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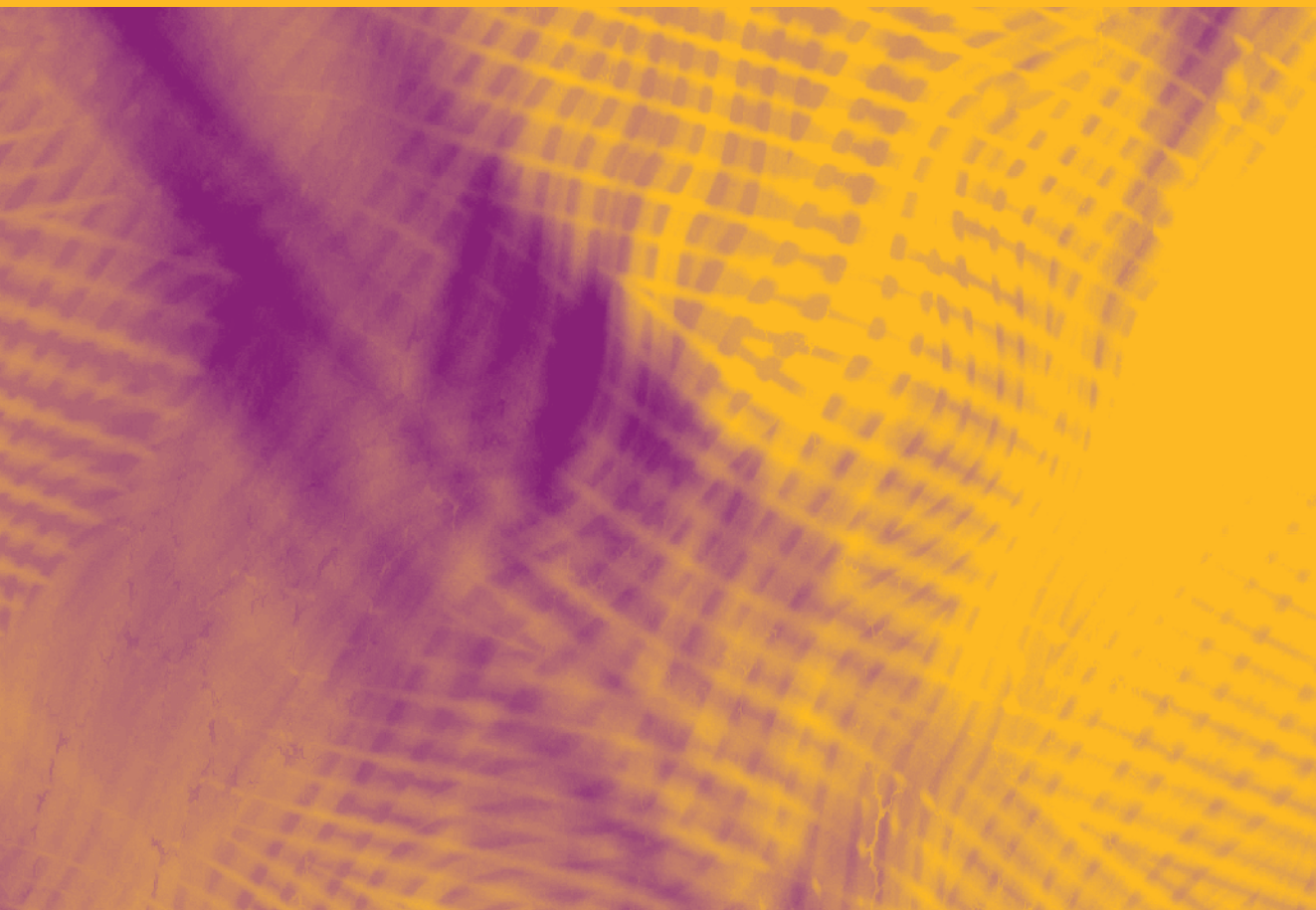
Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-12 years)

Pádraig Ó Duibhir and Jim Cummins.



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Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-12 years)

Commissioned research report

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Reading Note

Readers should note that this report is one of three research papers published in 2012 in support of the development of a new primary language curriculum, as Nos. 14, 15, and 16 in the NCCA's Research Report Series (ISSN 1649-3362):

- **Oral Language in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-8 years)** Drs. Gerry Shiel, Áine Cregan, Anne McGough and Peter Archer
- **Literacy in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-8 years)** Drs. Eithne Kennedy, Elizabeth Dunphy, Bernadette Dwyer, Geraldine Hayes, Thérèse McPhillips, Jackie Marsh, Maura O'Connor and Gerry Shiel
- **Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum for Primary Schools (3-12 years)** Dr. Pádraig Ó Duibhir and Prof. Jim Cummins

In recognition of the many important links between their subject matter, especially between the Oral Language and Literacy papers, a measure of cross-referencing has been brought to the reports. This has been achieved through:

- a cross-referencing table, included as Appendix C, showing where corresponding or related material appears in the companion report/s
- the inclusion of embedded hyperlinks in the Portable Document Format (PDF) of the reports.

The three reports are also published in Portable Document Format (PDF) on the NCCA website at: http://www.ncca.ie along with a series of podcasts of key messages from the reports.

Acronyms and words in the Irish language

ALM	Audio-lingual method
BICS	Basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
DES	Department of Education and Skills (previously Department of Education and Science)
EAL	English as an additional language
ELA	English language arts
ELP	European Language Portfolio
Gaeilge	Irish language
Gaeltacht	Irish-speaking community
IILT	Integrate Ireland Language and Training
ILC	Integrated language curriculum
IM	Irish-medium
L1, L2, L3	First language, second language, third language (of learner)
LGL	Gaelic learners (as L2 in Scotland)
MFL	Modern foreign language
MLAN	Modern languages
MLPSI	Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative
Naíonra	Irish-medium playgroup
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
PSC	Primary School Curriculum
SLA	Second language acquisition
SLO	Specific learning outcome

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) prioritised the curriculum for language as an area for development in 2010. Language is one of seven areas in the Primary School Curriculum (PSC). It encompasses the teaching of English and *Gaeilge* 'Irish' which are currently taught in three different school contexts: English-medium schools, *Gaeltacht* schools and all-Irish schools. There is one curriculum for English and there are two curricula for Gaeilge. The same English curriculum is taught regardless of school context. Gaeilge is taught as a second language (L2) in English-medium schools. In the case of Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools, Gaeilge is considered to be the first language (L1) of the school and is taught on that basis.

The PSC was developed in 1999 within a bilingual framework. The situation in schools has changed radically since then with the addition of modern languages in fifth and sixth classes in 550 primary schools and the advent of English as an additional language (EAL) learners in schools. These contextual differences lead to a complex multilingual environment in which to teach languages. This environment requires a flexible approach to curriculum which does not exist at present where English, Gaeilge and modern languages are compartmentalised and little emphasis is placed on encouraging children to transfer skills acquired in one language to the other languages. Neither is there formal recognition of the prior language skills of EAL learners. In order to address this situation the NCCA issued a request for tenders to examine the feasibility and advisability of developing an integrated language curriculum for the primary school. We present the case for such a curriculum in this review.

Research questions

The report is structured around the following four key research questions contained in the NCCA request for tenders:

1. How can the idea of an integrated language curriculum be defined?

2. What are the key principles of language learning and development which should underpin a language curriculum for children aged 3 to 12 years?

3. Where is the evidence for it in policy and practice? What are the expected outcomes by 8 years of age for children's learning and development in the different language learning contexts described in the background to this research?

4. What kinds of structures are implied in an integrated curriculum for children's language learning from 3 to 12 years, and how would these structures accommodate the different language learning contexts described in the background to the research?

Theoretical perspectives and research foundations

In examining the rationale for an integrated language curriculum, we distinguish three dimensions of integration that apply to language curricula: (i) integration within the teaching of a specific language, (ii) integration across the curriculum, and (iii) integration across languages. It is the third one of these, integration across languages, which is the focus of our review.

While the theoretical basis and empirical research to support the integration of skills across languages has been in existence since the early 1980s, it is only in recent years that it has been manifested in curriculum design. The underlying theory for this type of pedagogy is derived from the *interdependence hypothesis* which implies that when children develop literacy skills in Irish, English or another language, they are not just learning how to read and write in a particular language. They are also developing a common underlying proficiency that enables the transfer of literacy skills and learning strategies to other languages. We identify four major types of cross-linguistic transfer:

i. transfer of conceptual knowledge

ii. transfer of specific linguistic elements

iii. transfer of phonological awareness

iv. transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies.

There is extensive research evidence to support the view that literacy-related skills and knowledge can be transferred across languages. When teachers encourage this transfer explicitly they make learning more efficient for the learners and reinforce effective learning strategies. Teachers can engage children in cross-linguistic projects such as the production of dual-language texts and partner class exchanges.

Principles of children's language learning

The principles underlying second language teaching and learning have evolved and developed greatly over the past fifty years. The grammar translation method was replaced by the audio-lingual method (ALM) in the 1950's. The ALM in turn fell out of favour when researchers began to investigate other hypotheses such as the importance of language input and output. Much of this work was based on a cognitive approach to language learning where the internal processes in the learner's brain were seen as most influential. This view evolved further with a greater emphasis on the social aspects of language learning influenced by the writings of Vygotsky and others on sociocultural theory. Over time the focus has shifted from course materials, to the individual, to the learning environment to issues of learner identity and learner autonomy. The advent of digital technologies in recent years has provided new ways to enhance the learning environment and caused a further reconceptualisation of the field.

The instructional implications of this research have been synthesised by Ellis (2005) who described the following ten principles for instructed language learning:

Principle 1: Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.

Principle 2: Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning.

Principle 3: Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.

Principle 4: Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.

Principle 5: Instruction needs to take account of the learner's 'built-in syllabus'.

Principle 6: Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.

Principle 7: Successful instructed learning also requires opportunities for output.

Principle 8: The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.

Principle 9: Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.

Principle 10: In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

The implications of these ten principles are that learners acquire the target language as a result of active engagement with the language by means of oral and written activities (both inside and outside the context of the school) that generate personal investment on the part of the learner.

Practical examples of language curriculum integration

The manner in which an integrated language curriculum is being implemented in practical ways in Alberta (Canada), Scotland and Wales provides important insights to inform the present study. In these contexts, largely the same descriptors and categories are used to describe the linguistic skills and outcomes for L1 and L2 and this facilitates teachers in integrating the teaching of skills across languages. Scotland and Wales have a common language curriculum for the first school language, whether it is English or Gàidhlig or Welsh. Children whose native language is Gàidhlig or Welsh are enabled to attain the same learning outcomes in their L1 as their native English-speaking peers. The skills they acquire in the first school language can be transferred to English at a later stage. Such an approach in the revision of the language curricula in Ireland would help to address the specific needs of native Irish speakers. It would also facilitate a total early immersion approach in all-Irish schools. A similar approach could be adopted for Irish L2 and modern languages with L2 outcomes cross-referenced with those of L1.

Structure to facilitate curriculum integration

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) and its companion European Language Portfolio (ELP) (Council of Europe, 2006) provide a potential structure upon which to construct an integrated language curriculum in Irish primary schools. Part of the challenge in designing a suitable structure is to accommodate the variety of

contexts in which languages are learned in Irish primary schools. Rather than trying to write an individual curriculum for each language and the context in which it is taught, we believe that it is more productive to define a language learning pathway that individual learners can traverse at different rates according to their contact and engagement with the language both within the school and outside of it.

The CEFR is defined according to six levels of mastery from A1 to C2 and consists of 'can do' statements that are stated in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These 'can do' statements would need to be sufficiently fine-grained to accommodate early L2 learners who might progress along the pathway at quite a slow pace. It would also need to take into account the fact that young children are only developing literacy skills at that stage.

The ELP consists of: i) a language passport, ii) a language biography, and iii) a dossier, and represents an important tool to facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge across languages. The 'I can' statements of the ELP enable learners to self-assess their progress in the language, to reflect on what they have learned, and to set goals for future language learning. The combination of CEFR and ELP bring teaching, learning and assessment into closer contact and have the potential to facilitate implementation of the prescribed curriculum in a more learner-centred way.

The adaptation of the CEFR and ELP would require small-scale collaborative research projects to identify best practices and to investigate how they might be utilised effectively with young language learners for both L1 and L2. There is, however, considerable experience in Ireland already through the adaptation of these tools for EAL and modern languages in the IILT and MPLSI projects respectively. We believe that the time required for this research would

be rewarded in the longer term with a more satisfactory language learning experience for children.

Conclusions and recommendations

The PSC as currently structured is not suitable to meet the needs of diverse learners in different contexts. An integrated language curriculum would enable teachers to achieve learning efficiencies by explicitly drawing children's attention to similarities and differences between their languages.

The defining features of the current PSC are very close to the principles that we believe should underpin an integrated language curriculum. More attention may need to be paid to the role of literacy in supporting language development in L2 contexts in particular. The needs of L1 and L2 learners require more explicit differentiation in a revised language curriculum.

Integrated language curricula are being implemented in other countries and there are models of good practice upon which to draw. We recommend that there should be one L1 curriculum which children would follow in English or Irish depending on school context and child background. The L1 curriculum should be cross-referenced with the L2 and modern language curricula and use largely the same structures and descriptors. The L2 curriculum may require the addition of objectives for pronunciation/phonology that might not be relevant to teaching the L1. This would enable teachers to explicitly promote transfer of skills and knowledge from L1 to L2. Learning outcomes should be stated by level, as opposed to by class, thereby providing a flexible structure to cater for different learning paths and contexts.

The CEFR and ELP represent structures and associated tools around which an integrated language curriculum could potentially be

organised. These tools would need to be adapted to meet the needs of young learners. Learners would traverse a learner-centred language pathway with explicit support from teachers to transfer skills across languages as they go. We recommend that small-scale research projects be carried out to adapt the CEFR and ELP to the Irish primary school context and to assess the supports that teachers would require in order to use these tools effectively.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2011, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) commissioned a research study to inform the development of the language curriculum for Irish primary schools. In developing a new language curriculum, the NCCA stated *we do not intend to compartmentalise children's language learning in terms of their experience with their first language (L1), second language (L2) and modern languages, as is currently the case* (2011a, p. 9). The NCCA sought instead to develop a common curriculum structure that would facilitate the planning of *appropriate language experiences in all languages, for all children including those for whom English is an additional language* (ibid. p. 9). They also note, however, that the *feasibility and … advisability* (ibid. p. 9) of developing a fully integrated language curriculum for Irish primary school has not been made. The general purpose of the current research, then, was to investigate the merits of developing an integrated language curriculum and more specifically to address the following four questions:

1. How can the idea of an integrated language curriculum be defined?

2. What are the key principles of language learning and development which should underpin a language curriculum for children aged 3 to 12 years?

3. Where is the evidence for an integrated language curriculum in policy and practice? What are the expected outcomes by 8 years of age for children's learning and development in the different language learning contexts described in the background to this research?

4. What kinds of structures are implied in an integrated curriculum for children's language learning from 3 to 12 years, and how would these structures accommodate the different language learning contexts described in the background to the research?

We have structured this research review around those four key questions devoting a chapter to each one. We conclude the report with a fifth chapter briefly outlining our conclusions and recommendations. The first chapter defines our understanding of language curriculum integration. We commence by examining the context in which languages are taught in Irish primary schools and the Primary School Curriculum (PSC) as it is currently structured for this purpose. This is followed by an examination of the underlying theory that supports the concept of an integrated language curriculum.

In Chapter 2 we examine the learning principles upon which a primary school curriculum and pedagogy should be based. Following an introduction to the major developments in second language acquisition research in recent decades we describe 10 principles of language learning based on the work of Ellis (2005). We examine each principle in relation to the teaching of Irish and its implications for adults[1] and children in primary schools.

Chapter 3 synthesises the findings of three case studies where we examine language curriculum integration in practice. We describe the structure and design of the language curricula in Alberta, Canada, in Scotland, and in Wales drawing examples of good practice from each context that can help to inform the situation in Ireland. As part of our case studies we present possible learning outcomes for children at different stages throughout primary school. A comprehensive case study on each jurisdiction is presented in Appendix A2.

We examine the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR) and the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) in Chapter 4 as potential tools to assist in structuring revised language curricula in Ireland. We describe the

1 We are conscious that the term teacher does not apply to early childhood settings, nonetheless, we use the terms adult and teacher interchangeably throughout the text.

origins of the CEFR and suggest how it might be adapted for use in Irish primary schools. The ELP is investigated for its potential to facilitate explicit transfer of skills across languages. The experiences of Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) and the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MLPSI) in using the CEFR and ELP are also reported.

We conclude our review in Chapter 5 with our conclusions and recommendations for an integrated language curriculum arising from research and practice. Other relevant material on language curricula, the CEFR and ELP that we gathered in the course of our review is attached in the appendices.

CHAPTER 1:

DEFINING LANGUAGE CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Introduction

In this chapter we address the question of how the idea of an integrated language curriculum can be defined. We commence our review by examining the context in which languages are currently taught in Irish primary schools. This is followed by an analysis of the integrated nature of the PSC.

Language learning in Irish primary schools

Contextual background

The Irish language is recognised in *Bunreacht na hÉireann* (Constitution of Ireland) as the first official language of Ireland with English as a second official language. The position of Irish was reaffirmed in the Government *Statement on the Irish Language* (Government of Ireland, 2006). Among the stated objectives of this document was to continue to teach Irish as an obligatory subject throughout primary and secondary school. A key focus of the subsequent 20-year strategy for the Irish language (Government of Ireland, 2010) was the strengthening of the position of Irish within the education system (ibid. p. 4). Little (2003) addressed the issue of languages in the post-primary curriculum and suggested that Ireland should develop an integrated language curriculum. The Council of Europe (2008) took up this theme in its profile of language education policy in Ireland proposing an integrated approach to language teaching across languages where language awareness might be fostered using curriculum time to the best advantage (ibid. p. 9).

The *Primary School Curriculum* (PSC) (Department of Education and Science, 1999b) recognises the different contexts in which children learn language in Irish primary schools: *Language in the curriculum comprises Gaeilge and English and is taught in three different school contexts* (p. 43). Regardless of context all children commence school with competence in one or more languages. What differentiates them in

the majority of cases from the point of view of language is their contact and exposure to Irish inside and outside of school. If we consider the responses gathered by Harris et al. (2006) in table 1.1 as being representative of the larger body of primary schools we see that less than one third (30.7%) of children in Gaeltacht schools experience Irish as their principal home language. This figure decreases to 6.3% in the case of all-Irish school children and 1.1% in the case of English-medium schools where Irish in taught as a second language.

Table 1.1: Percentage of parents (respondent) in three populations of schools according to the frequency with which they speak Irish to their child

Parent speaks Irish to child	Ordinary	All-Irish	Gaeltacht
Always/Very often	1.1%	6.3%	30.7%
Often/Occasionally	22.8%	59.0%	40.2%
Seldom/Never	75.4%	33.9%	28.5%
Missing	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%

N Ordinary = 2744, N All-Irish = 609, N Gaeltacht = 575. (Adapted from Harris et al., 2006 p. 139 with categories collapsed.)

Exposure to Irish within the school differs also as we can see in table 1.2. While officially the all-Irish and Gaeltacht context appear similar from a school language point of view, we know from the Mac Donnacha et al. (2006) study that many Gaeltacht schools teach primarily through the medium of English.

Table 1.2: Exposure to Irish and English within the school

	English-medium school	All-Irish school	Gaeltacht school
Medium of instruction	English	Irish	Irish*
Time allocation for second school language	3.5 hrs of Irish per week**	3.5 hrs of English per week	3.5 hrs of English per week

* Mac Donnacha et al. (2005, p. 8) found that in weaker Gaeltacht areas approximately 50% of instruction was primarily through the medium of English.

** Many teachers use some Irish as the medium of instruction or use it informally outside the regular Irish lesson (Harris et al., 2006).

These contextual differences provide a complex environment in which to teach language in the primary school. This context has become even more complex in the past decade with the rapid increase in the number of children of immigrants who learn English an as additional language (EAL) in school. It was estimated in 2007 that approximately 7.5% of children in Irish primary schools were EAL learners (Smyth, Darmody, McGinnity, & Byrne, 2009). Data gathered in a 2009 study would indicate that 8.6% of second class children and 5.4% of sixth class children speak a language other than English or Irish most frequently at home (Clerkin & Gilleece, 2010). This would approximate to an average of 7% of children who mostly speak a language other than Irish or English at home. There are also children in 5th and 6th classes in 550 primary schools learning a modern language that could be included (Source www.mlpsi.ie)[1]. It is clear then that the context for language learning in Irish primary schools has become multilingual rather than bilingual.

