently taught languages.

In the larger schools, interested students can go on to third and fourth years of study on the secondary level, or switch to another language. Language classes at the middle and secondary levels are usually from 45 to 50 minutes in duration, five days per week, representing about 14 to 16% of the classroom time per week. On the primary (and occasionally continued on the middle) school level, some schools and districts offer language immersion programmes, in which the foreign language is the medium of instruction for part or all of the school day. About half of these immersion programmes are two-way, in which the student population is composed of native speakers of both the languages (e.g. of English and of Spanish or another language) and the curricula are taught in both languages.

Language study is required for entrance by about 25% of the post-secondary institutions in the United States. About 58% of post-secondary institutions include language study as a requirement for graduation in some or all of their degree programmes; and about 42% have no language requirements. Overall, about 10% of American college or university students study foreign languages.

Curriculum, syllabus and materials

The choice of curricula, syllabuses and materials is, like other aspects of education, in the hands of the States, but in practice choices are frequently made at the individual school or district level. In a few States there are State-wide commissions or adoption committees that draw up lists of texts from which teachers are expected to choose. A wide range of materials is available for foreign language study, and the choice of textbook tends to determine the curriculum and syllabus. Language students are usually equipped with a textbook and ancillary materials for personal use, gaining access to additional materials through their schools' libraries or media centres. Major textbook companies publish attractive, multi-volume, multi-media materials to teach the popular languages, and they go to great lengths to ensure that these texts are adopted or appear on State-recommended lists of texts. In addition, there are various textbook series available which have been developed in countries where the language is spoken. In general, foreign language textbooks used in the United States emphasise listening and speaking skills, and include study of the cultures in which the language is spoken. The extent to which these materials include reading and writing skills, or overt presentations of grammar, varies widely from text to text and language to language.

Assessment of students

Although most States are one by one developing systems of State-wide objective testing of student achievement, and although in many States requirements for graduation from secondary school include adequate performance on these tests, only one State (Pennsylvania) is implementing a plan to include testing of foreign language achievement. Student performance

in language classes is usually assessed by in-class testing, usually with instruments designed by the teacher. There are, however, two country-wide programs of standardised language tests which are part of the process of college admissions and placement: the College Level Examination Program tests of French, German and Spanish, and the Scholastic Aptitude Test II in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Modern Hebrew, and Spanish. These tests are voluntary on the part of students who want to demonstrate their achievement. Their scores are forwarded to the colleges or universities to which they are applying for entrance; high scores can enhance their chances for acceptance, or can exempt them from one or two years of basic study of the language on the tertiary level. Some secondary schools use the Proficiency Guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in assessing foreign language proficiency. The key component of the ACTFL assessments is the Oral Proficiency Interview, a face-to-face speaking test administered by trained interviewers. Standardised listening and reading proficiency tests based on the ACTFL guidelines have appeared in several languages.

Teacher qualifications and support

All teachers in US public schools are required by law to be certified, holding both academic (foreign language subject matter speciality) and professional (pedagogical) qualifications. Because certification, licensure and credentialing is done on a State by State basis, there is a great variety of requirements across the country. In general, the profession feels that foreign language pedagogy programmes on the undergraduate level should include more attention to the future teachers' development of competence in the language. Recent trends, such as the elimination of the education major for secondary teachers in 22 States, allow potential teachers to take more language classes. Many foreign language teachers are native speakers of the languages they are teaching: 40% of the Spanish teachers, for example; 20% of the German teachers; and 15% of the French teachers.

Language teachers are supported in a variety of ways. State foreign language associations provide in-service training, and there is federal government money to support such activities as summer immersion institutes, study abroad programmes, and methodology workshops. In addition, there are teachers' associations for each language, which provide a variety of support services to their members, and a number of national organisations that hold conferences, disseminate materials and newsletters, provide teacher training and engage in other activities for the benefit of foreign language teachers.

Links and exchanges

The relative geographical isolation of the United States makes foreign travel expensive, and opportunities for study abroad and exchanges are correspondingly limited; in 1991, for example, there were 70,000 students in the Institute for International Education's Study Abroad Program. Extensive data are not kept on students' travel abroad, but it is clear that the majority of students visit Spanish-speaking countries.

TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

In keeping with a national trend toward standards-based educational reform in the United States, the federally funded Project to Develop National Standards in Foreign Language Education is developing national standards and descriptors for language teaching and learning in kindergarten through Grade 12, with benchmarks for Grades 4, 8, and 12. Currently, standards are being developed around five goals: to communicate in languages other than English; to gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures; to connect with other disciplines and acquire information; to develop insight into one's own language and culture; and to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. When completed, the project will offer the standards to State and local educational agencies for their voluntary acceptance in whole or in part. At all levels, there is movement away from grammar-based or audio-lingual approaches towards communicative or proficiency-based approaches. There has been a decided increase in the numbers of elementary schools offering language classes over the last 15 years. The National Standards Project is also strongly recommending language programmes that start early in primary school and continue through middle and secondary school.

