Language Reference Levels for the Spanish Bilingual Program of Alberta

A correlation between the Spanish Language Arts Program of Studies (K-12) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Carlos Soler Montes
Instituto Cervantes, Calgary
carlos.soler@cervantes.es

Brandee Strickland
University of Calgary
bmstrick@ucalgary.ca
Spanish Bilingual Program of Alberta

- Spanish Language Arts and other core subjects, K-12
- Implemented in September of 2001
- A unique and exemplary model within North America
- Already being used in 12 schools in Calgary and Edmonton
- 5 more schools will be added by next September
- Part of the International Spanish Academies (ISA) network, sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Education
- Strong link between this program and its European mentors suggests a need to establish equivalences with the CEFR
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

- Published in 2001
- Language reference levels described by the Council of Europe
- Divided into 6 different levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2)
- Provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications
- Increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates
- Recommended for use in setting up systems of validation of second language ability
- CASLT has played an important role since 2004 in increasing the exposure to CEFR within Canada
Research objectives

• Establish equivalencies between the Bilingual Spanish Language Arts POS of Alberta and the 6 language reference levels described by the CEFR
• In addition we will rely on the Cervantes Institute Curricular Plan (CICP)
• The CICP applies the CEFR levels of description to the Spanish language
• These correlations will also contribute to an improved implementation of the Alberta curriculum
• Teachers would have access to a more detailed description of each outcome, with real language examples that could help them to interpret the curriculum more clearly
• Impact on the teaching, learning, and assessment processes
Research questions

1. Could the European reference levels be useful in improving the implementation of the Spanish Bilingual program of Alberta by giving access to more detailed language descriptors, international language credentials, transparency of standards, etc.?

2. Are the equivalents of all six European levels present within Alberta’s program of studies? In what grades can one observe a transition between these levels?

3. Will the results of our research lead to the use of new learning materials and resources?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilingual Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9 Year Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Year Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¡Hola Amigos!

A1  A2  B1  B2
Correlations Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES</th>
<th>CEFR LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Grades K – 12</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-General Outcomes</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Specific Outcomes</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spanish Bilingual Correlations Process

- Grades K – 12
- General Outcomes
- Specific Outcomes

CEFR LEVEL
A1
A2
B1
B2
C1
C2

SPANISH REFERENCE LEVELS
-12 language inventories
-Language samples

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASKS
- Spanish Bilingual Subcommittee
  - Grades 2 – 5
  - Grade 6 in process
  - Alberta students production

Validation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES</th>
<th>GENERAL OUTCOME</th>
<th>SPECIFIC OUTCOME</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>INVENTORY CORRELATION</th>
<th>LANGUAGE SAMPLE</th>
<th>ALBERTA STUDENTS PRODUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| GRADE 4                     | 1.1. Discover and Explore | Express ideas 1. Describe and reflect upon personal observations and experiences to reach tentative conclusions. |    |    |    |    | Invent. 5: 2 : 2.2, 2.4. p.220-221 | - Para mí, escuchar canciones es muy útil para aprender español. - La película está bastante mal. | Written production: -Create an original text based on personal observations  
[Yo pienso que la presentación de Kim están muy bien]  
[Yo creo que me gustaría porque es buen para tu cuerpo] |
|                             |                 |                  |    |    |    |    | Invent. 7 : 3 : 3.1.1. p.293 | -Me llamo Carla, soy italiana y estudio español en Lima. 
-Soy alta, rubia, delgada y un poco timida, pero tengo muchos amigos en la escuela. 
-Me parezco un poco a Shakira. | Written production: -Use knowledge of sentence patterns to form new sentences 
[-Kim le gusta montar bicicleta… 
- Ella le gusta porque es divertido y puedes ver muchas cosas… 
- Me gustaría saber más a la historia de bicicletas…] |
## GRADE 4

**GENERAL OUTCOME 2:** Students will listen, speak, read and write, view and represent in Spanish to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print, visual and multimedia texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES</th>
<th>CEFR LEVELS</th>
<th>SPANISH REFERENCE LEVELS</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL OUTCOME</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPECIFIC OUTCOME</strong></td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2.3 Understand forms and techniques | Create original texts | | | | | Invent. 7: 3.4 p. 299 | Vivo en Barcelona. El lunes pasado fui a la playa, está cerca de mi casa. Era muy temprano, así que nadé, tomé un poco el sol y me dormí. Cuando desperté, había una mujer a mi lado. La señora era muy guapa. Era rubia, tenía el pelo largo y los ojos verdes. Yo me senté en la toalla, ella se sentó en una silla… | Written production:  
- Create an original text based on personal observations  
[Algo nuevo que yo aprendí es que Kim montar bicicleta y puedes ver muchas cosas chéveres]  
**Coordinación:**  
[Hay diez personas en su equipo de gimnasia y todas las personas son niñas]  
**Subordinación:**  
[Para hacer gimnasia, ella dice que necesitas agua para beber y ropa de gimnasia] |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES</th>
<th>CEFR LEVELS</th>
<th>SPANISH REFERENCE LEVELS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE SAMPLE</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL OUTCOME 4: Students will listen, speak, read and write, view and represent in Spanish to enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Students Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Sample Inventory Correlation</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4.4 Present and share | Effective oral and visual communication 2. describe and explain information and ideas to a particular audience; and select and use appropriate volume, intonation and nonverbal cues. | | | | Oral production
- Use simple sentences
- Share information and ideas about favorite hobby or pastime
- Demonstrate presentation skills