This multilingual context can be seen in table 1.3 where we represent the considerable difference and variation within each situation. Row 3 shows the situation in English medium schools where English is taught as an L1 and as an additional language, and Irish is taught as an L2. In Gaeltacht schools in row 4, English is taught as an L1 to some children, as an L2 to others and as an additional language to a minority of children. Irish is taught as an L1 to native speakers and as an L2 and medium of instruction to other children. In all-Irish schools in row 5, we see that English is taught as an L1 and as an additional language while Irish is taught as an L1 to a minority of children and as an L2 and medium of instruction to the majority of children.

1 The decision by the Minister for Finance in the 2011 Budget to abolish the MPLSI at the end of 2011 and subsequent reprieve until summer 2012 has placed the future of this initiative in primary schools in some doubt.

Table 1.3: Difference and variation across languages and schools

	English			Irish			Modern language
	L1	L2 – subject only	Additional language – medium of instruction	L1	L2 – subject only	L2 – medium of instruction	L2 – subject only
English-medium school	•		•		•		•
Gaeltacht school	•	•		•		•	•
All-Irish school	•	•		•		•	•

Table 1.3 presents a very complex picture of language learning contexts. In an attempt to simplify the situation somewhat the Council of Europe (2008, p. 44) mapped three roughly comparable groups: i) Irish (Gaeltacht) L1 and English L1; ii) Irish L2 in all-Irish schools and English as an additional language (EAL) in English-medium schools where the L2 is the medium of instruction; and iii) Irish L2 in English-medium schools and modern languages. We return to these groupings at a later point in our report after we examine practice in other jurisdictions.

The integrated nature of the Primary School Curriculum

The PSC is conceptualised as providing an *integrated learning experience for children* (DES, 1999, p. 11). It does so on the understanding that *integration gives children's learning a broader and richer perspective, emphasises the interconnectedness of knowledge and ideas and reinforces the learning process* (DES, 1999 p. 16). It follows, in our opinion, that this conceptualisation applies to language learning also. In considering an integrated language curriculum, we can distinguish three dimensions of integration that apply to language curricula: (i) integration within

the teaching of a specific language, (ii) integration across the curriculum, and (iii) integration across languages.

Integration within a specific language, defined as linkage, is acknowledged in the PSC where language learning is seen as an integrated process with the different language skills of oral language, reading and writing being *inseparable* (DES, 1999 p. 45). What this means in practical terms is that reading or listening to a written story is expanding the target language input that children are receiving, which, in turn, develops the foundation for greater oral fluency in the language. Similarly, writing for authentic purposes in the target language, together with feedback from the teacher, helps to consolidate children's awareness of how components of the language work together. This metalinguistic awareness, in turn, infuses itself throughout children's performance in other spheres of language use (reading, listening, speaking).

A possible framework for integrating language across the curriculum is a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach which is dealt with comprehensively in the Harris and Ó Duibhir (2011) research synthesis for the NCCA. The PSC fails to deal adequately with the concept of integration across languages. While acknowledging other forms of integration no reference is made, for example, to the acquisition of literacy skills in L1 that might transfer to L2. Similarly, there is no recognition given to the prior learning experiences of native Irish speakers as they engage with the curriculum for English. The PSC compartmentalises languages according to L1, L2 and modern languages (NCCA, 2011) without a common structure that would enable children to experience language learning in a more holistic way and that would enable teachers to plan learning experiences more effectively drawing on children's prior learning. It also fails to address the needs of EAL learners as the PSC pre-dated the influx of immigrant children. We

will concentrate in this review on integration across languages, defining our understanding of integration across languages and its implications for instruction in the next section.

Summary

Many changes have taken place in Irish primary schools since the PSC was introduced in 1999, not least in the area of language. The bilingual context in which Irish and English were taught has evolved into a multilingual one, with the presence of EAL learners in many schools and the addition of modern languages in fifth and sixth classes in 550 primary schools. The compartmentalised nature of the language curricula within the PSC is not suitable to meet the diverse learning needs of children in primary school. While the PSC recognises the value and importance of integration across subjects, its current structure does not facilitate integration across languages.

Integration across languages: theory and research

Children learn a second language in much the same way as they learn their first language through interacting with other people in their environment to satisfy a communicative need. The fact that children can speak a language already has an effect on their learning of a subsequent language (Pinter, 2011). Surface features of the first language L1 such as pronunciation and syntax can interfere with L2 production. Research has shown, however, that the potential benefits of transferring skills across languages outweigh those of interference. English and Irish share many similarities in terms of orthography and phonemes. In the process of learning Irish (or English) as an L2, children can be given opportunities to reflect on the similarities and differences between the languages and to gain a greater understanding of the structure of their L1. In this way languages are

taught *partly in relation to one another* (Little, 2003, p. 6). Although the theoretical basis and empirical research supporting an instructional focus on integration across languages have been available for more than 30 years, as documented below, it is only in recent years that curriculum planners have begun to explore what integration across languages might mean in actual classroom practice.

The theoretical underpinning for integration across languages derives from two inter-related sets of well-established data in the literature on bilingualism and bilingual education. The first set of data concerns the enhancement of certain aspects of children's cognitive and linguistic functioning as a result of the acquisition of two linguistic systems (see Cummins, 2001, for a review). In particular, research has consistently pointed to the potential for enhancement of children's metalinguistic awareness as a result of continued development of proficiency in two or more languages during the primary school years (e.g. Bialystok, 1987; Cummins, 1978; Mohanty, 1994). Metalinguistic awareness in this context refers to children's ability to focus on language as an object of thought and, in the case of bilinguals, to analyse each language in relation to the other. In their evaluation of the initial French immersion programme in Canada, Lambert and Tucker (1972) noted that children engaged in a form of contrastive linguistics where they compared aspects of French and English, despite the fact that the two languages were kept separate for instructional purposes. Considerable subsequent research in many different sociolinguistic and educational contexts (including the Irish context [Cummins, 1978]) has documented convincingly that processing two languages over an extended period of time can promote the development of metalinguistic awareness.

The major implication for curriculum and instruction is that children who are in the process of developing bilingual skills are likely to benefit from systematic encouragement by the teacher to focus on

language and develop their awareness of how language can be used effectively for communicative purposes (both oral and written). If children spontaneously tend to compare and contrast their two languages, then they are likely to engage in this process more effectively with guidance from the teacher.

The second set of data concerns the consistent finding that literacy-related aspects of children's languages (e.g. reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge) show strong cross-lingual relationships. This research has highlighted the transfer of conceptual knowledge, specific linguistic elements, and learning strategies from one language to another as the acquisition of two (or more) languages proceeds over time. Again, these results have been reported across a wide range of sociolinguistic and educational contexts (see Cummins, 2001, for a review).

From an instructional perspective, this implies that the learning process can be rendered more efficient if teachers devote some instructional time to teaching for transfer across languages rather than viewing each language in isolation. The theoretical basis for this instructional approach derives from the *interdependence hypothesis* which was formally expressed as follows:

> To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly. (Cummins, 1981, p. 29.)

In concrete terms, what this principle means is that in an all-Irish school, Irish instruction that develops Irish oral and literacy skills is not just developing Irish skills, it is also developing a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of literacy in the majority language (English). In other

words, although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency, etc.) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying conceptual proficiency, or knowledge base, that is common across languages. This common underlying proficiency makes possible the transfer of concepts, literacy skills, and learning strategies from one language to another.

In recent years, a number of different terms have been proposed to refer to the notion of a common underlying proficiency. Baker (2006), for example, discusses the common operating system, Kecskes and Papp (2000) propose a common underlying conceptual base, while Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders and Christian (2006) interpret the research data in terms of a common underlying reservoir of literacy abilities. Whatever terminology is employed, the construct includes both procedural and declarative knowledge—knowing how and knowing that.

Four major types of cross-lingual transfer can be specified that will operate in varying ways depending on the sociolinguistic and educational situation:

i. Transfer of **conceptual knowledge** (e.g. understanding the concept of *number* or the concept of photosynthesis).

ii. Transfer of **specific linguistic elements** (knowledge of the meaning of *tele* in television/teilifís).

iii. Transfer of **phonological awareness**—the knowledge that words are composed of distinct sounds, considered an important precursor to the acquisition of decoding skills in reading.

iv. Transfer of **metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies** (e.g. reading and vocabulary acquisition strategies, use of graphic organisers, mnemonic devices, etc.).

There is extensive empirical research that supports the interdependence of literacy-related skills and knowledge across languages. Transfer tends to be greater across languages that are relatively similar (e.g. with respect to orthography, vocabulary origins, etc.) but also occurs across relatively dissimilar languages as a result of transfer of conceptual knowledge (e.g. the meaning of *molecule*) and learning strategies (e.g. knowledge of paragraph formation, etc.). Perhaps the most stringent test of the interdependence hypothesis relates to the cross-lingual connections between natural sign languages (such as Irish Sign Language [ISL] and American Sign Language [ASL]) and oral languages. Natural sign languages do not have a written system and meaning is communicated through gestures in three dimensional space rather than in a linear sequential fashion. Cummins (2011b) has conducted a comprehensive review of research relating to cross-lingual relationships between natural sign languages and oral languages (most of this research was conducted with ASL and English as the languages). He found strong support for moderately strong relationships between ASL and English literacy skills—individuals who were highly competent in ASL tended to develop significantly stronger English literacy skills than those whose ASL skills were less well developed.. He summarises the findings as follows:

> In summary, the research evidence shows consistent significant relationships between students' proficiency in ASL and their development of English reading and writing skills. Thus, the interdependence hypothesis appears to apply equally to the relationship between ASL and English as it does to the relationship between spoken languages. Transfer between sign language and written/spoken language has been reported at lexical, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic levels.
> (2011b, p. 13.)

Cummins (2011b) emphasised the importance of promoting not only children's knowledge of natural sign language at an early age but also focusing on literacy engagement as a means of enabling and encouraging children to connect conceptual and linguistic aspects of their two languages:

> The implication for parents and teachers is that Deaf children should be immersed in the world of books and stories from a very early age (just as with hearing children). Ideally, this immersion will be supported by natural sign language and focus on sign language literature (Snoddon, 2008) but there also appears to be a significant role for exposing children to written language at the same time, for example, by drawing children's attention to correspondences between the written language and pictures in the text. All of the research reviewed in this volume suggests that languages support each other in bilingual development and that teaching for two-way transfer across languages represents an effective pedagogical strategy. In other words, young children should be strongly supported and encouraged to work out the written code through an immersion in books both in the home and pre-school contexts. (2011b, p. 19.)

The most comprehensive review of the interdependence hypothesis was conducted by Dressler and Kamil as part of the Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (August & Shanahan, 2006). They concluded:

> In summary, all these studies provide evidence for the cross-language transfer of reading comprehension ability in bilinguals. This relationship holds (a) across

> typologically different languages ...; (b) for children in elementary, middle, and high school; (c) for learners of English as a foreign language and English as a second language; (d) over time; (e) from both first to second language and second to first language. (p. 222.)

The central point here is that learning efficiencies can be achieved if teachers explicitly draw children's attention to similarities and differences between their languages and reinforce effective learning strategies in a coordinated way across languages. For example, principles of effective writing (e.g. paragraph formation) are identical across Irish and English and thus it makes sense for teachers to coordinate their instruction in each language to maximise transfer and reinforcement across languages. The reality is that students are making cross-linguistic connections throughout the course of their learning of a second language, so why not nurture this learning strategy and help students to apply it more efficiently?

Apart from the cognitive processes involved in learning a second language (L2), the motivation to learn can be very different. The vast majority of children learning Irish in primary school have a greater competence in English and can draw on this to fulfil their communicative needs obviating the necessity to learn Irish. All-Irish and Gaeltacht schools seek to circumvent this by insisting that children speak Irish at all times thus creating an environment where the children need Irish to negotiate the curriculum and to have their communicative needs met. While few would dispute the importance of strongly encouraging children to use Irish as a normal language of communication within the ordinary school programme and *the* normal language of communication within Gaelscoileanna, the strategy of promoting Irish to the exclusion of English might benefit from reconsideration in light of the potentially facilitative impact of transfer across languages. If English (children's stronger language in

most cases) is viewed as a threat to Irish, there is less likelihood that teachers will engage children in some cross-linguistic projects that might enable children to showcase their developing identities as *bilinguals* and to feel proud of their accomplishments in both languages.

Summary

The central rationale for integration across languages is that learning efficiencies can be achieved when teachers explicitly draw children's attention to similarities and differences between their languages and reinforce effective learning strategies in a coordinated way across languages. There is extensive research highlighting the potential of bilingualism to enhance children's metalinguistic awareness. There is also consensus among researchers that transfer of knowledge and skills takes place across languages. An explicit instructional focus on integration across languages will enable children to make cross-lingual connections and develop their awareness of how language works more effectively than if the process remains implicit and haphazard.

CHAPTER 2: PRINCIPLES OF CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE LEARNING

Introduction

In this chapter we address the second key question concerning the main principles of language learning and development which should underpin a language curriculum for children aged 3 to 12 years. The main focus of our review is on the principles of second language (L2) learning. Many of these principles try to approximate in the classroom, conditions that children experience both within and outside of school as they develop their L1 skills. It is also the case that children continue to develop their L1 in early childhood and primary settings. Thus, the ten principles we outline below apply indirectly to L1 acquisition also. They state in more explicit terms processes that occur more implicitly in L1 instruction.

The underlying theories of second language teaching and learning have undergone many changes over the course of the last half-century. Larsen-Freeman (2011) traces the development of the field commencing with the audio-lingual method with its behaviourist approach where the learners were expected to be passive imitators of the language they heard. This method was initially seen as an advance on a grammar translation method that had dominated the field of language instruction up to that point (Lightbown, 2000). Many researchers rejected the audio-lingual method and began to investigate other theories. Among the most influential theorists was Krashen who presented a number of hypotheses in relation to language acquisition. Krashen's input hypothesis highlighted the necessity of comprehensible input in language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Learners must receive a large amount of input if they are to learn the language. He recognised that input alone was not sufficient and he identified other factors such as the affective filter hypothesis which can inhibit learning. If the learner is not motivated, doesn't see the need to learn the language, or is not developmentally ready for the particular feature of the language he/she is being exposed to, then learning may not take place (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). The input

may be filtered out (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Krashen was influenced by the early evaluations of immersion education in Canada which achieved very encouraging results.

Ironically, the results of further immersion education research contradicted Krashen's input hypothesis where immersion students' language was seen to contain many non-native like errors despite years of comprehensible input (Harley, Allen, Cummins, & Swain, 1990; Harley & Swain, 1984; Ó Duibhir, 2011). This research led Swain (1985) to develop the output hypothesis which emphasised the role of comprehensible output in language acquisition. If language learners are to communicate they must make what they say comprehensible to others. This can force them to focus on the form of the language that they are using and provide opportunities for feedback. Attention to output led to an investigation of the role of interaction. When learners produce output they interact with the teacher, other learners or perhaps native speakers. During interaction learners must negotiate for meaning and have opportunities to receive feedback. According to Long's interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) this can lead to language acquisition.

Research has revealed that learners acquire an L2 at very different rates and many studies have examined the factors that might explain this (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Issues such as age, learning strategies, learning styles, attitude, motivation, aptitude and personality, to list just some of the factors, have all been shown to have an influence on acquisition. This research has helped to draw attention to the fact that instruction is not just about teaching languages but teaching learners as well. It is necessary, therefore, to take account of individual differences. Some instructional approaches have focused on providing a context for language learning and language use through the design of task-based curricula (Bygate, Norris, & Van den Branden, 2009) or by integrating content and language through a content and language integrated (CLIL) approach (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

While much of the research in second language acquisition has attended to cognitive factors where the learner is seen to be hypothesising about language in one form or another (Larsen-Freeman, 2011), social factors have been examined more closely in recent decades. When we interact in a second language we do so in a social setting. Much of this work was influenced by the writings of Vygotsky who described a sociocultural theory of learning (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006b). Supporters of a sociocultural approach to language learning tend to be critical of research that focuses on learning as a purely cognitive activity. Such research might focus on the characteristics of good language learners or how to sequence language features in the optimal order of acquisition. From a sociocultural point of view, meanings are created in social interaction rather than in the minds of individuals. To focus purely on the individual, the learning environment or the course materials in a decontextualised way is to neglect *the ways in which learners exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities in those contexts* (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 318). Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman (2011) call for a more holistic perspective where *[I]dentity is never determined by one person alone but is socially constructed* (p. 88). We also need to consider the influence that societal factors exert on identity formation in relation to language learning.

A learner-centred focus to language learning led some researchers to examine the role of learner autonomy which has been defined by Little (1991, p. 4) as 'a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action'. The application of sociocultural theory to learner autonomy led Little to suggest that three interacting principles govern success in second language teaching: *learner involvement*, *learner reflection and target language use* (2007, p. 23). This must be facilitated by the teacher where according to Little (1991), learners need to be enabled to become autonomous learners who gradually take ownership of their own learning.

The advent of digital technologies has caused a further reconceptualisation of language teaching and learning and facilitated a greater role for autonomous learning where the learner is no longer seen an imitator but rather a creator of new language, an innovator who takes ownership of the process.

Principles, techniques, insights and generalisations

A study of this corpus of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has led several writers to compile lists of principles, techniques, insights and generalisations to help to guide teachers in their work of teaching second languages (Brown, 2007; Ellis, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Lightbown, 2000; Mangubhai, 2006). These lists share much in common with one another and the principles outlined below draw in the main from Ellis (2005). Ellis lists ten principles of instructed language learning and cautions against treating them as 'prescriptions or proscriptions' (2005, p. 201). These principles, taken from Ellis (2005, p. 210-221), are discussed with reference to young language learners in early childhood and primary education in Ireland.

Principle 1: Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.

Skehan (1998, p. 4) described a dual-coding approach to language performance and language learning where we memorise some chunks or formulaic language in our long-term memory. These forms are unanalysed and we have rapid access to them in spontaneous communication. Other language input is stored in rule-based form but this tends to require more working memory time to access it. The unanalysed chunks that learners have memorised may be analysed at a later stage and lead to productive rules (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998). The use of language

chunks in this way frees up time and working memory capacity for planning the rest of what a speaker wishes to say. This applies to L1 learning as well where native speakers have been found to use a larger number of formulaic expressions than was originally thought.

There is evidence from the work of Mhic Mhathúna (1995, 2005; 2008) in an Irish context that children in early childhood settings can acquire formulaic expressions through repeated story-telling sessions. Mhic Mhathúna (2005) observed and recorded storytelling sessions in an in-depth study of one *naíonra* (Irish-medium playgroup), over a six-month period, using a case-study approach. She found that the preschool teachers facilitated children's participation in the sessions and that the language input they received led in time to acquisition of Irish. The teachers read the same stories repeatedly and this enabled the children to acquire formulaic expressions that they were able to segment at a later stage and to use creatively. Where the teacher used language from the stories in interactional routines outside of the story-telling sessions it was found that the children transferred formulaic chunks to spontaneous communication. It was evident from later recordings that the children had made significant progress in acquiring Irish.

Ellis (2005, p. 211) suggests that if formulaic chunks play such an important role in early language acquisition, it may be best to concentrate on this aspect of teaching initially and delay the teaching of grammar until later in the process. In an Irish context, this advice can be applied to Irish from an early age and to modern languages at the end of primary school. It applies equally to the English language learner who needs to hear the same phrases repeated daily in the same context. A language curriculum must, however, take account of the development of rule-based knowledge at a later stage.

The role of the adult initially will be to use formulaic language based on the daily rituals of the class or early childhood setting. The same

language should be used in the same context repeatedly so that the child can understand what is being said from the context. Repeated storytelling, action songs and rhymes should also form part of the language curriculum as they are good sources for formulaic language. Action songs employ the Total Physical Response (TPR) method which involves children using their bodies as well as their minds and places an emphasis on understanding rather than on language production. Key vocabulary and phrases from the stories, songs and verses can be used in the class context in order to incorporate them in daily routines and enhance opportunities for their acquisition and use by the children.