A shortage of foreign language teachers exists throughout the country. The current teaching force is ageing, and the number of teachers entering the field does not equal the demand, especially for Spanish. This problem is being addressed in a number of ways, usually by allowing qualified (but not necessarily certified) teachers to teach while they are acquiring certification. Another approach utilises distance learning (e.g., satellite and computer programs), which is becoming popular in rural areas and in the teaching of less commonly taught languages such as Japanese. A third approach is to limit the number of languages available to students in a particular school, or to increase the size of language classes. Another approach is to increase recruitment efforts such as loan forgiveness programmes, tuition reimbursement and scholarships to attract college and university students to the language teaching professions, and to recruit teachers from abroad.

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Information has been gathered as well from: American Association of Teachers of German, American Association of Teachers of French, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, The Language Center, and The Japan Foundation

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APPENDIX

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH IN SCHOOLS

Starting Age, Take-up and Allocation of Time

In the first phase of the IEA Language Education Study, information was collected about languages taught as a subject in schools, languages taught as medium of instruction, and the time allocated to the teaching of languages in relation to time allocated to all school subjects. Some of this information appears in the individual national profiles. This appendix presents tables with information on languages taught as a subject. They provide an opportunity to compare key data on the teaching of English, French, German and Spanish across countries. Each table indicates:

- ◆ the age at which the majority of students at school started learning the language
- ◆ the total number of years which may be devoted to the study of the language from the starting age to the end of upper secondary
- ◆ the percentage of students in each of two populations — final year of compulsory schooling (A) and final year of upper secondary (B) — studying the language
- ◆ the modal number of minutes allocated to study of the language for each of the two populations A and B
- ◆ the modal age for each of populations A and B.

Many of the data presented in the tables have been obtained from official statistics, but some rely on well-informed estimates, particularly in countries where there are sub-systems of education or variation as a result of local decision-making. It should also be noted that the figures provided do not reflect fully the complex arrangements which often exist for the provision and organisation of first, second and third foreign languages taught in schools. For example, current reforms in some European countries have resulted in significant numbers of students starting language learning at a lower age than that indicated for the majority. The details of these arrangements can be found in the individual national profiles; the tables provide, in addition, a sound basis for comparing in broad terms the position of English, French, German and Spanish in many different countries.

Table A.1 English: starting age, take-up and allocation of time

COUNTRY			POPULATION A			POPULATION B		
	Starting age	Total years	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes
Austria	8	11	15	90	138	18	52	121
Cyprus	9	9	15	100	150	18	100	135
Czech Republic	10	9	14	42	135	19	91	135
Denmark	10	9	15	99	135	19	100	225
England	-	-	16	-	-	18	-	-
Finland (F)	9	10	15	99	90	18	98	150
Finland (Swed)	9	10	15	99	90	18	100	150
France	10	9	16	96	180	19	97	180
Hong Kong	6	13	14	6†	320	18	6†	320
Hungary	10	7	15	71	225	17	38	225
Iran	12	6	14	100	200	18	100	180
Israel	9	9	16	100	180	18	100	180
Italy	8	11	14	83	180	18	65	180
Latvia	9	10	15	71	120	18	80	120
Netherlands	10	8	15	92	150	18	92	150
Norway	10	9	15	100	135	19	45	225
Philippines	7	10	13	100	400	16	100	200
Portugal	10	8	15	98	150	17	21	150
Russian Federation	10	7	15	55	120	17	55	120
Slovenia	11	8	15	82	135	19	80	135
South Africa	6	12	*	77	**	18	75	**
Spain	11	7	15	91	180	17	92	165
Sweden	10	9	15	100	120	18	76	120
Switzerland (Fr)	14	6	16	70	**	19	50	**
Switzerland (Ger)	14	5	16	70	**	19	50	**
Switzerland (Ital)	13	6	16	25	**	19	40	**
Thailand	10	8	13	95	200	17	95	400
USA	-	-	16	-	-	17	-	-