As children mature and are exposed to more language the teacher can focus on language form. What is involved here is that the teacher might overtly draw the children's attention to a language feature as it arises incidentally in a lesson where the main focus is on communication and meaning (Long & Robinson, 1998). This could, for example, be drawing the children's attention to the changes that can occur to words in Irish when preceded by the personal pronoun *mo* 'my' (*mála* 'bag', *mo mhála* 'my bag'). The teacher might ask the children if they notice a change in the initial sound of the word when preceded by the pronoun or if they notice a change in spelling if the word is encountered in written form. A similar approach can be adopted for other languages where in the case of French, for example, the pronoun rather than the noun is subject to change: *mon sac* 'my bag' but *ma voiture* 'my car'. EAL learners can be given the role of 'linguistic experts' in this type of activity by providing insights into how these features operate in their home language(s). These activities are beneficial to EAL learners on many levels. They affirm their home language is a positive concrete way, they grant agency to the children, and they validate them as co-constructors of knowledge in a learning community (Dagenais, Walsh, Armand & Maraillet, 2008).

This type of pedagogy follows the language awareness approach recommended for modern languages in the primary school (NCCA, 2008b). It also highlights the manner in which languages are learned partly in relation to one another. As we learn an L2 we become more explicitly aware of the implicit knowledge acquired in our L1. This approach differs from the traditional grammar lesson where the learners are taught rules out of context and expected to memorise them. Harley (1998) cautions that it is inappropriate to subject children of 7 or 8 years to focus on form that requires them to understand abstract rules. There is some disagreement as to the value of knowing language rules (Lightbown, 2000), nonetheless, Norris & Ortega (Norris & Ortega, 2000) in a comprehensive research synthesis conclude that focus on form makes a positive difference. The critical issue for young children learning Irish is that they must be developmentally ready for it (Lightbown, 1998).

Principle 2: Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning.

In making this proposal, Ellis is focusing on the *contextualised meanings that arise in acts of communication* (p. 211). Ellis maintains that this requires a task-based approach to curriculum and instruction. In order to develop this, learners must use language for communication and act as communicators. By engaging in meaningful communication from the beginning, the conditions necessary for acquisition are created (Lightbown and Spada 2006). This also helps to develop fluency and learners tend to find these types of activities intrinsically motivating (Willis & Willis, 2011). Most features of the language such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation can be learned in this way. It is activities such as these that have made immersion education so successful where the context requires real communication (Swain & Johnson, 1997). CLIL approaches also facilitate meaning-focused instruction. While opportunities to

communicate should dominate the curriculum, there will also be a need to focus on the form of the language as we will see in the next principle.

The implications for teachers of this principle need to be considered in conjunction with principle 3 in order to achieve a balanced language programme. An emphasis on meaning engages children in deriving meaning from the input that they receive, even if they do not understand all the linguistic features in the message they receive (Lightbown, 2000). They do so by drawing on contextual cues and on their prior knowledge. When teaching languages to children the adults need to ensure that they facilitate this process by using context embedded language (Cummins, 2000) and draw as far as possible on themes that the children are familiar with. In the case of EAL learners, their prior knowledge is often encoded in their home language. Teachers can support EAL learners in accessing this prior knowledge by grouping children according to language for some activities and by encouraging them to use their home language as a resource for learning both at home and at school.

Principle 3: Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.

Many researchers have suggested that focus on form activities can help focus learners' attention of the desired features in the input (Nassaji & Fotos, 2007). This can be important in particular situations where, for example, *learners in a class share the same first language* (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 166). In this situation they may make errors due to interference from their shared first language. Very often these errors don't lead to a breakdown in communication and go unnoticed. By encouraging learners to pay attention to form it is argued that it may influence how they process the form of the language in the input leading to accurate uptake (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 1994).

The type of language instruction that takes place in a language-as-subject class tends to have a focus on form partly because it may be the only exposure that learners have to the language. It could be argued, however, that the immersion context has a more natural focus on language use and on meaning and may lack a focus on form. Cummins (1999) maintains that if immersion children are to acquire more target-like forms in the L2 then teachers must focus explicitly on the form of the language also. The challenge here is to determine the most effective way in which to focus on form and at what age or stage of L2 development.

Doughty & Williams (1998) believe that focus on form type of activities are useful in drawing learners' attention to grammatical errors as they occur incidentally in classroom use. This type of focus is different to explicit focus on forms in decontextualised grammar lessons and rule presentation which some claim have not been shown to be successful (Ellis, 1994). Long (1996) agrees that focus on form type activities in the context of meaningful interaction are far more beneficial than decontextualised grammar lessons. Long & Robinson (1998) suggest that *focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to the linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production* (1998, p. 23). This view is supported by others. Many studies (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006a; Nassaji & Fotos, 2007; Spada & Lightbown, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 2001) have found evidence that incidental correction which is carried out regularly in context was more effective than explicit form-focused instruction. Ellis (2005) highlights that extensive attention to form cannot account for structures that learners avoid using and that intensive focus on pre-selected linguistic forms may be required. In order to master the L2 structures, learners' existing knowledge must be reorganised in order to accommodate the new knowledge and children will require analytical learning strategies in order to do this (Little, 1991). Indeed

there are certain features of the target language where comprehensible input alone, which of its nature is implicit, will not suffice. These are the features of the target language which are *semantically lightweight, and/or perpetually non-salient, and/or cause little or no communicative distress* (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). An instructional approach focusing on forms may not be suitable, however, for young children in the early stage of SLA.

An issue that arises here is the suitability of such approaches in immersion and mainstream settings in Ireland. Classes that teach Irish as an L2 for 30-40 minutes per day (Irish L2) or a modern language for one hour per week tend to have a more analytic orientation whereas immersion classes tend to be experiential in focus. It can be difficult to focus learners' attention in the latter on form due to the predominance of negotiation for meaning. In addressing these issues Lyster (2007) developed the counterbalance hypothesis whereby activities and feedback that run counter to the predominant communicative orientation of the class act as a counterbalance and are more effective in facilitating learning. The implication for practice in Ireland is that schools that teach Irish and modern languages as L2s need to provide greater opportunities for spontaneous communication and immersion settings need a greater focus on form or a more analytic approach to language learning. The latter also applies to EAL learners particularly where there are high concentrations of such learners in the same class or school. Where EAL learners represent a small percentage of children, they tend to get sufficient corrective feedback from their native speaker peers which acts as a counterbalance to any lack of focus on form.

A critical issue for teachers in early language programmes is the timing of the introduction of focus on form activity. While it may not be appropriate to introduce these activities in the early classes, at a later stage however, when children have attained basic

communicative competence, error correction and feedback can be used to encourage them to reflect on their language use. Harley et al. (1998) conducted research with grade 2 French immersion classes in five schools. They hypothesised that if the gender of French nouns was made more salient that they would be noticed more by the children in the input leading to more effective learning of this form. Age-appropriate materials such as games, songs and the creation of personal dictionaries were designed for use in the experimental classes over a five-week period. At the end of the school-year when the results of delayed post-tests were examined it was found that the children in the experimental classes were more successful in assigning correct gender to familiar nouns indicating item-learning. There was no evidence however, that they could generalise this knowledge and apply it to new nouns unfamiliar to them. While the latter result may be disappointing, the overall outcome of the study indicates that drawing attention to grammatical features such as noun gender in French can be an effective learning experience for relatively young children in grade 2 immersion classes.

It is not clear that this type of approach could be applied to Irish L2 classes at such an early stage as the learners have not developed basic communicative skills at this point. It would, however, be relevant to EAL, all-Irish and Gaeltacht children where teachers need to carefully monitor the language produced by the children from an early stage and to draw the learners' attention to errors as they arise. This can take the form of corrective feedback where the teacher alerts the child's attention to the fact that what he/she has said or written is incorrect and elicits the correct form from the child (Harris & Ó Duibhir, 2011). The most problematic features for all-Irish children to acquire accurately are the copula, dependent forms of verbs and features of Irish that differ from English such as the number system[1]. Part of the difficulty is that the inaccurate speech of

1 See Ó Duibhir & Garland (2010) for a comprehensive discussion.

the children can be understood and doesn't lead to a breakdown in communication. Rectifying these errors is a complex task that is unlikely to be achieved through instruction alone. By enabling the children to become autonomous learners from an early stage, children can be empowered to self-evaluate their Irish and take steps to improve it.

Principle 4: Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.

There are similarities between the formulaic language discussed in principle 1 above and implicit knowledge in so far as implicit knowledge can be quickly and easily accessed for use in spontaneous fluent communication (Ellis, 2005, p. 214). According to Ellis, there is general consensus that implicit knowledge is the essence of L2 competence. Implicit knowledge results from the unconscious acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. There are different theories as to how implicit knowledge should be developed but there is general agreement that participation in communicative activity is required.

The value of explicit knowledge of grammar is contested. Ellis suggests that it is only of value if leaners can use it in actual communication. Schmidt (2001) argues that explicit knowledge can help learners to 'notice' gaps in their competence and that they may pay more attention to form in input that they receive and compare this to their output.

The implication of this principle for teachers is to follow the advice in principle 2 and principle 3 to focus predominantly on meaning particularly in the early stages of learning and to allow opportunities to focus on form as children mature.

Principle 5: Instruction needs to take account of the learner's 'built-in syllabus'.

Young children acquiring their first language have been found to follow the same order and sequence when acquiring the features of the language. Each grammatical structure is acquired in a particular order. Similar results have been found with second language learners regardless of whether they learned the language in a classroom or in a more naturalistic setting. It should be noted, however, that while instructed learners tended to achieve higher levels of grammatical competence, the fact that learners were taught a particular feature didn't guarantee that they would learn it.

The implication for instruction here is that teachers need to ensure that learners are developmentally ready for a particular feature before they try to teach it. This can be quite challenging however, as readiness will vary greatly across individuals in a class. Ellis (2005) concludes that while teaching *a target feature may enable learners to 'beat' the built-in syllabus it may serve to push them along it as long as the target structure is not too far ahead of their developmental stage* (p. 216). In communicative language teaching, the content of language lessons is based on the communicative needs of the learners. As a consequence of this we don't delay the introduction of verbs in the conditional tense until fifth or sixth class when very young learners will want to express needs such as 'I would like a drink.' Expressions such as this are likely to be acquired by the children as unanalysed chunks which can be analysed at a later stage.

Principle 6: Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.

Learning a language is a slow process that requires a good deal of effort on the part of the learner. Children acquiring their first language take between two and five years to master the various aspects of grammar

despite massive amounts of input (Ellis, 2005). The quantity and the quality of the L1 input have been shown to influence the speed of acquisition. The same can be said for L2 learning. The more exposure the learners have to the L2 the more they will learn and the faster they will learn it. Krashen (1985) claims that the input learners receive must be comprehensible and that this can lead to the development of *highly connected implicit knowledge that is needed to become an effective communicator* (Ellis, 2005, p. 217).

The implications of this principle are discussed in the context of Irish as an L2. Much of the discussion is also relevant to modern languages in the primary school. The majority of children learning Irish in early childhood or primary contexts in Ireland have very little contact with Irish outside of the school or class setting. While teachers can encourage parents to avail of opportunities such as reading to their children in Irish or watching television in Irish, teachers obviously have no control over this situation. They do, however, control the classroom context. Nonetheless, the amount of teaching through Irish in Irish lessons has been shown to vary greatly across classes. In a recent classroom observational study almost one third of teachers were found to be teaching Irish through the medium of English (Department of Education and Science, 2007, p. 71). Teachers need to maximise the contact time with Irish by teaching the Irish lesson through Irish. Greater use of the target language by the teacher has been shown in one study to result in higher L2 proficiency levels in the children (Curtain, 2000, p. 101). As highlighted by Harris & Ó Duibhir (2011), Irish is taught in primary school by class teachers rather than by language specialists. This affords considerable potential to use Irish outside of the Irish class for classroom management routines and throughout the school in general. It also allows for the possibility of Irish becoming not just the object of instruction but the medium of instruction as well through the use of a CLIL approach[2].

2 See Harris & Ó Duibhir, 2011 for a more detailed discussion.

Another source of input outside of the Irish class is that of reading. Extensive reading programmes and reading to children have been shown to be beneficial to L2 learners (Hickey, 1991). Unfortunately, many children do not have access to the wealth of books that are now available in Irish that were not available when the Primary School Curriculum (1999) was published. The study by the Inspectorate, for example, found that *[R]eading activities in most classes were based on the textbooks which were essentially workbooks* (Department of Education and Science, 2007, p. 57).

Ellis (2005, p. 218) concludes his discussion of this principle with the following statement:

> *It can be claimed with confidence that, if the only input students receive is in the context of a limited number of weekly lessons based on some course book, they are unlikely to achieve high levels of L2 proficiency.*

This statement is supported by the findings of the Harris et al. (2006) where there was a significant drop in the levels of achievement in Irish of sixth-class children in 2002 when compared to a similar study in 1985. Among the factors cited by Harris et al. (2006, p. 168) for this drop in achievement was the contraction of core time for Irish from over 5 hours in the 1980s to 3.5 hours as recommended in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) for schools where Irish is taught as a subject. Maximising the level of input in Irish and modern languages then can be seen as critical for achievement.

Teachers and schools need to create an environment where children hear and read Irish and modern languages outside of the language lesson and are encouraged to communicate in the target language to fulfil their communicative needs throughout the school day.

Principle 7: Successful instructed learning also requires opportunities for output.

As discussed briefly above, the research on immersion education has shown that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for successful L2 acquisition. Swain (1985) developed the output hypothesis to explain the role and importance of output. Indeed, Swain has continued to develop the output hypothesis over the last quarter of a century. In Swain (1995) she identified some of the functions of output in SLA. The main ones for our purposes here are (i) the 'noticing/triggering' function that helps to raise the consciousness of the learner to aspects of the L2 that they may not have mastered or the gaps in their own learning to date. This can also help the learner to pay attention to grammar (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). (ii) The hypothesis testing function gives the learner an opportunity to test out their current understanding of grammatical features and to receive feedback. This feedback in turn becomes input that the learner is likely to be ready to process. (iii) The metalinguistic function allows learners to reflect on the language that they have produced. Little (2007), as noted above, considers learner reflection to be essential for successful acquisition.

The implications for practice in relation to second L2 teaching and learning is that we must provide *increased opportunities for the productive use of the target language in meaningful contexts* (Swain, 1996, p. 97). Ellis (2005) suggests that we can do this by including tasks in our language programmes. Language tasks can provide opportunities for learners to produce the sustained output that fosters language learning. Asking learners to perform oral and written tasks can push them to find their own words and phrases to express their ideas.

Principle 8: The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.

Interaction in the L2 affords the learner with opportunities to combine input and output as discussed above. Through interaction, learners can become active communicators. They learn how to communicate in a way that they will be understood. This helps them to automatise the linguistic features they are in the process of acquiring. When a communication problem arises they are forced to engage in negotiation for meaning which can lead to modification of what they have said and encourage new learning (Long, 1996).

From a sociocultural perspective, interaction can serve as a form of mediation where collaborative talk can mediate cognition and learning (Swain et al., 2011). This also acknowledges the social domain of language interaction which can be viewed as the primary source of learning (Ellis, 2005). In order to create optimal conditions for interaction in classrooms Ellis (2005, p. 219) suggests that learners: (i) need to be given some control of the choice of topics, (ii) be given opportunities to express their own personal meanings, (iii) be given a reason to attend to language, and (iv) be scaffolded to participate in language-related activities that are beyond their current level of proficiency. The implication for teachers, if these conditions are to be met, is to facilitate the children in becoming more autonomous learners, and to make small group and pair work an integral part of lessons. It has been found that children usually learn more effectively with others than they do on their own (Goswami,2008).

Principle 9: Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.

Advances in neuroscience research have called into question whether children have different learning styles such as 'visual', 'kinaesthetic'

etc. (Goswami, 2008, p. 390). Nevertheless, this research suggests that learning is multi-sensory. The greater the number and variety of senses used by children in their learning, the stronger the connections in their brain will be, leading to stronger learning. Ellis (2005) advises that language teachers should employ a flexible approach and adopt a variety of strategies and activities. This is supported by studies of what good language learners do. It also helps to develop a range of learning strategies in the learners. There is some research evidence to suggest that young children aged 6-10 years can be taught to use learning strategies (Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2010).

Ellis (2005) maintains that learners require both an analytic and experiential approach to learning. As we noted above, language-as-a-subject contexts tend to have an analytic approach whereas immersion contexts have an experiential approach. Strategy training in this case needs to counterbalance the predominant orientation of the class (Lyster, 2007). For children learning Irish or a modern language as a subject, the adoption of task-based language teaching will orient them towards an experiential approach. This type of approach affords opportunities for spontaneous communication that develops fluency. EAL and immersion learners tend to have sufficient opportunities to develop fluency but lack the opportunity to adopt an analytic approach where they focus on the form or the grammatical accuracy of their output.

Learner motivation is also a factor in individual difference. Ellis (2005) believes that it is the responsibility of the teacher *to ensure that their students are motivated and stay motivated and not bewail the fact that students do not bring any motivation to learn the L2 to the classroom* (p. 221). The work of Dörnyei & Skehan (2003) has shown that situational factors, what actually happens in the classroom, greatly influence learner motivation. The implications for practice in Irish schools are that language lessons need to enhance the intrinsic

motivation of the learners by being enjoyable and engaging. They need to be based on the communicative needs of the children, to stimulate their interest and to take cognisance of their identities as learners.

Principle 10: In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

In assessing learner proficiency Ellis (2005) maintains that a free constructed response such as a communicative task is the best measure of language proficiency. Tasks such as information gap exercises would be suitable for this purpose. Examples from the teacher guidelines of *Curaclam na Gaeilge* (Irish Curriculum) (Department of Education and Science, 1999c) would be *Aimsigh na difríochtaí* (Spot the differences) or *Críochnaigh an pictiúr* (Complete the picture). Similar tasks might be used to assess communicative competence in modern languages. These tasks could be used in an assessment for learning or an assessment of learning context (NCCA, 2007). In the former, the errors that the learners make can form the basis of subsequent lessons. In the case of the latter, a teacher can judge what forms of the language have been acquired by the learners. Tasks such as these are designed and led by the teacher. There is also a need for learner-led assessment task such as learner self-assessment and portfolio assessment. The merits of the European Language Portfolio as a means of assessment and as a tool to facilitate learner reflection and integration will be discussed below.

In the case of EAL learners, it should be noted that while it can take one or two years to develop basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), students may require from five to seven years to develop native-speaker levels of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2011a). Teachers need to be aware of this distinction when assessing their students so that they do not

underestimate the on-going support that EAL learners require in order to develop CALP. A variety of assessment tools is required to capture progress in both dimensions.

Summary of principles

Learners acquire the target language as a result of active engagement with the language by means of oral and written activities (both inside and outside the context of the school) that generate personal investment on the part of the learner. The major roles of the teacher include:

- providing learners with comprehensible oral input (including a repertoire of immediately useful formulaic expressions) and opportunities for oral interaction in the target language
- providing opportunities and motivational incentives for learners to read extensively in the target language
- providing opportunities and motivational incentives for learners to write for real audiences in the target language
- drawing learners' attention to formal aspects of the language that learners must master for effective communication in both oral and written modes.

New technologies are increasingly providing unprecedented opportunities for teachers to pursue these goals. For example, students' creative work can be published in written and oral form on the internet, while partner class projects, involving collaboration with children in distant locations and focused on a variety of linguistic and curricular topics can engage children in creative work in the target language and promote opportunities for meaningful interaction in the language.

When the defining features of *Curaclam na Gaeilge* (DES, 1999a, p. 8-9) are compared to these principles they measure up quite well. They place an emphasis on meaning, input, interaction, target language use, active learning, learner autonomy and a learner-centred approach. Some of the features are more age appropriate to young learners such as the emphasis on enjoyment and the child-centred nature of the topics chosen. In the revision of the Gaeilge L2 curriculum, we believe that more attention may need to be paid to the role of literacy in supporting language development. The defining features of Curaclam na Gaeilge are also more applicable to Irish L2 rather than L1. The research evidence suggests native Irish speakers are reaching their expected potential in English (Parsons & Liddy, 2009; Shiel, Gilleece, Clerkin, & Millar, 2011) but that this is not the case for Irish (Ó Curnáin, 2007, 2012; Ó Giollagáin, et al., 2007). The work of Montrul (2008), in relation to Spanish in North America, has demonstrated that simultaneous bilinguals tend to acquire the dominant language more completely than the minority language. The school needs to positively support the lesser-used language in order to counteract the dominance of English. While the ten principles described here apply particularly to L2 situations, engagement with literacy may require attention in the context of L1 development and enrichment. Notwithstanding this, we believe that the consistent application of these principles across languages can underpin an integrated language curriculum.

CHAPTER 3:

LANGUAGE CURRICULUM INTEGRATION IN POLICY AND PRACTICE

Introduction

In this chapter we examine the evidence supporting the implementation of an integrated language curriculum that derives from policy and practice in other jurisdictions. As part of that examination we present examples of the expected outcomes by 8 years of age for children's learning and development in the different language learning contexts. We investigate the development of policy in the next section. This is followed by examples of linguistic integration practice in schools where teachers are enabling children to transfer skills across languages.

Language curriculum integration: policy

In this section we describe the results of our review of curricula in other jurisdictions that would facilitate the type of learning efficiencies we referred to in Chapter 1 where teachers would be facilitated in drawing children's attention to similarities and differences between their L1 and L2. We reviewed language curricula in the following nine jurisdictions:

- Alberta, Canada
- Ontario, Canada
- Finland
- New Zealand
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Singapore
- South Australia
- Wales

There were relevant models of language curriculum design in most of these jurisdictions and we have included a summary of each in Appendix A1. Three jurisdictions stood out as meriting in-depth study: i) Alberta, ii) Scotland, and iii) Wales and we present comprehensive case studies of each in Appendix A2. In the following sections we synthesise the features of the curriculum design in the three jurisdictions that are most relevant in informing the design of an integrated language curriculum in Ireland. The discussion is divided into four sections. First, we examine the sociolinguistic and school contexts and their similarity to the Irish context. Second, we describe the structure of the language curriculum in each jurisdiction. Third, we examine the manner in which learning outcomes are described in each curriculum. Finally, we draw conclusions from each of the case studies and how they might inform the design of an integrated language curriculum in Ireland.

Sociolinguistic and school contexts

All three jurisdictions, Alberta, Scotland and Wales, share similarities with Ireland in terms of sociolinguistic background. The minority Francophone learners in Alberta are similar to native Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht where English is the dominant language of society and contact with their L1 may be confined largely to home and school. Students are expected to achieve a high level of balanced bilingualism in both French and English (Alberta Learning, 2001). While the majority of students may speak French as a first language this is not always the case depending on the sociolinguistic background of students. Thus the English language skills of some students may be ahead of their French language skills when they commence school.

The context in Scotland shares many common features with that of Ireland where the majority of children are native speakers of English and learn Gaelic[1] as an L2 with a minority who learn Gàidhlig as L1

1 Gaelic is the term used to refer to L2 learners of the language as a subject in English-medium schools. This differentiates it from Gàidhlig which is learned as L1 or L2 in Gàidhlig-medium units or schools.

or L2 in Gàidhlig-medium units or schools very like all-Irish schools. Modern languages are also taught in primary school although from P5 (3rd class) which is earlier than Ireland. There are four different language curricula at primary level in Scotland which mirror the PSC in many ways: i) Literacy and English (English as L1), ii) Literacy and Gàidhlig, iii) Gaelic (learners) (Gaelic as L2, Gaelic is used to distinguish it from Gàidhlig as L1) and iv) Modern Languages.

The sociolinguistic context in Wales is also similar to that of Ireland. It is a bilingual country where English is the dominant language with the minority language, Welsh, spoken principally though not exclusively in geographical heartland areas. The contexts in which languages are taught in early childhood and primary school settings are also very similar to Ireland. Primary schools in Wales teach English as L1 in the majority of schools with Welsh L2 in those schools also. Welsh is taught as an L1 in traditional bilingual schools in Welsh heartland areas, similar to the Gaeltacht in Ireland, with the teaching of English delayed until age 7 (Key Stage 2). Welsh is also taught as an L1 in designated bilingual schools outside of the Welsh heartland areas, similar to all-Irish schools. Modern foreign languages are introduced at age 11(Key Stage 3) in secondary schools although they may be taught at Key Stage 2 in primary schools.

Each of the three jurisdictions share common sociolinguistic and school context features with Ireland. They each have a bilingual or multilingual school system where English is the dominant language and the minority language is taught as an L1 in all three and as an L2 in Scotland and Wales.

Curriculum structure

All language curriculum documents in Alberta use the same three organisers, namely, listening and talking, reading, and writing to

structure the learning outcomes. The English Language Arts (ELA) programme is organised around five general learning outcomes. These are broad statements *identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate with increasing competence and confidence from Kindergarten to Grade 12* (Alberta Learning, 2000, p. 3).

In Scotland, the L1 curriculum sets out statements of experiences and outcomes for literacy in terms of the competences that children can display. Each curriculum area is presented in two sections: i) principles and practice, and ii) experiences and outcomes. As one might expect, the experiences and outcomes sections specify the intended language experiences of children and learning outcomes that they will achieve as they progress through different levels. The document uses the same three organisers to structure the statements for each language area which facilitates integration across languages. The organisers are: i) listening and talking, ii) reading, and iii) writing, which are the same as Alberta. The document refers to levels and stages as opposed to classes or grades.

The curriculum in Wales identifies the four key skills of thinking, communication, ICT and number, which are to be developed across the curriculum. The main focus of the language area is that of communication where the skills in this area are to be developed in English, Welsh and in other languages. Communication is divided into four areas: i) oracy, ii) reading, iii) writing, and iv) wider communication skills. Again we can see similarities with Alberta and Scotland with the addition of wider communication skills. Each of the four elements is subdivided into strands.

In each of the three jurisdictions then, there are common elements to the manner in which the curriculum is structured for languages. Each curriculum is organised around the language skills of listening and talking (oracy), reading and writing, with Wales also adding wider communication skills.

Outcomes

Each curriculum is further described in terms of learning outcomes. In the case of Alberta, the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum is divided into five general statements and these are in turn are subdivided into specific learning outcomes (SLO) for each grade level. This structure is described in greater detail in Appendix A2 but for our purposes here it is sufficient to report that the SLOs are mapped across the English and Français programmes in a bridging guide (Direction de l'éducation française, 2001), enabling the ELA teacher to build upon language skills previously acquired in French.

The Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland lays out the same L1 curriculum for English and Gàidhlig[2]. The outcomes are stated in terms of active statements of what the child can do and resemble the 'can do' statements of the CEFR discussed below. The outcomes are stated by level rather than by grade at the end of P1 (junior infants), P4 (second class) and P7 (fifth class). By structuring the curriculum in this way, Gàidhlig-medium teachers can develop the children's language skills in Gàidhlig first and enable the children to transfer them to English at a later stage. The outcomes for Gaelic learners (LGL) and modern languages (MLAN) differ from the L1 curricula but are related to one another. While the study of Gaelic can start in the preschool years, MLAN doesn't commence until P5 (third class) in the majority of schools. From that point forward, however, the outcomes for LGL and MLAN are identical. This facilitates the transfer of skills across second languages. The study of LGL and MLAN are seen as foundations for the lifelong learning of additional languages where children are supported in reflecting on how they learned their first language. In this way children are enabled to become aware of effective language learning strategies. While the curriculum documents adopt the same structure, L1 and L2 operate

2 There is one minor exception in the Gàidhlig curriculum explained in Appendix A2.

as parallel systems without explicit links, for example, between L2 skills and those already acquired in L1. More explicit links would make it easier for teachers to integrate the various skills across languages.

In Wales, outcomes are described in terms of generic communication skills and these could provide an overarching framework for development across languages and across the curriculum in general. The manner in which progression is described is similar to the learning outcomes in the Alberta curriculum, the levels in the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, and the 'can do' statements of the CEFR. There is one statement of language, literacy and communication skills at Foundation Phase for L1, and they are taught in either English or Welsh according to the school context. English-medium schools also teach Welsh L2 skills at Foundation Phase and common themes can be identified across L1 and L2 statements. At Key Stage 2, there are separate curricula for English (L1) and Welsh (L1) with the skills to be attained stated in very similar terms. There is even greater similarity between the skills for Welsh L1 and L2. These patterns are repeated for the statements of the range of experiences across age groups and languages.

The manner in which the National Curriculum in Wales is structured provides opportunities for teachers to integrate language teaching and learning across languages. This principle is enshrined in the documentation. An earlier document, *Making the Link* (ACCAC, 2003), which predates the current iteration of the curriculum, appears to have informed the structure and design of the latest iteration. Nonetheless, apart from L1 at Foundation Phase, we had to draw from a number of documents in order to present the skills and experiences in Appendix A2 in the manner in which we did. More explicit links, such as those in the *Making the Link* document or those highlighted in the Alberta documentation, would enable teachers to integrate across languages in a more coherent way.

We present in table 3.1 the learning outcomes for the latter half of the Foundation Phase in Wales. The complete list is attached in the case study in Appendix A2. Outcomes 5 and 6 would be indicative of the type of global statements that might describe achievement by children in Irish primary schools in L1 and L2 by age 8. We chose to include these global statements of outcomes because they represent a reasonably successful attempt to capture the continuum of children's language development across L1 and L2 contexts. Global statements such as these can also provide a useful basis for developing a language curriculum in terms of 'can do' statements.

Table 3.1: Wales: Foundation phase outcomes

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes (English/Welsh L1)	Welsh L2 Language Development Outcomes
Foundation Phase Outcome 4 Children speak audibly, conveying meanings to a range of listeners. They begin to extend their ideas or accounts by including some detail. Children listen to others, usually responding appropriately. They recognise familiar words in simple texts and when reading aloud, use their knowledge of letters and sound–symbol relationships to read words and establish meaning. They respond to poems, stories and non-fiction, sometimes needing support. Children's writing communicates meaning through simple words and phrases. In their reading or writing, they begin to demonstrate an understanding of how sentences work. Children form letters, which are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated. They begin to understand the different purposes and function of written language.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 4** Children show understanding of words and phrases spoken clearly by a familiar voice and respond by means of short oral phrases. They speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation when imitating and using simple words and phrases. With support, they express simple information, and ask and answer questions. Children recognise familiar words. They connect the written form of words with their sound when reading individual words. They show understanding of individual words by means of non-verbal responses. They sometimes need support/ assistance. Children communicate by copying correctly and writing words and some simple and familiar phrases from memory.

Table 3.1: Wales: Foundation phase outcomes

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes (English/Welsh L1)	Welsh L2 Language Development Outcomes
Foundation Phase Outcome 5 Children speak clearly, with increasing confidence and use a growing vocabulary. They show an awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail. They understand and convey simple information. They usually listen carefully and respond to a wider range of stimuli. In some situations they adopt a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice. They begin to realise that there is variety in the language they hear around them. Their reading of simple texts is generally accurate. They show understanding and express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction. They use a range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. Children's writing communicates meaning. They use appropriate and interesting vocabulary showing some awareness of the reader. Ideas are often developed in a sequence of connected sentences, and capital letters and full stops are used with some degree of consistency. Simple words are usually spelled correctly, and where there are inaccuracies, the alternative is phonically plausible. In handwriting letters are accurately formed and consistent in size.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 5** Children show understanding of short items spoken by a familiar voice by responding either non-verbally or by means of short oral phrases. They seek, understand and communicate simple information and respond to a range of stimuli. They speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation, varying vocabulary and patterns to a degree. Children recognise simple and familiar words and phrases that are within their experience and begin to show an interest in written material by reading some simple passages. They show an understanding of what they have read by responding orally or non-verbally to the content. Children communicate by writing words, phrases and sometimes sentences to express factual and personal information, using familiar patterns. Simple words are usually spelled correctly.

Table 3.1: Wales: Foundation phase outcomes

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes (English/Welsh L1)	Welsh L2 Language Development Outcomes
Foundation Phase Outcome 6 Children begin to modify their talk to the requirements of the audience, varying the use of vocabulary and level of detail. They explore and communicate ideas, showing an awareness of sequence and progression in a range of contexts. Through relevant comments and questions, they show that they have listened carefully. They read a range of texts with growing accuracy, fluency and emphasis. They read independently, using appropriate strategies to establish meaning. They respond to texts and express preferences. They show an understanding of the main points and talk about significant details. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information. Children's writing is often organised, imaginative and clear. The main features of different forms of writing are used appropriately. Words are chosen for variety, interest and effect. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct. Punctuation is generally accurate. Spelling is usually accurate. Children produce legible writing.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 6** Children show understanding of a series of short items, spoken by a familiar voice, by responding orally or non-verbally. They seek, understand and communicate simple, personal and factual information clearly and make some statements voluntarily. They will express an opinion simply. They speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation and use an increasing range of vocabulary and sentence patterns which are usually correct. Children read simple texts fairly clearly. They understand and respond simply to texts that contain an increasing range of words, phrases and short passages in familiar contexts. They will respond and express an opinion to poetry, stories and factual material. They begin to read independently and choose some texts voluntarily. Children write short basic sentences, using suitable and familiar vocabulary and patterns to communicate simple factual and personal information, fairly accurately. Familiar words are usually spelled correctly and they show some awareness of basic punctuation by using capital letters, full stops and question marks with a degree of consistency.

English and other additional language learners

The curricula examined in the three jurisdictions do not differentiate outcomes and experiences for additional language learners. In Wales, for example, children whose first language is not English or Welsh are categorized with children having additional learning needs (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2010). It is left to early childhood settings and schools to plan appropriate experiences that are mediated according to the language abilities of the learners. Supplementary documentation and guidelines are provided for schools to facilitate them in implementing learner-centred approaches (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2006). Among the principles that underpin the suggested pedagogical approaches

are that: i) children's prior knowledge is encoded in their L1; ii) learners' home languages should be affirmed, supported and used in the learning process; iii) the presence of additional language learners in a class provides opportunities for language awareness that benefits all learners. We document below some current practices in language curriculum integration that support additional language learners. We return to the needs of additional languages learners in Chapter 4 when we examine structure to facilitate language curriculum integration.

Synthesis of the three case studies

In the three case studies described above, we have seen many common elements and some differences that help inform our review of integrated language curricula. The major strength of the Alberta Learning model is the document produced for teachers that helps them link the specific learning outcomes for English with those already acquired in French (L1). In doing so, teachers can facilitate their students in transferring language skills from French to English and in deepening their metalinguistic awareness. This approach would be easier to implement in an Irish context where the same teacher teaches both languages in the primary school whereas there is a different teacher for English in Alberta. Instead of producing a bridging guide, we would recommend that transfer of skills across languages be part of the revision of the language curricula from the outset.

The L1 curricula in Scotland and in Wales facilitate children whose native language is Gàidhlig or Welsh in attaining the same outcomes in their L1 as native English-speaking peers. This approach in the revision of the language curricula in Ireland would help to address the concerns raised in the research in relation to native Irish speakers. It also facilitates a total early immersion approach in all-Irish schools. Utilising largely the same structures and descriptors for L2 teaching

and learning as employed in the L1 documents facilitates teachers in integrating skills across languages. Teaching the L2 may require the addition of objectives for pronunciation/phonology that might not be relevant to teaching the L1. Primary school teachers who are generalist in terms of pedagogy and not language specialists may require more assistance in implementing an integrated approach in practice. In that context the type of support in the 'Bridging guide' in Alberta and the '*Making the Link* document in Wales might be necessary if teachers are expected to integrate and transfer skills across languages in a systematic way.

Stating outcomes by level, as opposed to by grade, as in the examples from Scotland and Wales facilitates a more holistic approach to language learning and is similar to the structure provided by the CEFR discussed in the next chapter. This approach provides greater flexibility in accounting for the different contexts in which languages are taught in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The 'can do' statements in the language curricula in Scotland would lend themselves to the use of a tool such as the ELP discussed below.

Summary

The case studies examined exemplify different approaches to language curriculum design and possible ways of integrating learning across languages. In developing an integrated language curriculum in Ireland we would recommend using largely the same structures and descriptors for teaching and learning all languages such as listening and talking, reading, and writing. Linguistic skills should be initially acquired in the first school language of the child, depending on the school context, and transferred to the L2 at a later stage. In order to facilitate teachers in integrating across languages, skills and outcomes should be cross-referenced across L1 and L2.

LANGUAGE CURRICULUM INTEGRATION: PRACTICE

In this section we present concrete examples of curricular and pedagogical integration across languages. These examples are intended to illustrate the fact that (a) instruction for linguistic integration (teaching for transfer) *is* happening in a variety of contexts, and (b) that such instruction can produce both learning efficiencies and powerful affirmation of children's bilingual identities.

Promoting children's disposition to explore and become aware of cross-linguistic relationships

The research we have briefly reviewed above highlights the tendency of bilingual children to manifest greater awareness of various dimensions of language in comparison to monolingual children. This research intersects with a more general set of investigations carried out over the past 30 years into how a focus on language awareness can be injected into curriculum and pedagogy for all children. Sparked by Eric Hawkins' initial work in the early 1980s, which was later published as *Awareness of Language: An Introduction* (1987), an extensive literature has emerged in many countries on the benefits of explicitly promoting children's awareness of how language works. The continued vitality of this work is evident in websites such as the L'Eveil aux Langues (Awakening to Languages) site in Quebec[3] and many more[4]. Some countries have developed detailed guides to support teachers in promoting children's awareness of language. For example, the Luxembourg government has published *L'Ouverture aux langues: Vers des competences plurilingues et pluriculturelles*[5]. All of these sites elaborate a variety of activities for children of different ages intended to promote language awareness.

3 http://www.elodil.com/index.html
4 E.g. http://jaling.ecml.at/ and http://www.unige.ch/fapse/SSE/teachers/perregau/rech_eole.html
5 No date, available at http://www.men.public.lu/publications/syst_educatif_luxbg/langues/100222_ouverture_langues/100222_ouverture_langues.pdf

In the Irish context, the implications of the language awareness movement have been taken up in a paper by John McCarthy (1994) entitled 'The Case for Language Awareness in the Irish Primary School System'. It is beyond the scope of this report to summarise the many excellent suggestions made by McCarthy but the final sentence of his paper expresses the essence of his contribution: *Not to include some comparative/contrastive dimension where pupils already have experience in learning a second language is to ignore a very valuable resource* (p. 7).

In the context of the present paper, as curricula for both English and Gaeilge are reshaped in the coming years, we support the recommendation to include an explicit language awareness focus that highlights not only issues and activities *within* each language but also integration *across* languages as outlined in NCCA (2008b). This might involve coordination of an appropriate instructional programme in each language so that similar concepts and strategies (e.g. reading strategies) could be reinforced in a timely way across languages.

Creation of dual language multimedia books and projects

In recent years, projects in a number of countries have highlighted the instructional potential of supporting children in writing dual language books or projects and enabling them to share this work with a wide audience through the World Wide Web (Cummins & Early, 2011). Research carried out on this instructional innovation suggests that the creation of dual language digital books strongly reinforces students' sense of self and fuels sustained engagement with literacy[6].

6 See, for example, the Dual Language Showcase [http://www.thornwoodps.ca/dual/index.htm] and the Multiliteracies web site [www.multiliteracies.ca] in the Canadian context, and the Scoil Mhuire [Roscommon] website [http://www.conventprimaryroscommon.ie/gallery/G07.html] in the Irish context

Implementation of projects such as creation of dual language books (or in the case of immigrant children, trilingual books that include their home languages) requires teachers to adopt a bilingual instructional strategy that focuses on promoting cross-language transfer and the development of language awareness. A variety of implementation strategies are possible; for example, the teacher might encourage children to write initially in their stronger language (English in most cases) and work from that language to the weaker language (Irish in most cases). At other times, the reverse strategy might be employed, going from initial writing in Irish to the English version. In either case, children will need to grapple with linguistic equivalents in the other language and compare expressions and structures in each language, thereby promoting transfer of knowledge and skills across languages.