* age varies

† English is mostly taught as medium of instruction

** not known

Table A.2 French: starting age, take-up and allocation of time

COUNTRY			POPULATION A			POPULATION B		
	Starting age	Total years	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes
Austria	8	12	15	23	128	18	24	125
Cyprus	12	6	15	100	90	18	100	90
Czech Republic	15	4	14	4	135	19	4	135
Denmark	13	6	15	5	180	19	16	225
England	11	7	16	61	130	18	15	180
Finland (F)	14	5	15	8	135	18	18	150
Finland (Swed)	14	5	15	14	135	18	31	150
France	-	-	16	-	-	19	-	-
Hong Kong	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	-
Hungary	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Iran	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	270
Israel	13	6	16	11	135	18	3	180
Italy	8	11	14	32	180	18	27	180
Latvia	-	-	15	-	-	18	-	-
Netherlands	12	6	15	38	150	18	18	150
Norway	14	5	15	10	90	18	28	255
Philippines	-	-	13	-	-	16	-	-
Portugal	10	8	15	85	150	17	7	150
Russian Federation	10	7	15	9	120	17	8	120
Slovenia	-	-	15	-	-	19	3	135
South Africa	-	-	*	-	-	18	-	-
Spain	11	7	15	8	180	17	8	165
Sweden	13	6	15	13	160	18	14	120
Switzerland (Fr)	-	-	16	-	-	19	-	-
Switzerland (Ger)	11	9	16	75	**	19	45	**
Switzerland (Ital)	8	11	16	100	**	19	50	**
Thailand	-	-	13	-	-	17	-	-
USA	14	4	16	-	225	17	11	225

* age varies

** not known

Table A.3 German: starting age, take-up and allocation of time

COUNTRY			POPULATION A			POPULATION B		
	Starting age	Total years	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes
Austria	-	-	15	-	-	18	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Czech Republic	10	9	14	55	135	19	77	135
Denmark	13	6	15	86	180	19	18	225
England	11	7	16	23	130	18	6	180
Finland (F)	14	5	15	32	135	18	50	150
Finland (Swed)	14	5	15	48	135	18	62	150
France	10	8	16	33	180	19	30	180
Hong Kong	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	-
Hungary	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Iran	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	-
Israel	-	-	16	-	-	18	-	-
Italy	8	11	14	5	180	18	7	180
Latvia	9	10	15	28	120	18	56	120
Netherlands	13	5	15	58	150	18	36	150
Norway	14	5	15	43	90	18	28	255
Philippines	-	-	13	-	-	16	-	-
Portugal	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Russian Federation	10	7	15	36	120	17	37	120
Slovenia	11	8	15	18	135	19	50	135
South Africa	-	-	*	-	-	18	-	-
Spain	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Sweden	13	6	15	38	160	18	32	120
Switzerland (Fr)	9	10	16	100	**	19	45	**
Switzerland (Ger)	-	-	16	-	-	19	-	-
Switzerland (Ital)	12	7	16	100	**	19	65	**
Thailand	-	-	13	-	-	17	-	-
USA	14	4	16	-	225	17	3	225

* age varies

** not known

Table A.4 Spanish: starting age, take-up and allocation of time

COUNTRY			POPULATION A			POPULATION B		
	Starting age	Total years	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes	Age	Per cent students	Modal no. of minutes
Austria	-	-	15	-	-	18	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Czech Republic	-	-	14	-	-	19	-	-
Denmark	16	3	15	-	-	19	14	225
England	11	7	16	7	130	18	6	180
Finland (F)	-	-	15	-	-	18	-	-
Finland (Swed)	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-
France	13	5	16	46	180	19	33	180
Hong Kong	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	-
Hungary	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Iran	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	-
Israel	-	-	16	-	-	18	-	-
Italy	-	-	14	-	-	18	-	-
Latvia	-	-	15	-	-	18	-	-
Netherlands	-	-	15	-	-	18	-	-
Norway	-	-	15	-	-	19	-	-
Philippines	-	-	13	-	-	16	-	-
Portugal	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Russian Federation	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Africa	-	-	*	-	-	18	-	-
Spain	-	-	15	-	-	17	-	-
Sweden	13	6	15	2	160	18	11	120
Switzerland (Fr)	-	-	16	-	-	19	-	-
Switzerland (Ger)	-	-	16	-	-	19	-	-
Switzerland (Ital)	-	-	16	-	-	19	-	-
Thailand	-	-	13	-	-	17	-	-
USA	114	4	16	17	225	17	25	225

* age varies

Note: Many more countries than are represented here have some teaching of Spanish. Figures were provided only if 5% or more of population A or B were learning the language.



PROFILES OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN 25 COUNTRIES

Overview of phase 1 of the IEA Language Education Study

This volume draws on information gathered in 1995, under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), to provide an authoritative and up-to-date reference work on language policies and foreign and second language education in school systems. A profile for each country is presented in summary form, including a brief description of:

- languages in society and national policies
- organisation of language teaching in schools
- curriculum and assessment
- teacher qualifications and support
- resources for language teaching and learning
- current developments and innovative trends

The countries represented are: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iran, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, USA.

The profiles will be of interest to educators, policy-makers, government agencies, university students and researchers and those in commerce and industry wishing to obtain an international overview of the state of language teaching and learning.

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