Two studies among EAL learners provide quantitative evidence that use and/or creation of dual language books in the early years of schooling can enhance aspects of language and literacy development. In a large-scale study of book creation among EAL children 4-6 years in Florida, Bernhard et al. (2006) demonstrated significant increases on a variety of English (L2) language development indices in comparison to children in early childhood programmes who did not engage in dual language book creation activities. The authors explain their findings as follows:

> The dramatic increase in EAP [Early Authors Program] children's scores can be explained, we suggest, by focusing on the essential elements of the program. The children's experiences as early authors allowed them to see themselves in their self-made books and to talk about their own lives and interests. This identity investment resulted in increased pride, both in themselves and in their families. (2006, p. 2399.)

A more recent study by Naqvi, Thorne, Pfitscher, Nordstokke, and McKeough (in press), showed that the reading of books in both English (by the teacher) and in children's home languages (by a parent or grandparent volunteer) significantly increased EAL children's graphophonemic knowledge in comparison to children who were read to in English only.

In addition to the research suggesting that the opportunity for children to showcase their bilingual accomplishments for a variety of audiences can result in affirmation of their emerging linguistic identities as bilingual and biliterate, there is also evidence that teaching for transfer can benefit children's performance in their weaker language. Auerbach (1993), for example, cites the research of Strohmeyer and McGrail (1988) who reported that adult students who explored ideas initially in their L1 (Spanish) and wrote first in that language *went on to write pieces in English that were considerably more developed than their usual ESL writing* (1993, p. 20).

Partner class exchanges

The technology is increasingly available within schools to enable children to engage in technology-mediated partner class exchanges using both Irish and English to carry out a variety of joint projects. These might include the creation of literature and art or the exploration of issues of social relevance to them and their communities (e.g. environmental issues linked to the science curriculum, history of our community, etc.). Although this type of exchange can obviously take place in just one language, there is considerable scope to inject a cross-linguistic dimension into such projects. For example, a partner class exchange with a bilingual school in Scotland might lend itself to analysis by both groups of children of the similarities and differences between Scottish Gàidhlig and Irish Gaeilge. Similar partner class exchange projects might compare different varieties of Gaeilge in the Irish context.

Depending on the arrangements worked out by the teachers involved, children might use Irish or English, or both languages, to communicate with the exchange class and to create a joint project (e.g. bilingual newsletters where children help edit each other's writing). A practical example of this type of exchange is the pen pals and class correspondence exchanges promoted by MLPSI.[7]

In summary, these examples illustrate the potential of linguistic integration and teaching for transfer to:

- enable children to increase their awareness of each language as a result of contrasts with their other language
- transfer concepts, skills, and strategies from one language to the other
- take ownership of the target language (Irish in most cases) as a result of being enabled to showcase their bilingual talents and emerging bilingual identities.

7 http://mlpsi.ie/images/stories/Tanya/Tipsonpenpalexchanges.pdf; http://www.mlpsi.ie/images/stories/Tanya/links_with_a_partner_schoo.pdf

Summary

A persuasive rationale for promoting children's awareness of language was initially articulated more than 30 years ago but it is only in recent years that educators have pursued this direction in the context of second language teaching. Teaching for language awareness and transfer across languages was not seen as an option in the context of the compartmentalised nature of L1 and L2 instruction within schools. This situation has begun to change during the past decade influenced by the fact that an increasing number of schools in Europe and North America are multilingual in character with significant numbers of immigrant-background children. Educators in these schools have implemented a wide variety of cross-lingual language awareness activities. In particular, they have documented the increased potential for children to connect their languages by means of projects such as the writing and web-publishing of dual language books and sister class connections that focus on intellectually substantive projects carried out by children from different language backgrounds. These projects not only encourage children to integrate their knowledge and skills across languages, they also provide opportunities for children to showcase their growing identities as bilingual and biliterate which, in turn, is likely to stimulate their personal investment in learning the target language.

CHAPTER 4: STRUCTURE TO FACILITATE CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Introduction

In this chapter we explore the kinds of structures that are implied in an integrated curriculum for children's language learning from 3-12 years, and how these structures accommodate the different language learning contexts in primary schools. Among the objectives contained in the *National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020* are those to revise the language curricula for English, Irish (L1) and Irish (L2) in order *to clarify the learning outcomes to be expected of learners … specifying clearly what children will be expected to achieve at each stage of the primary cycle* (Department of Education and Skills, 2011b, pp. 53-55). While the document recognises *the child-centred and integrated nature of the Primary School Curriculum and…that pupils will acquire literacy in both Irish and English* (ibid. pp. 53-56), there may be some unease with such an approach which can be seen as subject- rather than child-centred and disempowering of teachers. With the benefit of research and the experience of the Primary Curriculum reviews (NCCA, 2005, 2008a), we know that teachers experience constraints *in enacting or effecting the curriculum in their classes* (NCCA, 2005, p. 18). Although a revised language curriculum might specify learning outcomes for children there is no guarantee that suitable activities to achieve these outcomes would be enacted by teachers or experienced by children. There may be a need for *a certain shifting of curriculum control from the centre to the teacher* (NCCA, 2011, p. 20) in order to ensure that the curriculum experienced by the children is as close as possible to what is specified. We believe that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) and its associated European Language Portfolio (ELP) (Council of Europe, 2006) can offer a structure to enable the specification of learning outcomes and simultaneously promote teacher and learner autonomy. The CEFR and ELP will be described briefly and separately here but should be used in tandem. The purpose of this description is to explore the potential of these tools for facilitating the design and implementation of an integrated language curriculum. An in-depth analysis and description of these documents is beyond the scope of this review. The

reader who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of the CEFR and ELP is directed to the Council of Europe website (www.coe.int) and to the other sources cited in the text below. In presenting the CEFR we are not suggesting that it could be adopted without considerable adaptation for young learners in the Irish context. Nonetheless, it provides a structure that would enable us to map the development of language learning across languages.

Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR provides *a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and methods* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1) and as suggested by Little (2011a, p. 382) it has the *capacity to bring curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into much closer interdependence.* It is this latter element that is crucial for our purposes here. The CEFR is divided into six common reference levels of language proficiency: A1, A2 (Basic User), B1, B2 (Proficient User), C1, C2 (Independent User) as represented in table 4.1[1].

Table 4.1: CEFR Common reference levels

C2	Mastery	Independent User
C1	Effective operational proficiency	
B2	Vantage	Proficient User
B1	Threshold	
A2	Waystage	Basic User
A1	Breakthrough	

A central feature of the CEFR is the use of 'can do' statements to define its global scales as in the following example for A1 Basic User:

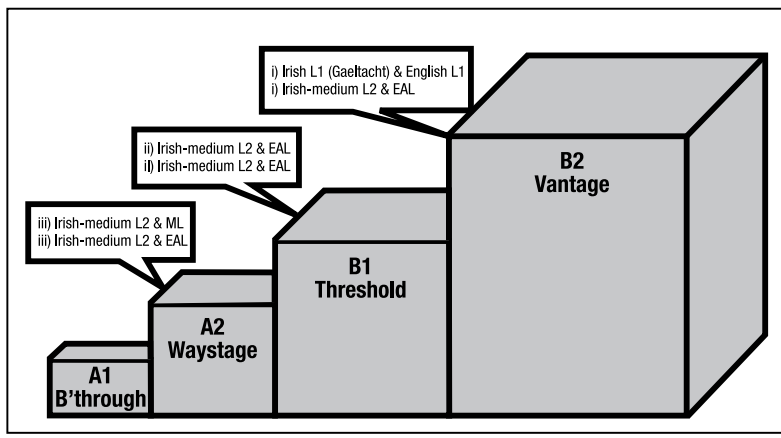
> *Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

1 See Appendix C1 for more detail on the proficiency levels. A copy of the CEFR is available at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf.

These descriptive statements would need to be further sub-divided to provide greater differentiation and adapted to meet the needs of different learning contexts as they *do not specifically embrace classroom communication, especially communication in which learners themselves are active learners* (Little, 2011a, p. 384).

Progress from one level of the CEFR to the next is not linear (Little & Perclová, 2001). It might take a learner twice as long to go from B1 to B2 as it took to go from A2 to B1 (Council of Europe, 2001). Figure 4.1 represents this notion in graphic form. Bearing in mind this non-linear progression, Figure 4.1 also tentatively maps the potential proficiency levels for children learning languages in primary school across different contexts. We return here to the groupings mapped out by the Council of Europe (2008) and referred to in Chapter 1 above. These groupings were: i) Irish (Gaeltacht) L1 and English L1; ii) Irish L2 in all-Irish schools and English as an additional language (EAL) in English-medium schools where the L2 is the medium of instruction; and iii) Irish L2 in English-medium schools and modern languages (ML). Levels A1 and A2 would be the most relevant for L2 learners of Irish and modern languages in primary school. The level of proficiency relevant to the L2 learner in Irish-medium schools and EAL learners might span A1-B1 while the native speaker might span A2-B2.

Figure 4.1: Progression rate across proficiency levels A1-B2



The CEFR has the potential to map out a pathway for learners where those with greater prior knowledge and exposure to Irish would progress further and more rapidly along the pathway. If we were to conceive a similar pathway for English, connections could be made across the pathways providing a more holistic profile of each child's language proficiency. The curricular structure reported above for Scotland and Wales would support this type of approach.

Each proficiency level in table 4.1 above can be further subdivided according to the five skills of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing (see Appendix B2). As children continue to develop their literacy skills throughout primary school it would be anticipated that their proficiency in listening and spoken interaction would be higher initially than in reading and writing. While it might be expected that native speakers would have reached mastery or C2 level by the end of primary school, the descriptors of the CEFR were written originally with highly literate adult L2 learners in mind and levels above B1 may be beyond the cognitive development of young learners as currently written (Hasselgreen, Kalédaité, Maldonado, & Pizorn, 2011). This observation contradicts to some extent the B2 level assigned to native speakers in figure 4.1. Native speaker children continue to develop their underlying linguistic competence in second-level education and throughout their lives. Some of the areas involved here would be vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, phonological control and orthographic control (see Appendix B3). In taking cognisance of this, the CEFR would need to be adapted to meet the needs of young language learners and native speakers[2]. Much work has already been done in Ireland through the Integrate Ireland Language and Training to adapt the CEFR and ELP for young primary additional language learners

2 Little (2011a) sets out a comprehensive research agenda of how the CEFR might be adapted and extended to meet the needs of language learners in changing circumstances. He recommends that small-scale projects would be the most effective way of achieving this.

such as IILT (2003, 2004) (see Appendix B4). The Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MPLSI) has also developed an ELP for fifth and sixth class children learning a modern language (MLPSI, 2005). This work provides a potential model for the development of a structure to support an integrated language curriculum.

European Language Portfolio

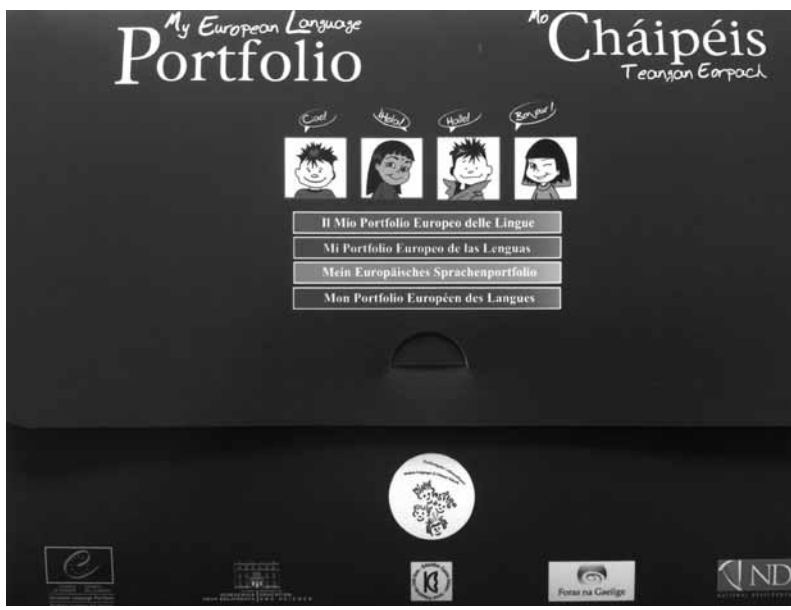
The ELP was developed as a companion to the CEFR. While the CEFR describes the learning outcomes for learners, the ELP helps to mediate the CEFR for learners with a pedagogical and reporting function (Little, 2011b). The ELP comprises three elements:

i. a language passport

ii. a language biography

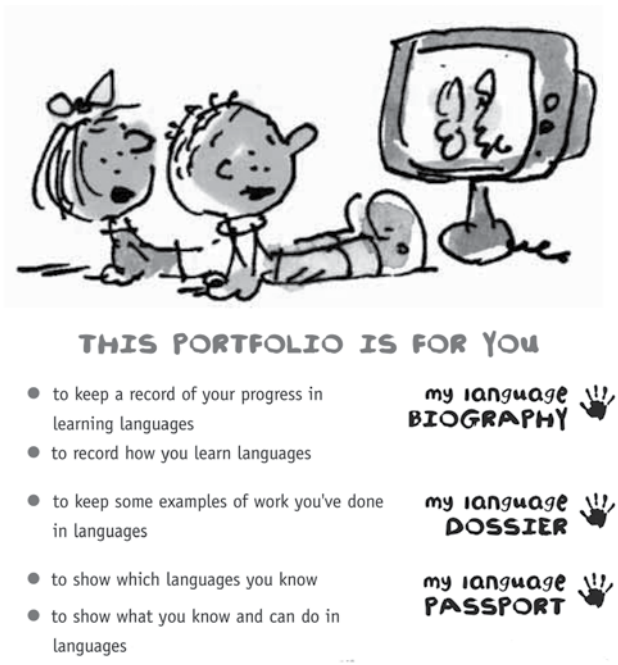
iii. a dossier.

Figure 4.2: Example of an ELP developed by the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MPLSI) www.mplsi.ie



Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show excerpts from two language portfolios developed for young language learners by MPLSI (2005) and CILT (2006). The passport allows the learner to record and summarise his/her linguistic identity and to self-assess his/her L2 proficiency against the CEFR self-assessment grid (see Appendix B2).

Figure 4.3: Example of an ELP developed by CILT (UK), the National Centre for Languages[3]



The language biography contains 'I can' descriptors that are linked to the CEFR proficiency levels. These descriptors enable the learner to 'identify learning goals and assess learning outcomes' (Little, 2011b, p. 9). The scales for these descriptors are based on the 'can do' CEFR proficiency levels A1-C2 as described above and categorised by communicative activity. Table 4.2 shows a section of the self-assessment grid with the 'I can' statements.

3 http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/home.aspx

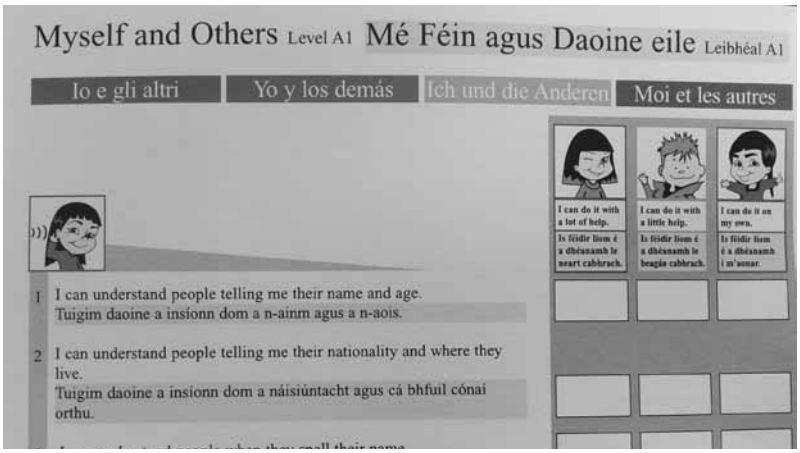
Table 4.2: A section of the CEFR self-assessment grid

Theory	A1	A2	B1	B2
Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.

Figure 4.4 shows an adaptation of the self-assessment grid for L2 learners of modern languages in fifth and sixth classes in Irish primary schools. It will be noted that the images of the children in the right-hand columns allow the learner to assess their level of

mastery according to whether they can perform the learning outcome with 'a lot of help', 'a little help' or 'on their own'. (There is another example in Appendix B5).

Figure 4.4: Example of self-assessment grid from MLPSI 'My Language Biography'



The final element, the dossier, is where the learner can collect evidence of his or her progress in the L2 and can also be used to store samples of their work.

The use of the three elements of the ELP gives it a role in assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment of learning (AoL) making assessment an integral part of the learning process for the learner (NCCA, 2007). Part of the rationale for this is to promote learner autonomy where the learner is enabled to take charge of his/her learning as discussed in principle 8 above. By engaging in activities such as linking the 'I can' statements of the language biography to the "can do" descriptors of the curriculum, learners and teachers are helped *to plan monitor and evaluate learning over a school year, a term, a month or a week* (Little, 2011b, p. 11). This also connects the specified and the experienced curriculum. The language biography has the potential to raise the learners' awareness of the relationship between planning and self-assessment on the one hand and learning strategies and styles on the other. Thus the learners are encouraged to reflect on how they learn

best. When the ELP is presented in the target language, it promotes the three interacting principles ('learner involvement, learner reflection and target language use') that govern success in L2 learning as defined by Little (2007, p. 23) above. The learner is actively involved in the learning process, he or she is required to reflect on what has been learned and must use the target language to record progress. Horan, Puig i Planella, & Rantz (2007) describe some examples of these activities:

> *Recording learning goals in the section entitled My Language Biography is a form of planning. Completing the "can do" statements also in the Biography requires pupils to consider their performance. In doing so they are monitoring their progress and evaluating their work. Completing the relevant sections of My Language Passport is a form of evaluation and self-assessment.* (p. 36)

Children could also complete the ELP for their L1. This would be useful in drawing attention to what they do with language and how language works, thereby enhancing their language awareness. Their self-assessment of L2 proficiencies would likely be more accurate if completed after they had completed L1. It would also facilitate their making explicit connections between the languages in line with the concept of teaching languages partly in relation to one another (Little, 2003).

For EAL children, the ELP provides an opportunity to showcase their emerging plurilingualism (L1, English, Irish) in a positive way. It can promote awareness among children of connections among their languages as well as the different functions their languages serve in their lives. In addition, for these children it can potentially serve to legitimate the adoption of a 'public multilingual identity' (Mc Daid, 2009) within the classroom. The CEFR and ELP have been adapted and used previously for EAL children in Ireland by IILT (2003, 2004).

They are being used for this purpose in other jurisdictions also such as Northern Ireland. Much of this work to date has been implemented by language support teachers, however. If the CEFR was used as a framework to map language progression for an integrated language curriculum, it would enable teachers and children to assess their language skills across languages and to know *where they are in the learning continuum, where they need to go [and] how best to get there* (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008g, p. 7). Additionally, EAL children could include their knowledge of their home language(s) in their language portfolio thereby 'normalising' their multilingualism and sharing their multiple linguistic accomplishments with teachers, parents, and peers.

Essentially, the ELP represents a useful component of a 'language awareness toolkit' that serves to connect language learning in the classroom to children's lives outside the classroom. It can thus be conceptualised within a child-centred orientation to pedagogy that encourages children to assume a greater degree of control over and personal responsibility for their language learning and literacy development in two or more languages.

Little (2011b) draws attention to some concerns that arose in the piloting of the ELP. Among them were that learners would be unable to self-assess, that they might overestimate their proficiency or that they might cheat in some way. These issues need not be a cause of concern if the ELP is used in the way it was intended, as a central part of teaching and learning, where we teach the children to reflect on their learning and how to use the ELP as a self-assessment tool. This process would require professional development for teachers and could be based on the previous experience of the IILT and MLPSI models. We would support Little's (2011a) call for small-scale research projects to develop this area, such as the work undertaken in the NCCA's Primary School Network: Language.

Summary

The CEFR and ELP presented here provide structures that could facilitate an integrated language curriculum. We saw in the case of Scotland and Wales that structuring L1 and L2 language curricula with similar experiences and outcomes can facilitate transfer of skills across languages but that alone may not be sufficient in making it a reality in classrooms. The manner in which the language curricula in Scotland were designed most closely resembles the CEFR with the use of 'can do' statements. We believe that this structure also requires a tool such as the ELP that makes explicit for the learner the links across languages. Stating learning outcomes in terms of 'can do' statements linked to a framework such as the CEFR lends flexibility to implementation in a variety of contexts. In Irish primary schools these contexts currently range from native speakers to Irish-medium L2 and EAL learners to the Irish and modern language L2 learners. We saw in table 1.3 above the degree of difference and variation across languages and school contexts. Those contexts could become more complex in the future if schools adopt a CLIL approach as recommended in the Government's 20-year strategy for Irish. Instead of viewing language learning according to context, we believe that it is more productive to approach it from the point of view of the language learner. For ultimately, it is within the learner that language skills will be integrated and transferred across languages. The challenge is to design a flexible curriculum to facilitate this. The 'I can' statements of the ELP combined with the 'can do' statements of the CEFR provide such a structure enabling children to be active participants in the learning process. These tools facilitate children in self-assessing their learning, in monitoring their progress, in setting future learning goals and in comparing and transferring

their skills across languages. This has the potential to make the language lesson more relevant to the child thereby enhancing learner motivation. Each child might see a direct link between the success criteria of a series of lessons and his or her progress in terms of 'I can' statements.

The utilisation of the CEFR and ELP in the context of revised language curricula would require some small-scale research projects to determine the most effective means of implementation. Teachers would also require professional development in assisting them in using these tools effectively. Considerable experience has already been gained in an Irish context through IILT and MLPSI which could be built upon to good effect. While research projects such as this might be seen to delay the revision of language curricula, they would bring the process of curriculum design closer to the teacher and the classroom. This is more likely to bring the specified and enacted curricula closer together in the longer term enhancing the curriculum experienced by the learners.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research review was to examine the feasibility and advisability of developing an integrated language curriculum for Irish primary schools. In doing so we were asked to concentrate on four key research questions. We present our conclusions and recommendations under each of these four questions.

How can the idea of an integrated language curriculum be defined?

An integrated language curriculum would address three dimensions of integration: (i) integration within the teaching of a specific language, (ii) integration across the curriculum, and (iii) integration across languages. Our review has focused only on the third dimension, integration across languages.

Our review of the current PSC revealed that its compartmentalised nature is not suitable for the multilingual context and the diverse needs of learners that have emerged in schools since it was designed in 1999. We demonstrated how learning efficiencies can be achieved if teachers explicitly draw children's attention to similarities and differences between their languages and we recommend that this type of pedagogy should be an integral part of an integrated language curriculum.

What are the key principles of language learning and development which should underpin a language curriculum for children aged 3 to 12 years?

We presented ten principles in Chapter 2 that we believe should underpin an integrated language curriculum. There is general agreement in the second language acquisition research that successful L2 learning will involve extensive input in the L2 that learners can make sense of together with an explicit focus on formal aspects of the language. Learners also require opportunities for interaction in the L2 in both oral and written forms. In the revision of the Gaeilge

L2 curriculum, our review shows that more attention may need to be paid to the role of literacy in supporting language development. The revision of language curricula needs to differentiate more explicitly between the needs of L1 and L2 learners and the differing contexts in which they are acquiring their language skill.

Where is the evidence for it in policy and practice? What are the expected outcomes by 8 years of age for children's learning and development in the different language learning contexts described in the background to this research?

We documented the organisation of integrated language curricula in Alberta, Scotland and Wales. We also saw examples of practice where teachers were building on children's language awareness, creating dual language books and engaging in partner class exchanges. We recommend that the revision of language curricula in Ireland would follow the best examples of this practice. There should be one L1 curriculum which children would follow in English or Irish depending on school context. The experiences and outcomes of this L1 curriculum should be cross-referenced with the L2 and modern language curricula enabling teachers to promote the explicit transfer of concepts and skills from L1 to L2 (and from L2 to L1) and to deepen children's metalinguistic awareness. Largely the same structures and descriptors should be used across L1 and L2 curricula. Effective implementation of these changes will require professional development for teachers. Learning outcomes should be stated by level, as opposed to by class thereby providing a flexible structure to cater for different learning paths and contexts.

What kinds of structures are implied in an integrated curriculum for children's language learning from 3 to 12 years, and how would these structures accommodate the different language learning contexts described in the background to the research?

When examining potential structures for an integrated language curriculum we believe that the issue should be considered from the point of view of the learner rather than the learning context. An adapted form of CEFR and ELP could provide a suitable structure upon which a language learning pathway could be mapped. This would be a learner-centred structure where children could map their progress across languages. One of the strengths of such an approach from an L2 perspective is that the experience of learning Irish as an L2 for the majority of children, would establish a solid foundation upon which they would build the learning of third and fourth languages later on. We recommend that small-scale research projects be carried out, building on the work of IILT and MPLSI, to adapt the CEFR and ELP to the Irish primary school context from L1 to L2 to L3. Such research should also assess what supports teachers would require in order to use these tools effectively.

GLOSSARY

Audio-lingual method	This method was based on a behaviourist approach to language learning where learners repeated sentences orally and learned grammatical drills.
Corrective feedback	This is an indication by the teacher to a child that he/she has made an error in the target language. When this occurs the teacher can: • recast it – repeat what the child has said in the correct form • give an elicitation prompt – question, or raise eyebrow • repeat the error – usually with emphasis on the error • seek clarification – e.g. I don't understand • recast and continue not waiting for the child to correct • ignore the error.
Explicit knowledge	Explicit knowledge is the conscious learning of, and attention to, grammatical rules and features of the target language. When the learner knows the rule, he/she is able to explain it simply in his/her own words. This knowledge is not necessarily easily accessed in spontaneous interaction.
Focus on form	Drawing the learners' attention overtly to linguistic features as they arise incidentally in lessons where the main focus is on communication or meaning.

Focus on forms	Traditional grammar lessons focusing on discrete language elements in separate lessons such as verb endings, declensions, tenses etc.
Formulaic expression	A sequence of words that has been memorised or stored. It is easily accessible for spontaneous use. It can be referred to as a prefabricated chunk.
Francophone	French speaking, usually as first language but sometimes as a second or additional language. It can apply to an individual or a community.
Grammar translation method	In this teaching method an emphasis is placed on learning grammatical rules and memorising vocabulary in order to translate texts from L1 to L2 and vice versa.
Implicit knowledge	Implicit knowledge is unconsciously acquired through input and language use. A child may be able to use the correct form of an irregular verb but may not be able to explain why. This type of knowledge is easily accessible in spontaneous communication.
Interdependence hypothesis	To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly.

Language task	The main focus should be on meaning and there should be an information gap which compels the learners to communicate in order to fill the gap. In doing so they must draw on their own linguistic resources and there should be a clear target to the task such as spotting difference, completing a picture or supplying information.
Metalinguistic awareness	The ability to see language as an object, to be able to think and talk about it. When a learner realises, for example, that the word 'dog' can be a 'madra' in Irish or a 'chien' in French, they come to realise that these words are only labels and not the essence of the object itself. They learn to separate form and meaning in this way.
Task-based language teaching	Learners use the L2 to try to achieve the goals of a task in whatever way they can with an emphasis on developing fluency and language use. Accuracy is seen as secondary to language use.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A1

Alberta, Canada

The Direction de l'éducation française (2001) of Alberta Learning produced a bridging guide for English language arts (ELA) teachers of Francophone students. These 'teachers must ensure that francophone program students build upon their established French language skills when learning English' (p. 1). The guide consists of a bridge mapping specific learning outcomes across the French and English programmes. The ELA teacher can see at a glance the skills that the learners are expected to have achieved already in French so that they can build on the prior knowledge of the students and help them to transfer them to English. The system in Alberta differs from that of Ireland in so far as children have one teacher for most aspects of the curriculum and a different teacher for ELA. It should be easier to facilitate the transfer of skills across languages in the Irish primary school as the same teacher teaches all subject areas.

Ontario, Canada

The curriculum document for language in Ontario contains no reference to integration across languages. The French as a Second Language document assumes 'that the language skills and knowledge developed in English at a particular grade level can be used in learning French' (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 4).

A document published by the Ontario Ministry for Education on French immersion is more explicit on the need for collaboration in relation to integration across languages: 'By working together, English and French Immersion teachers are able to design integrated classroom experiences where the communication skills taught in one language are supported and reinforced in the other' (Ontario

Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 2). This document further recommends that the underlying literacy skills of both languages should form the basis of school planning where English and French teachers contribute to a 'connected literacy block' (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 3).

Finland

The Core Curriculum for Basic Education in Finland provides for a variety of native and additional languages and outlines detailed learning objectives for various grade levels across different language contexts. Each context appears to be dealt with in isolation with an underlying assumption that for example *the teaching of Finnish as a second language assumes joint planning and cooperation among the teachers* (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, p. 95). There is a similar statement on p. 270 in relation to immersion languages. There is recognition that transfer may take place between skills acquired in mother-tongue instruction and in the immersion language, particularly if instruction in the immersion language commences early (p. 270).

Assessment criteria for the learning of languages other than the mother tongue is linked to a Language Proficiency Scale (p. 278) which was adapted from the CEFR for language learning, teaching and assessment.

New Zealand

There are separate documents in the New Zealand curriculum for English-medium and Maori-medium education both of which are official languages. Additional languages are not taught until grade 7. No evidence was found in curriculum documentation of integration across languages.

Northern Ireland

The curriculum for Irish-medium (IM) education in Northern Ireland (CCEA, 2009) is particularly interesting for the current research as the language learning context closely resembles that of all-Irish school children in the Republic of Ireland. The IM curriculum recognises an immersion phase where the majority of children are English speakers who are immersed in Irish with the teaching of English delayed until Key Stage 1 (years 3 and 4, age 6-8). Although the teacher speaks exclusively in Irish the children respond initially in English, they speak English to one another and to other adults in the school environment. The different contexts in which Irish is acquired across the curriculum are outlined. The role of English and translanguaging are recognised where children might report to others in Irish, experiences that they had through English and vice versa. This could involve responding to texts read in Irish through English also. At Key Stage 2, for example, teachers are advised to avoid duplication in the teaching of different genres of writing by teaching them in either Irish or English.

Due to the fact that children will have acquired literacy skills in Irish at foundation level, their experience of learning literacy skills in English will be different to that of children in English-medium schools. The documentation advises that through careful planning, teachers can facilitate the transfer of literacy skills acquired through Irish to English at Key Stage 1.

Scotland

The Scottish Office Education Department (1993) refers to 'language across the curriculum' in its curriculum documentation for Gàidhlig-medium learners. It suggests that:

> *[S]chools should aim to bring pupils to the stage of broadly equal competence in Gaelic and English, in all the skills, by*

> *the end of P7. To facilitate this, schools should produce a policy for language which embraces both Gaelic and English. This should allow for the development of all the language skills in both languages by the end of P7 and having given primacy to Gaelic should recognise that skills acquired in Gaelic may be expected to transfer readily to English.*

As can be seen from this excerpt it is left to schools to develop a language policy to integrate the skills across languages while acknowledging that it should be a relatively straightforward process.

In the current curriculum documentation the learning outcomes in English, Gaelic (learners of Gaelic as L2), Gàidhlig-medium and modern languages are all presented using the same structure and categories, listening and talking, reading and writing. This is done *[I]n order to make clear the links between learning in English, Gaelic, Gàidhlig and modern languages* (Learning and Teaching Scotland, n.d, p. 2), the experiences and outcomes in all of these areas are organised within the same structure. The learning outcomes are not, however, cross-referenced across English, Gaelic, Gàidhlig-medium and modern languages.

Singapore

An examination of the primary school curriculum for Singapore where there are four official languages, English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil failed to reveal any information about integration across languages relevant to the current research.

South Australia

The curriculum in South Australia (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2001) recognises three types of languages: alphabetic, non-alphabetic and aboriginal. While acknowledging that there is overlap between the different languages, there are distinct

documents for each language type. Each document adopts a similar structure, and it is possible to map development across languages. Another feature of the curriculum in South Australia is the identification of different learner pathways that take account of prior learning in a particular language and the stage at which learning in that language commences in school. This situation would be applicable to native-Irish speakers in Ireland and children who are learning a modern language in fifth or sixth class.

Wales

The context for language learning in Welsh schools is similar to that in Ireland where English and modern foreign languages are taught together with Welsh as a second language and Welsh for native speakers of Welsh and in Welsh-medium schools. ACCAC, the Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (2003) produced a document for teachers to assist them in making the link between the different languages taught in their schools.

> *It aims to help all language teachers develop pupils' language learning skills (in English and/or Welsh) from the beginning of Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 3. It also aims to build on these skills to support the learning of a modern foreign language in Key Stage 3.* (p. 2)

The document contains grids that enable teachers to map progression in attainment targets for the language skills of oracy (listening and speaking), reading and writing across languages. It also contains suggested activities to promote language awareness which can enhance children's understanding of how languages work.

Appendix A2

Case study 1: Alberta, Canada

In this case study we examine how Alberta Learning has made links across languages for Francophone learners of English. The students learn French in a context similar to native Irish speakers in Ireland in so far as there is a pervasive English influence in the environment.

The English Language Arts (ELA) programme in Alberta is organised around five general learning outcomes. These are broad statements 'identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate with increasing competence and confidence from Kindergarten to Grade 12' (Alberta Learning, 2000, p. 3). An example of these statements is the following general outcome:

General Outcome 2
Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

2.1 Use strategies and cues

- Use prior knowledge
- Use comprehension strategies
- Use textual cues
- Use phonics and structural analysis
- Use references

2.2 Respond to texts

2.3 Understand forms, elements and techniques

2.4 Create original text (ibid. p. 4, 16)

As can be seen, the general statement is followed by sub-headings 2.1 – 2.4. Each of these headings is further subdivided with more specific outcomes such as those for 2.1 above. These are: 'use prior knowledge', 'use comprehension strategies', etc. If we examine one of these outcomes, 'use prior knowledge', we see in table A2.1 below that each one is further elaborated with 'specific outcome statements—expected by the end of each grade' (ibid. p. 5). We have included kindergarten to grade 3 here for illustrative purposes.

Table A2.1: Use of prior knowledge - specific learning outcomes by grade level

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Use prior knowledge			
connect oral language with print and pictures understand that stories, information and personal experiences can be recorded in pictures and print and can be listened to, read or viewed expect print and pictures to have meaning and to be related to each other in print and other media texts understand that print and books are organized in predictable ways	use knowledge of how oral language is used in a variety of contexts to construct and confirm meaning use previous experience and knowledge of oral language to make connections to the meaning of oral, print and other media texts use knowledge of context, pictures, letters, words, sentences, predictable patterns and rhymes in a variety of oral, print and other media texts to construct and confirm meaning use knowledge of print, pictures, book covers and title pages to construct and confirm meaning	use knowledge of how oral and written language is used in a variety of contexts to construct and confirm meaning connect personal experiences and knowledge of words, sentences and story patterns from previous reading experiences to construct and confirm meaning use knowledge of the organizational structures of print and stories, such as book covers, titles, pictures and typical beginnings, to construct and confirm meaning	share ideas developed through interests, experiences and discussion that are related to new ideas and information identify the different ways in which oral, print and other media texts, such as stories, textbooks, letters, pictionaries and junior dictionaries, are organized

(ibid. p. 18–19)

If we take the first specific learning outcome (SLO) for each grade level above 'Use prior knowledge' (columns 1-4 in blue) and consult *Bridging the Français and ELA programmes of study* (Direction de l'éducation française, 2001, p. 18) we see in table A2.2 that each of these SLOs is matched to a corresponding SLO in the Français programme of study. The two SLOs with a check mark (✓) in columns one and four have corresponding SLOs in the Français programme at the same grade level. The two SLOs with an arrow (→) in columns two and three have corresponding SLOs in the Français programme after the grade level in which they appear for English[1]. The letters C, L, S, R, and W, represent the curriculum strands; culture, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The letter or number immediately succeeding this letter represents the Grade level (Kindergarten, Grade 1 etc.). The numbers in parentheses represent the numbers of the corresponding SLOs in the Français programme.

Table A2.2: Linking SLOs across Français and ELA programmes

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Use prior knowledge			
✓ connect oral language with print and pictures LK(46, 60), SK(265)	→ use previous experience and knowledge of oral language to make connections to the meaning of oral, print and other media textsC3(4), L3(64, 109), R3(320, 383, 411)	→ connect personal experiences and knowledge of words, sentences and story patterns from previous reading experiences to construct and confirm meaning C3(4), L3(64, 110), R3(320, 383, 411), W3(455)	✓ share ideas developed through interests, experiences and discussion that are related to new ideas and information R3(320, 383)

If we examine an English translation of the Français programme for the two corresponding SLOs LK 46 and 60 we see that they are as follows:

1 While it may appear strange that the skills in the L2 (English) would come before those of the L1 (French) it may be the case that the curricula for French and English were written independently of one another. When one bears in mind the sociolinguistic background of students in francophone schools it may not be so unusual. Nonetheless it makes integration across languages more difficult.

Listening

(46) Make predictions about content from illustrations and pictures that accompany an oral presentation in order to guide listening

- recognize that illustrations and pictures support meaning
- describe what is seen
- give meaning to illustrations and pictures
- imagine what the content might be

(60) Use illustrations to support understanding - establish relationships between the intended message and interpretation of the illustration (Direction de l'éducation française, 2001, p. 79)

Linking learning outcomes across language programmes in this way facilitates teachers in integrating skills across the two languages. As noted above, it appears that the bridging of the two programmes took place after each curriculum had been designed. In the case of the revision of the English and Gaeilge curricula in Ireland, we would recommend that they be designed in tandem with integration in mind from the beginning.

Summary

The sociolinguistic background of Francophone learners in Alberta is similar to that of native Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht where English is the dominant language of society and contact with their L1 may be confined largely to home and school. Alberta Learning produced a document for teachers that helps them link the specific learning outcomes for English with those already acquired in French (L1). In doing so, teachers can facilitate their students in transferring language skills from French to English and in deepening their metalinguistic awareness. This is particularly the case for the literacy outcomes

presented above. This approach would be easier to implement in an Irish context where the same teacher teaches both languages in the primary school whereas there is a different teacher for English in Alberta. Instead of producing a bridging guide, we would recommend that the transfer of skills across languages be part of the revision of the language curricula from the outset.

Case study 2: Scotland

This case study describes the provision for language learning in the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland. All information is drawn from Learning and Teaching Scotland (2009). There are four different language curricula at primary level in Scotland which mirror the PSC in many ways:

i. literacy and English (English as L1)

ii. literacy and Gàidhlig (Gàidhlig as L1 or a first school language in a Gàidhlig-medium school or unit)

iii. Gaelic (learners) (Gaelic as L2, Gaelic is used to distinguish it from Gàidhlig as L1)

iv. modern languages.

Each curriculum area is presented in two sections:

i. principles and practice

ii. experiences and outcomes.

As one might expect the experiences and outcomes sections specify the intended language experiences of children and learning outcomes that they will achieve as they progress through different levels. The document uses the same three organisers to structure the statements for each language area which facilitates integration and linkage across

languages. The three organisers are:

i. listening and talking

ii. reading

iii. writing.

The document refers to levels and stages as opposed to classes or grades as outlined in table A2.3. It is the early, first and second levels that are of interest to us here.

Table A2.3: Levels and stages of Curriculum for Excellence, Scotland

Level	Stage
Early	The preschool years and P1*, or later for some.
First	To the end of P4*, but earlier or later for some.
Second	To the end of P7*, but earlier or later for some.
Third and fourth	S1 to S3, but earlier for some. The fourth level broadly equates to SCQF level 4.

*P1 is equivalent to junior infants in Ireland, P4 = second class and P7 = fifth class.

Literacy, literacy and English, literacy and Gàidhlig

In the following tables we examine the statements of experiences and outcomes on the theme of 'using information'. In table A2.4 we see the statements for 'finding and using information' (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2009, p. 27). The identical statements are repeated for literacy and English on p. 132 and for literacy and Gàidhlig on p. 157. This pattern is repeated for all other subdivisions of listening and talking, reading, and writing.

Table A2.4: Statements for literacy

Literacy: Listening and talking			
	Early	**First**	**Second**
Finding and using information – when listening to, watching and talking about texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary.	I listen or watch for useful or interesting information and I use this to make choices or learn new things. LIT 0-04a	As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. LIT 1-04a	As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, main ideas and supporting detail contained within the text, and use this information for different purposes. LIT 2-04a
		As I listen or watch, I am learning to make notes under given headings and use these to understand what I have listened to or watched and create new texts. LIT 1-05a	As I listen or watch, I can make notes, organise these under suitable headings and use these to understand ideas and information and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-05a
		I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful for others. LIT 1-06a	I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. LIT 2-06a

The only exception is an extra section in the literacy and Gàidhlig statements on p. 155 as shown in table A2.5 below. So apart from the statements in table A2.5, the curricula for literacy and English, and literacy and Gàidhlig are identical. Children are expected to have similar learning experiences and achieve largely the same outcomes regardless of whether they are in an English- or Gàidhlig-medium school. This facilitates the teacher in selecting suitable learning activities for children to achieve learning outcomes across languages regardless of school language.

Table A2.5: Statements for literacy and Gàidhlig that don't appear for literacy and English

Literacy and Gàidhlig: Listening and talking			
	Early	**First**	**Second**
Tools for listening and talking – to help me when interacting or presenting within and beyond my place of learning	As I listen and take part in conversations, I discover new words and phrases. I use these to help talk to, play and work with others. GAI 0-02a	As I listen and take part in conversations, I can use new words and phrases to help me to communicate. GAI 1-02a	As I listen and take part in conversations, I can use new words, phrases and Gàidhlig idiom to help me to engage in a coherent manner using extended vocabulary and more complex language structures. GAI 2-02a

Gaelic learners and modern languages

In this section we examine the experiences and outcomes for Gaelic (learners) (LGL) and modern languages (MLAN). As was the case with literacy and English, and literacy and Gàidhlig above, the statements for Gaelic (learners) and modern languages are the same for the second level and above. The only difference in the statements is that modern languages do not commence in the majority of schools until P5 or the beginning of Stage 2. As a consequence of this, there are no statements for early and first levels. When one compares table A2.6 for Gaeilge (learners) and table A2.7 for modern languages it can be seen that the statements for second level in both tables are very similar, incorporating the same concepts with slightly different wording in LGL 2-06b and MLAN 2-06b.

Table A2.6: Statements for Gaelic (learners) LGL

Gaelic (learners): Listening and talking			
	Early	**First**	**Second**
Organising and using information	I can listen, watch and use play to explore aspects of Gaelic culture. LGL 0-06a	I can listen and respond in different ways to the experiences of others when exploring aspects of Gaelic culture. LGL 1-06a	I can deliver a brief presentation on a familiar topic using familiar language and phrases. LGL 2-06a I have worked with others, using ICT and other media where appropriate, and can contribute successfully to a presentation in English, supported by Gaelic vocabulary, on an aspect of Gaelic culture and tradition. LGL 2-06b

Table A2.7: Statements for modern languages MLAN

Modern languages: Listening and talking			
	Early	**First**	**Second**
Organising and using information	Not applicable	Not applicable	I can deliver a brief presentation on a familiar topic using familiar language and phrases. MLAN 2-06a I have worked with others, using a variety of media including ICT where appropriate, and can contribute successfully to a presentation in English, supported by use of the language I am learning, on an aspect of life in a country where the language I am learning is spoken. MLAN 2-06b

As was the case with English and Gàidhlig-medium learners above, teachers are enabled to integrate learning across languages and to build on skills acquired previously in another language. The statements as they are structured for L2 learners do not appear to make explicit connections to skills previously acquired in the child's

L1. The section on principles and practice for Gaelic (learners) requires teachers to draw on a wide variety of approaches including 'developing children and young people's understanding of *how they have acquired and learned their first language* and how this relates to their study of Gaelic' (ibid. p. 109, italics added). The principles and practice of modern languages contains a similar statement where teachers are expected to support children in becoming '**successful learners**, who can reflect on how they have acquired and learned their first language and *how this can assist them in further language learning*' (ibid. p. 172, bold text in original, italics added).

Both sections on principles and practices for LGL and MLAN contain statements concerning lifelong learning and the learning of other languages. In MLAN for example children should gain an 'awareness of the skills required to be an effective learner of languages' and 'establish a solid basis for the lifelong learning of modern languages' (ibid. p. 174). The LGL states that teachers through their teaching approaches will 'establish a solid foundation by the end of primary school for the lifelong learning of languages which encourages young people to learn, should they choose, additional languages later' (ibid. p. 109).

Summary

The context in which languages are taught in primary schools in Scotland is very similar to that of Ireland where the majority of children are native speakers of English and learn Gaelic as an L2 with a minority who learn Gàidhlig as L2. Modern languages are also taught in primary school. All language curriculum documents use the same three organisers of listening and talking, reading, and writing to structure the learning outcomes.

In relation to L1, the curriculum sets out statements of experiences and outcomes for literacy in terms of the competences that children

can display. The same statements apply to English and Gàidhlig with one minor exception (see table 3.5). These statements are active statements of what the child can do and resemble the 'can do' statements of the CEFR discussed below. By structuring the curriculum in this way, Gàidhlig-medium teachers can develop the children's language skills in Gàidhlig first and enable the children to transfer them to English at a later stage. It is not clear to what extent children can self-assess their progress using the 'can do' statements. At the very least, they provide an instructional tool for teachers to discuss language learning goals and strategies with the children which could serve to raise language and metalinguistic awareness. The children may need a tool such as the ELP discussed below in order to help them self-assess their language ability.

The approach to L1 is replicated for Gaelic as an L2 and for Modern Languages (MLAN). The only difference being that Gaelic starts at preschool level and MLAN are not introduced until P5 (3rd class). The learning outcomes from that point on are identical. The study of Gaelic L2 and MLAN are seen as foundations for the lifelong learning of additional languages where children are supported in reflecting on how they learned their first language. In this way children are enabled to become aware of effective language learning strategies.

While the curriculum documents adopt the same structure, L1 and L2 operate as parallel systems without explicit links, for example, between L2 skills and those already acquired in L1. More explicit links would make it easier for teachers to integrate the various skills across languages.

Case study 3: Wales

Introduction

The context for language teaching and learning in Wales is quite similar to that which exists in Ireland. Wales is a bilingual country where Welsh enjoys official language status along with English under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Welsh is taught in three different contexts:

i. traditional bilingual schools

ii. designated bilingual schools

iii. Welsh L2.

Traditional bilingual schools are located predominantly in Welsh rural heartland areas where there is a high proportion of Welsh speakers. Children in these schools are not introduced to English until 7 years of age and are reasonably bilingual and biliterate by the end of primary school at age 11. These schools are similar to Gaeltacht schools in Ireland. The designated bilingual schools mainly located in English dominated areas are similar to all-Irish schools in Ireland. The curriculum is taught almost entirely through the medium of Welsh in the designated bilingual schools employing an immersion approach. Welsh is taught as a L2 in all English-medium schools and children are required to study it from 5-16 years.

The position of Welsh in Wales is stronger than the position of Irish in Ireland. There are more native speakers of Welsh and more businesses function through the medium of Welsh. Welsh is the medium of instruction in 20.8% of schools (http://wales.gov.uk) compared to 7.4% in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2011a). Nonetheless, Welsh is still a minority language under threat from the pervasiveness of English. That threat is most acute in Welsh-speaking heartlands where adolescents are increasingly socialising

through English outside of school (Jones & Martin-Jones, 2004) similar to native Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007). The transmission of Welsh to the next generation shows similar patterns to Irish also where the number of children in Welsh-medium schools is increasing, while the number of children acquiring Welsh as a first language is declining (Jones & Martin-Jones, 2004, p. 54).

In order to counteract this influence, the Welsh Assembly Government has a National Action Plan for a bilingual Wales *'Iaith Pawb'* (everyone's language), comparable to the Irish Government's *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language* (Government of Ireland, 2010). The action plan contains ambitious plans to increase the numbers of Welsh speakers and to make Wales a truly bilingual country.

National curriculum

The national curriculum in Wales has undergone revision and restructuring and has been subject to phased implementation in recent years. The curriculum has been organised according to Foundation Phase[2], and Key Stages 2-4 as can be seen in table A2.8. It is the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 that are of greatest interest to us in our review.

Table A2.8: Structure of the national curriculum in Wales

	Pupils' ages	Year groups
Foundation Phase	3-7	Preschool, 1-2
Key Stage 2	7-11	3-6
Key Stage 3	11-14	7-9
Key Stage 4	14–16	10–11

Many documents have been produced to support curriculum implementation. Among the documents is the *Skills Framework for 3 to 19-Year-Olds in Wales* (Department for Children, Education,

2 The Foundation Phase replaced Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum from the start of the 2011/12 school year.

Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008e). This document was produced in order to ensure a balance between the acquisition of subject knowledge and the development of skills. The document cites Estyn's (2002) recommendation that 'schools will need to devote attention to developing attitudes to learning – affecting the disposition of learners and developing their learning skills – as well as to delivering formal instruction.' The four key skills highlighted are thinking, communication, ICT and number which are to be developed across the curriculum. The document is not language specific and maintains that thinking and communication can and should be developed in English, Welsh and in other languages. A core feature of the development of communication is 'that skills learned in one language should support the development of skills in another' (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong learning and Skills, 2008a, p. 6) and that it should also support bilingual and multilingual development. This principle also permeates all the other language curriculum documents (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008a, 2008d, 2008f). A key feature of the MFL curriculum is 'a greater emphasis on learners making links with and using common skills and knowledge from other languages' (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008d, p. 8).

Communication

We now focus on the skill of communication which is most relevant to the area of language learning. The four elements of communication and their associated strands can be seen in table A2.9.

Table A2.9: Elements and strands of the communication skill

Elements	Strands
Oracy	Developing information and ideas Presenting information and ideas
Reading	Locating, selecting and using information using reading strategies Responding to what has been read

Elements	Strands
Writing	Organising ideas and information Writing accurately
Wider communication skills	Communicating ideas and emotions Communicating information

In table A2.10 we present a progression table for the strand 'Locating, selecting and using information using reading strategies' as an illustration of the manner in which each element and strand is presented in the documentation. All elements use this six-column continuum and progression is cumulative as you read from left to right. We have added row 2 in blue type to indicate the stage to which each level notionally refers to and to the approximate age of the students. The description of learners' progression in this fashion is not unlike the learning outcomes for Alberta in tables A2.1 and A2.2 above; the 'early, first and second' levels of the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland in tables A2.3- A2.7; and the 'can do' statements of the CEFR in table 4.2.

Table A2.10: Developing communication across the curriculum: Reading

Reading: Locating, selecting and using information using reading strategies					
Beginning Foundation Phase (3yrs)	**End Foundation Phase (7 yrs)**	**Key Stage 2 (11 yrs)**	**Key Stage 3 (14 yrs)**	**Key Stage 4 (16 yrs)**	**Post -16 (up to 19 yrs)**
Begin to differentiate between print and pictures.	Decode text and begin to find simple information using or-ganisational devices and available clues to deduce meaning.	Use a range of word identification skills and different strategies to locate and reorganise ideas and information from different sources.	Use different reading strategies to locate, select and summarise information, identifying accurately the key points.	Use a range of strategies to identify key points, ideas and lines of reasoning.	Select, summarise and synthesise ideas and information.

One can view the Skills Framework document as an overarching description of the skills that children should acquire as they engage in each curriculum area and references are made in the individual documents to these skills. The Skills Framework should not be seen as a curriculum framework and is not statutory.

Language curricula

We will now examine the language curricula documents which are statutory. They are the *Foundation Phase: Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds, Welsh in the National Curriculum for Wales: Key Stages 2-4,* and *English in the National Curriculum for Wales: Key Stages 2-4*. We concentrate on Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 as being illustrative of the curriculum structure and of most relevance to our review. The curriculum for MFL is not statutory for Key Stage 2 and while all the language curricula use the elements of oracy, reading, and writing as in table 2.9, the MFL curriculum adopts a different structure. It is beyond the scope of this review to present that structure although it is worth noting that key features of the MFL curriculum are i) the emphasis on learners making links and connections with and using common skills and knowledge from English Welsh and other languages, and ii) building on their prior language learning skills.

Skills and range

Each area of learning in the curriculum sets out an educational programme stating what children should be taught in terms of 'skills' and the 'range' of experiences. In the language curricula, the skills and range are stated for each of the three elements, i) oracy, ii) reading, and iii) writing. The standards that children are expected to achieve are stated in terms of outcome levels which are discussed below. This section examines the skills and range for reading to illustrate the structure of the documents and to show how a teacher

might make links across languages. This will be followed by a presentation of learning outcomes.

We present the skills development in reading across the language curricula from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 in table A2.11, and the range of experiences in table A2.12. It should be noted that we have drawn on the three documents cited above *(Foundation Phase: Framework, Welsh in the National Curriculum and English in the National Curriculum)* to present the information in this way. It can be seen in table A2.11, columns 1 and 2, that there are many common skills across the Foundation Phase for English/Welsh L1 and Welsh L2 with greater depth for the L1 as one would expect. At Key Stage 2, in columns 3-5, there is even greater similarity between the skills and the language used to describe them. This is particularly the case for Welsh L1 and L2.

Table A2.12 presents the range of experiences that children should be exposed to in L1 and L2 from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2. It can be seen that there are common experiences across the Foundation Phase for L1 and L2 and this pattern is repeated at Key Stage 2 across English and Welsh L1/L2.

Table A2.11: Skills development in reading across the language curricula

Reading: Skills				
Foundation Phase		**Key Stage 2**		
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (L1 English or Welsh)	Welsh Language Development (L2)	English	Welsh L1	Welsh L2
Opportunities throughout the Foundation Phase should enable children to enjoy reading and to make progress in their ability to:	Opportunities throughout the Foundation Phase should enable children to enjoy reading and to make progress in their ability to:	Pupils should be given opportunities to:	Pupils should be given opportunities to:	Pupils should be given opportunities to:

Reading: Skills				
Foundation Phase		Key Stage 2		
• show an interest in books and enjoy their content • follow stories read to them and respond as appropriate • look at books with or without an adult, handling them as a reader • understand that written symbols have sound and meaning and develop phonological, graphic and grammatical knowledge, word recognition and contextual understanding within a balanced and coherent programme • read with increasing fluency, accuracy, understanding and independence, building on what they already know • be aware of different types of books • read their own work and other texts aloud and respond in different ways for different purposes, being able to talk about characters, events, language and information as they predict events and explore meaning • respond appropriately to books, considering what they read in terms of content, ideas, presentation, organisation and the language used.	• follow stories read to them and respond as appropriate • listen to others reading appropriate imaginative material • look at books, handling them as a reader, with or without an adult • listen to a story being read by following the print • understand the significance of the printed word and the relationship between printed symbols and sound patterns • use context to perceive the meaning of familiar words and decode new words by means of clues in pictures, letter sounds and word forms • read aloud their own work and other printed resources • re-read extracts that have been enjoyed and memorise passages • begin to read independently • show an understanding of what they or others have read by responding orally or non-verbally to the content.	1. develop phonic, graphic and grammatical knowledge, word recognition and contextual understanding within a balanced and coherent programme 2. develop their ability to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment 3. read in different ways for different purposes, including: skimming, scanning and detailed reading using prediction, inference and deduction distinguishing between fact and opinion, bias and objectivity in what they read/view 4. recognise and understand the characteristics of different genres in terms of language, structure and presentation.	1. use various strategies, e.g. phonics, word recognition, as required in order to develop as readers 2. read their own and others' work: confidently meaningfully fluently with enjoyment 3. use different strategies to establish meaning and retrieve information in texts including: skimming scanning detailed reading predicting using context and knowledge about language to understand that which is implicit in a text 4. identify the characteristics of different genres in terms of organisation, structure and presentation; note how effects are created by means of orthographical devices, sounds and words and differentiate between fact and opinion.	1. use various strategies, e.g. phonics, word recognition, as required in order to develop as readers 2. read their own and others' work confidently meaningfully with enjoyment 3. use different strategies to establish meaning and gather information in texts including: skimming scanningdetailed reading predicting using context and knowledge of language 4. identify the characteristics of different genres in terms of organisation, structure and presentation, and differentiate between fact and opinion.

Table A2.12: Range of experiences in reading across the language curricula

Reading: Skills				
Foundation Phase		**Key Stage 2**		
Language Literacy and Communication Skills (L1 English or Welsh) Children should be given opportunities to:	Welsh Language Development (L2) Children should be given opportunities to:	English Pupils should be given opportunities to:	Welsh L1 Pupils should be given opportunities to:	Welsh L2 Pupils should be given opportunities to:

Reading: Skills				
Foundation Phase		Key Stage 2		
• hear lively readings from a variety of sources • be introduced extensively to books, stories and words around them • read individually and collaboratively • read aloud their own work and other texts to different audiences • experience and respond to a wide range of print and fonts that include: – picture books, plays, stories with familiar settings, those based on imaginary or fantasy worlds, retellings of traditional folk tales and fairy stories, poems and chants, including those with patterned and predictable language – stories and poems from Wales and a range of cultures – information, reference and non-literary texts, including print and computer-based materials read and share books and texts: – written by significant children's authors – including adaptations and translations – including stories and poems that are challenging in terms of length or vocabulary.	• hear lively readings from a variety of sources • appreciate books, stories and words around them • read individually and collaboratively • read and respond to imaginative material, as appropriate, which should include: – prose and poetry for young children – stories, poems and chants containing patterned and predictable language – work written for learners – information resources • read and make use, for different purposes, of a variety of printed and ICT resources • choose from a wide range of books and immerse themselves in them.	1. become enthusiastic and reflective readers 2. read individually and collaboratively 3. experience and respond to a wide range of texts that include: – information, reference and other non-literary texts, including print, media, moving image and computer-based materials – poetry, prose and drama, both traditional and contemporary – texts with a Welsh dimension and texts from other cultures.	1. develop as enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers 2. read in a variety of situations including reading: – with support – independently – in pairs – in a group – aloud and listen whilst following the print 3. experience a variety of texts and forms including: – traditional and contemporary poetry and prose – material which is challenging – material that broadens horizons and expands the mind – material that presents information and reference material including media texts and computer material – extracts and complete texts – material with a variety of structural and organisational features.	1. develop as enthusiastic, independent and reflective readers 2. read in a variety of situations including reading: – with support – independently – in pairs – in a group – aloud and listen whilst following print 3. experience a variety of texts and forms including: – traditional and contemporary poetry and prose including some material written specifically for learners – material which is challenging – material that broadens horizons and expands the mind – material that presents information and reference material including media texts and computer material – extracts and complete texts – material with a variety of structural features.

Learning outcomes and attainment targets

We present the Foundation Phase language outcomes 1-6 in table A2.13 as examples of the type of learning outcomes that children are expected to strive for by the end of the Foundation Phase. The outcomes for language, literacy and communication skills are presented in column 1. These are the outcomes that children are expected to achieve in the first school language, which would be English for the majority of children and Welsh for Welsh-medium children. Welsh-medium schools do not need to deliver the Welsh language development outcomes in column 2 whereas English-medium schools are expected to progressively develop children's Welsh language skills throughout the Foundation Phase (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008b). As with previous tables above, it can be seen that there are common themes across L1 and L2 and that the outcomes are framed in terms similar to 'can do' statements.

Table A2.13: Foundation Phase language outcomes

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes (English/Welsh L1)	Welsh L2 Language Development
Foundation Phase Outcome 1 Children 'talk' to themselves and can understand many more words than they can speak. They repeat the names of familiar objects. They follow simple instructions and begin to express themselves through role play. They increasingly want to join in songs and nursery rhymes, especially action songs and finger rhymes. Children begin to follow stories read to them and they start to respond appropriately. They begin to 'draw' using their preferred hand and experiment with mark-making.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 1** Children can understand more words than they can speak. They repeat some familiar words and phrases. They increasingly begin to join in action songs and finger rhymes. Children begin to follow stories read to them and they start to respond appropriately, verbally or non-verbally.
Foundation Phase Outcome 2 Children converse simply, sometimes leaving out link words and often asking questions, e.g. 'why?' and 'how?' They respond to instructions, questions and other stimuli. Children listen to stories, songs and rhymes and express some enjoyment and interest. Children look at books with or without an adult and show an interest in their content. They begin to follow stories from pictures and differentiate between print and pictures. They try out a variety of instruments to make marks and shapes on paper or other appropriate material.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 2** Children converse simply, sometimes replacing English words with Welsh when involved in activities. They follow simple instructions. They increasingly want to join in songs and nursery rhymes. Children look at books with or without an adult and show an interest in their content.

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes (English/Welsh L1)	**Welsh L2 Language Development**
Foundation Phase Outcome 3 Children draw on an increasing vocabulary in their talk. They begin to use complete sentences. Children listen to others and usually respond appropriately. With support they repeat/ memorise songs and rhymes. They retell familiar stories in a simple way. Children handle a book as a 'reader' and talk about its content. They begin to recognise the alphabetic nature of reading and writing and understand that written symbols have sounds and meaning. They hold writing instruments appropriately, discriminate between letters and begin to write in a conventional way.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 3** Children begin to express themselves through role play. They respond to instructions, questions and other stimuli, spoken clearly by a familiar voice. With support they repeat/memorise songs and rhymes. Children listen to stories, songs and rhymes and express some enjoyment and interest. They begin to recognise the alphabetic nature of reading and writing and understand that written symbols have sounds and meaning.
Foundation Phase Outcome 4 Children speak audibly, conveying meanings to a range of listeners. They begin to extend their ideas or accounts by including some detail. Children listen to others, usually responding appropriately. They recognise familiar words in simple texts and when reading aloud, use their knowledge of letters and sound–symbol relationships to read words and establish meaning. They respond to poems, stories and non-fiction, sometimes needing support. Children's writing communicates meaning through simple words and phrases. In their reading or writing, they begin to demonstrate an understanding of how sentences work. Children form letters, which are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated. They begin to understand the different purposes and function of written language.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 4** Children show understanding of words and phrases spoken clearly by a familiar voice and respond by means of short oral phrases. They speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation when imitating and using simple words and phrases. With support, they express simple information, and ask and answer questions. Children recognise familiar words. They connect the written form of words with their sound when reading individual words. They show understanding of individual words by means of non-verbal responses. They sometimes need support/assistance. Children communicate by copying correctly and writing words and some simple and familiar phrases from memory.
Foundation Phase Outcome 5 Children speak clearly, with increasing confidence and use a growing vocabulary. They show an awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail. They understand and convey simple information. They usually listen carefully and respond to a wider range of stimuli. In some situations they adopt a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice. They begin to realise that there is variety in the language they hear around them. Their reading of simple texts is generally accurate. They show understanding and express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction. They use a range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. Children's writing communicates meaning. They use appropriate and interesting vocabulary showing some awareness of the reader. Ideas are often developed in a sequence of connected sentences, and capital letters and full stops are used with some degree of consistency. Simple words are usually spelled correctly, and where there are inaccuracies, the alternative is phonically plausible. In handwriting letters are accurately formed and consistent in size.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 5** Children show understanding of short items spoken by a familiar voice by responding either non-verbally or by means of short oral phrases. They seek, understand and communicate simple information and respond to a range of stimuli. They speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation, varying vocabulary and patterns to a degree. Children recognise simple and familiar words and phrases that are within their experience and begin to show an interest in written material by reading some simple passages. They show an understanding of what they have read by responding orally or non-verbally to the content. Children communicate by writing words, phrases and sometimes sentences to express factual and personal information, using familiar patterns. Simple words are usually spelled correctly.

Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes (English/Welsh L1)	Welsh L2 Language Development
Foundation Phase Outcome 6 Children begin to modify their talk to the requirements of the audience, varying the use of vocabulary and level of detail. They explore and communicate ideas, showing an awareness of sequence and progression in a range of contexts. Through relevant comments and questions, they show that they have listened carefully. They read a range of texts with growing accuracy, fluency and emphasis. They read independently, using appropriate strategies to establish meaning. They respond to texts and express preferences. They show an understanding of the main points and talk about significant details. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information. Children's writing is often organised, imaginative and clear. The main features of different forms of writing are used appropriately. Words are chosen for variety, interest and effect. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct. Punctuation is generally accurate. Spelling is usually accurate. Children produce legible writing.	**Foundation Phase Outcome 6** Children show understanding of a series of short items, spoken by a familiar voice, by responding orally or non-verbally. They seek, understand and communicate simple, personal and factual information clearly and make some statements voluntarily. They will express an opinion simply. They speak with intelligible pronunciation and intonation and use an increasing range of vocabulary and sentence patterns which are usually correct. Children read simple texts fairly clearly. They understand and respond simply to texts that contain an increasing range of words, phrases and short passages in familiar contexts. They will respond and express an opinion to poetry, stories and factual material. They begin to read independently and choose some texts voluntarily. Children write short basic sentences, using suitable and familiar vocabulary and patterns to communicate simple factual and personal information, fairly accurately. Familiar words are usually spelled correctly and they show some awareness of basic punctuation by using capital letters, full stops and question marks with a degree of consistency.

At Key Stages 2 and 3, language proficiency in the three elements (oracy, reading and writing) is assessed against attainment targets set out in eight levels with a further level for exceptionally able children. The level descriptions in table A2.14 describe the types and range of performance that children should demonstrate. Once again, we have chosen 'reading' for illustrative purposes. We present levels 1 to 5 here as learners in Key Stage 2 are expected to perform between levels 2 and 5 by the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 3 learners should be within the range 3 to 7. If one reads each level in table A2.14 across English and Welsh L1, it becomes clear that the attainment targets are very similar for both languages. Progression in Welsh L2 is much slower as one would expect. Nonetheless, a teacher teaching Welsh L2 to a particular level could refer to earlier levels in English to draw on literacy skills already attained in the children's L1. The structure of the modern languages curriculum document is the same as for other languages enabling teachers to build on prior language skills (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008c).

Table A2.14: Key Stage 2 language attainment targets: Reading

English L1	Welsh Language (L1)	Welsh Language (L2)
Level 1		
Pupils recognise familiar words in simple texts. They use their knowledge of letters and sound–symbol relationships in order to read words and to establish meaning when reading aloud. In these activities they sometimes require support. They express their response to poems, stories and non-literary texts by identifying aspects they like.	Pupils recognise familiar words in simple texts. When reading aloud they use their knowledge of letters and the relationship between sounds and symbols to read words and establish meaning. They respond to poetry, stories and factual material by identifying aspects they like.	Pupils recognise familiar words. They connect the written form of words with their sound when reading single words. They show an understanding of single words by means of non-verbal responses. Sometimes they need support/assistance.
Level 2		
Pupils' reading of simple texts shows understanding and is generally accurate. They express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-literary texts. They use more than one strategy, such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual, in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning.	Generally, pupils read simple texts accurately. They show an understanding of major events or ideas in stories, poems and factual material and express opinions about them. They use a range of strategies in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning.	Pupils recognise simple and familiar words and phrases within their experience and begin to show an interest in written material by reading some simple passages. They show an understanding of what is read by responding to the content verbally or non-verbally.
Level 3		
Pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately. They can use appropriate strategies in order to read independently and establish meaning. In responding to literary and non-literary texts they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.	Pupils read a range of texts. They read aloud accurately, fluently and with increasing emphasis. They use appropriate strategies to establish meaning. They extract the main facts from texts and respond to what they have read. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.	Pupils read simple texts quite clearly. They understand and respond simply to texts that include an increasing range of words, phrases and short passages in familiar contexts. They respond to poetry, stories and factual material by referring to aspects they like. They begin reading independently and choose some texts voluntarily.

English L1	Welsh Language (L1)	Welsh Language (L2)
Level 4		
In responding to a range of texts, pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, and are beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information on a specific topic from more than one source, and use them effectively.	Pupils read clearly and expressively. In responding to a wide variety of texts they show an understanding of the main ideas, events and characters. They refer to the text when expressing opinion, and begin to show an understanding of what is implicit in the material read. Pupils gather information on a specific topic from more than one printed source and use it effectively.	Pupils read familiar passages clearly and with some expression. They show an understanding of the main flow of short paragraphs or short dialogues in familiar contexts by recognising an increasing range of words and phrases and key facts. They respond to the texts read by referring to significant details in the text. They develop as independent readers.
Level 5		
Pupils show understanding of a wide range of texts, selecting essential points and using inference and deduction where appropriate. In their responses, they identify key features, themes and characters, and select relevant words, phrases, sentences, images and other information to support their views. They retrieve and collate information from a range of sources.	Pupils show understanding of a variety of texts, selecting the main points and show understanding of what is implicit in them by drawing conclusions where appropriate. When responding to a wide range of texts they express opinion and refer to plot, characters and some aspects of style, selecting appropriate words, phrases, sentences and information to support their views. They gather, recall and organise information from various sources.	Pupils read clearly and with expression. They respond to a variety of suitable texts showing an understanding of the main ideas, events and characters. They select relevant information from texts and express opinions simply. They read independently.

Summary

The sociolinguistic context in Ireland shares many similarities with Wales. They are both bilingual countries where English is the dominant language with a minority language spoken principally though not exclusively in geographical heartland areas. The contexts in which languages are taught in early childhood and primary school settings are also very similar. Primary schools in Wales teach English as L1 in the majority of school with Welsh L2 in those schools also. Welsh is taught as an L1 in traditional bilingual schools in Welsh

heartland areas with English taught from age 7 (Key Stage 2). Welsh is also taught as an L1 in designated bilingual schools outside of the Welsh heartland areas, similar to all-Irish schools. Modern foreign languages are introduced at 11 (Key Stage 3) in secondary schools although they may be taught at Key Stage 2 in primary schools.

A non-statutory skills framework document was produced in order to ensure that there was progression and development in the key areas of thinking, communication, ICT and number, together with subject knowledge development. The generic communication skills could provide an overarching framework for development across languages and across the curriculum in general. The manner in which progression is described is similar to the learning outcomes in the Alberta curriculum, the levels in the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, and the 'can do' statements of the CEFR.

The language curricula documents are structured around the three elements of oracy, reading and writing with statements for the skills to be attained and range of experiences to be encountered in each area. There is one statement of Language, Literacy and Communication skills at Foundation Phase for L1 and they are taught in English or Welsh according to the school context. English-medium schools teach Welsh L2 skills at Foundation Phase and common themes can be identified across L1 and L2 statements. At Key Stage 2, there are separate curricula for L1 English and Welsh with the skills to be attained stated in very similar terms. Even greater similarity can be seen between the skills for Welsh L1 and L2. These patterns are repeated for the statements of the range of experiences across age groups and languages.

The manner in which the National Curriculum in Wales is structured provides opportunities for teachers to integrate language teaching and learning across languages. This principle is enshrined in

the documentation. An earlier document, *Making the Link* (ACCAC, 2003), which predates the current iteration of the curriculum, appears to have informed the structure and design of the latest iteration. Nonetheless, apart from L1 at Foundation Phase, we had to draw from a number of documents in order to present the skills and experiences in the tables above. More explicit links, such as those in the *Making the Link* document or those highlighted in the Alberta documentation, would enable teachers to integrate across languages in a more coherent way.

Appendix B: CEFR and ELP

B1: CEFR Common Reference Levels: global scale

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

B2: CEFR Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
UNDERSTANDING	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.

		A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for examples sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can write simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles, which present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 26-27)

B3: Global scales and underlying linguistic competence

	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
Vocabulary control	Can recognise, understand and use a limited range of basic vocabulary which has been used repeatedly in class or has been specifically taught.	Can recognise, understand and use a range of vocabulary associated with concrete everyday needs or learning experiences (e.g., topics or routines that have been introduced and practised in class).	Can recognise, understand and use a range of vocabulary related to familiar classroom themes, school routines and activities. Errors still occur when the pupil attempts to express more complex ideas or handle unfamiliar topics.
Grammatical accuracy	Can use a very limited number of grammatical structures and simple sentence patterns that he/she has learnt by repeated use (e.g. My name is …).	Can use simple grammatical structures that have been learnt and practised in class. Makes frequent basic mistakes with tenses, prepositions and personal pronouns, though when he/she is speaking or writing about a familiar topic the meaning is generally clear.	Can communicate with reasonable accuracy on familiar topics (those being studied or occurring frequently during the school day). Meaning is clear despite errors. Unfamiliar situations or topics present a challenge, however, particularly when the connection to familiar patterns is not obvious.
Phonological control	Can pronounce a very limited repertoire of learnt and familiar words and phrases. Native speakers who are aware of what the pupil has been learning and familiar with the pronunciation patterns of pupils from different language backgrounds can understand his/her pronunciation, but sometimes with difficulty.	Can pronounce familiar words (those being learnt in class or used in the school generally) in a reasonably clear manner, though with a noticeable foreign accent. It is sometimes necessary to ask the pupil to repeat what he/she has said.	Can pronounce words with confidence in a clearly intelligible way. Some mispronunciations still occur, but in general he/she is closely familiar with the sounds of English.
Orthographic control (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	Can copy keywords from the board, flashcards or posters. n copy or write his/her name, address and the name of the school.	Can copy or write short sentences or phrases related to what is being studied in class. Sentence breaks are generally accurate. Words that he/she uses orally may be written with phonetic accuracy but inaccurate spelling.	Can produce short pieces of continuous writing that are generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.

IILT. (2003). English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for non-English-speaking pupils at primary level.

Retrieved from http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Inclusion/English_as_an_Additional_Language/IILT_Materials/Primary/English_language_proficiency_benchmarks.pdf

B4: Global benchmarks applied to a thematic Unit 1 'Myself'

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
UNDERSTANDING	Listening	Can recognise his/her name when it is spoken by another person. Can understand basic questions asked by the teacher or another pupil (e.g. What is your name?, How old are you?). Can understand simple instructions when they are spoken slowly and accompanied by appropriate gestures.	Can follow conversations between peers during play. Can follow the important points in instructions or advice (e.g. Stay Safe).	Can understand what is said by teachers and peers without the need for frequent repetition or supporting gestures.
	Reading (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	Can find his/her name on a list.	Can read very short and simple texts with a high frequency of familiar words on topics such as children, families and school. Can use the alphabet to find his/her name in a list.	Can read and understand age-appropriate stories about children and their lives, including life in different environments (e.g. country, city, abroad).
SPEAKING	Spoken Interaction	Can answer basic questions about his/her name, age, family when supported by prompts. Can respond non-verbally (e.g. with a nod or shake of the head) or with single-word or very brief answers to basic questions about his/her likes or dislikes (e.g. *Do you like ice-cream?*). Can greet the teacher and other pupils and say goodbye. Can indicate personal needs (e.g., to go to the toilet).	Can reply with confidence to familiar questions about his/her name, age, number of brothers and sisters, etc. Can initiate conversation on a familiar topic (e.g. why he/she was late for school). Can use greetings naturally and appropriately. Can say how he/she feels (tired, upset, ill, etc.). Can tell parents about what he/she did in school. Can ask for clarification when necessary.	Can ask and respond to questions on a wide range of familiar topics (family, home, interests, etc.). Can express worries or concerns to the teacher or some other responsible person. Can give parents a detailed account of what has taken place in school and describe his/her successes and achievements.
	Spoken Production	Can make a short, incomplete statement about him/herself (e.g. name is …).	Can describe his/her own appearance, including eye and hair colour, size, height. Can describe his/her family, daily routines, plans (e.g. for holidays), likes and dislikes.	Can explain his/her attitudes in an age-appropriate way (e.g. family values, ethnic or religious difference). Can relate an event in sequence, using descriptive language (especially appropriate adjectives).
WRITING	Writing (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	Can copy or write his/her name, address, name of school. Can copy words about him/herself from the board (e.g. *my name is … , I live in …*).	Can write short texts describing his/her family, daily routines, etc. Can write short texts describing personal interests, likes and dislikes (food, TV programmes, etc.).	Can write age-appropriate descriptions of important events or personal experiences (a new baby in the family, travelling to Ireland, etc.) Can write a brief comparison of his/her life now and in the past (e.g. before attending school, in another country). Can write about personal likes and dislikes, hobbies, interests, etc.

IILT. (2003). English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for non-English-speaking pupils at primary level.

Retrieved from http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Inclusion/English_as_an_Additional_Language/IILT_Materials/Primary/English_language_proficiency_benchmarks.pdf

B5: European Language Portfolio. Examples of Global Benchmarks from ELP developed by IILT for children of immigrant backgrounds in Ireland

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
UNDERSTANDING	Listening	I can understand words and phrases about myself, my family and school and simple questions and instructions.	I can understand most instructions given inside and outside school, can follow topics covered in the mainstream class, and can understand a simple story.	I can understand detailed instructions given in school, the main points of topics presented and stories read aloud in the mainstream classroom, and films about things I am familiar with. I can follow most conversations between other pupils without difficulty.
	Reading (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	I can recognize the letters of the alphabet and can understand signs and simple notices in the school and on the way to school. I can understand words on labels or posters in the classroom and some of the words and phrases in a new piece of text.	I can understand short texts on familiar subjects and can use the alphabet to find items in lists (e.g., a name in a telephone book).	I can understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes and can use comprehension questions to find specific answers in a piece of text. I can also use key words, diagrams and illustrations to help me understand texts I am reading. I can follow written instructions for carrying out classroom activities.

Example

	A1			A2			A3		
	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help
Listening	15/9/2004	17/10/2004	14/11/2004	18/12/2004	15/2/2005	20/4/2005	17/5/2005	20/9/2005	19/10/2005

	A1			A2			A3		
	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help
Listening									
Reading									

IILT (2004). European Language Portfolio: Learning the language of the host community (primary). Integrate Ireland Language and Training. http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Curriculum/inclusion/primary_elp.pdf

Appendix C

This table shows the cross-references between the three research reports.

Oral Language in Early Childhood and Primary Education	Literacy in Early Childhood and Primary Education	Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education
Chapter 4: Section: Teaching as Dialogue, p. 149	Chapter 2: Section: Constructivist and Socio-Constructivist Models, p. 59	
Chapter 3: Section: The academic language of discourse, p. 94	Chapter 3: Section: Comprehension, p. 88	
Chapter 3: Section: The Intersubjective Mode, p. 76	Chapter 3: Section: Developing Writers, p. 95	
Chapter 1: Section: Language and Children's Virtual Worlds, p. 56	Chapter 3: Section: Digital Literacy, p. 105	Chapter 4: Section: European Language Portfolio, p. 82
Chapter 5: Section: Language and Disadvantage, p. 180	Chapter 4: Section: Storybook Reading and Discussion, p. 120	
Chapter 4: Section: Meaning Vocabulary, p. 153	Chapter 4: Section: Teaching Vocabulary – Early Years, p. 131	
Chapter 5: Section: Language and Disadvantage, p. 180	Chapter 5: Section: Disadvantage and Literacy, p. 190	Chapter 1: Section: Language Learning in Irish Primary Schools, p. 26
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Chapter 7: General principles of and approaches to assessing young children, p. 251	Chapter 6: Section: Towards a Framework for Assessment, p. 256	Chapter 4: Section: Common European Framework of Reference, p. 79

Oral Language in Early Childhood and Primary Education	Literacy in Early Childhood and Primary Education	Towards an Integrated Language Curriculum in Early Childhood and Primary Education
Chapter 7: Section: Aspects of oral language that should be assessed, p. 253	Chapter 6: Section: Oral language, p. 222	
Chapter 7: Section: Tools for assessing oral language in classroom contexts, p. 266	Chapter 6: Section: Range of Assessment Tools Suitable for Assessing Early Literacy Learning, p. 247	Chapter 4: Section: European Language Portfolio, p. 82
Chapter 7: Section: Assessing children for whom English is a Second Language, p. 276	Chapter 6: Section: Assessing the Literacy of EAL Children, p. 264	
Chapter 6: How can teachers ensure that children's oral language development supports their literacy development?	Chapter 7: How can teachers ensure that children's literacy development supports their oral language development?	Chapter 1: Section: Theoretical perspectives and research foundations, p.11
Chapter 8: Section: Development of Subject-Orientated Knowledge in Science, p. 288	Chapter 8: Section: Inquiry-based Models of Literacy, p. 296	
Chapter 8: p. 280	Chapter 8: Section: Creativity and Literacy, p. 299	
Chapter 4: Section: Research on vocabulary instruction, p. 157	Chapter 8: Section: Drama and Literacy, p. 302	
Chapter 2: Section: Second language acquisition, p. 68	Chapter 8: Section: Second Language and Curriculum Access, p. 307	Chapter 1: Section: Theoretical perspectives and research foundations, p.11
	Chapter 8: Section: Content and language integrated learning (CLIL), p. 310	Chapter 1: Section: The integrated nature of the Primary School Curriculum, p. 27

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