**Formalidades:**
Buenos días…

**Presentación personal:**
Primero voy a presentarme: me llamo…, soy estudiante…

**Introducción:**
Como ustedes saben el tema de la charla es la natación…

**Desarrollo:**
La natación es un deporte muy completo porque es…

**Conclusión:**
En resumen, nada es bueno para la salud.

**Oral production**
- Use simple sentences
- Share information and ideas about favorite hobby or pastime
- Demonstrate presentation skills

**Formalidades**

**Presentación personal**

**Introducción**

**Desarrollo**

**Conclusión**

**Oral production**

- Use simple sentences
- Share information and ideas about favorite hobby or pastime
- Demonstrate presentation skills

Invent. 7: 2.2.1. p. 339

2.2.1. Presentación pública breve y preparada sobre un tema conocido o de interés personal

- [Hola. Yo me llamo Calista]
- [Llevo seis años de estar coleccionando rocas.]
- [Me gusta coleccionar rocas por… porque son…]
- [Hora yo voy a mostrun poquito de mis rocas]
## GENERAL OUTCOME 6:
Students will acquire Spanish to understand and appreciate languages, and use Spanish confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and further learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES</th>
<th>CEFR LEVELS</th>
<th>SPANISH REFERENCE LEVELS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE SAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL OUTCOME</td>
<td>SPECIFIC OUTCOME Grammatical Elements (modelled situations)</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Linguistic Elements</td>
<td>Commands- negative form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Object pronouns – indirect: <em>me, te, le, nos, os, les</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Object of prepositions: <em>mi, ti, él, ella usted...</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GENERAL OUTCOME 6:
Students will acquire Spanish to understand and appreciate languages, and use Spanish confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and further learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES</th>
<th>GENERAL OUTCOME</th>
<th>SPECIFIC OUTCOME</th>
<th>CEFR LEVELS</th>
<th>SPANISH REFERENCE LEVELS</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 4</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL OUTCOME</th>
<th>SPECIFIC OUTCOME</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>INVENTORY CORRELATION</th>
<th>ALBERTA STUDENTS PRODUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Language Competence</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong> 1. Listen to and generally understand a short oral presentation on a familiar topic in structured and unstructured situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invent. 7: 1.3. p. 289 1.3. Cuentos breves en versión simplificada (recepción)</td>
<td>Listening comprehension - Determine the main ideas and events of the story: <em>Un Gigante en el bosque</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong> 2. Produce, spontaneously and/or with guidance, a short oral presentation on a familiar topic in a structured situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invent. 7: 2.2.1. p. 339 2.2.1. Presentación pública breve y preparada sobre un tema conocido o de interés personal</td>
<td>Oral production - Share information and ideas about favorite hobby or pastime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong> 3. read and understand a series of interrelated ideas dealing with a familiar topic in structured situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invent. 7: 1.3. p. 289 1.3. Cuentos breves en versión simplificada (recepción)</td>
<td>Reading comprehension - Use story textual cues to construct and confirm meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong> 4. produce, spontaneously and with guidance, a simple text on a familiar topic in structured and unstructured situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invent. 7: 3.4 p. 299 3.4. Macrofunción narrativa</td>
<td>Written production - Create an orginal text based on personal observations - Use simple sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ALBERTA PROGRAM OF STUDIES

- **Language Competence**
  - **Listening**
    1. Listen to and generally understand a short oral presentation on a familiar topic in structured and unstructured situations.
  - **Speaking**
    2. Produce, spontaneously and/or with guidance, a short oral presentation on a familiar topic in a structured situation.
  - **Reading**
    3. Read and understand a series of interrelated ideas dealing with a familiar topic in structured situations.
  - **Writing**
    4. Produce, spontaneously and with guidance, a simple text on a familiar topic in structured and unstructured situations.
## CEFR – Spanish Language Arts
### Future Alignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### CEFR Levels
- **A1**
- **A2**
- **B1**
- **B2**
Conclusions and Impact

• This project has involved a close examination and comparison of the aforementioned documents in order to situate the six reference levels within the Alberta curriculum.

• We began by analyzing the specific language components of the Bilingual Program of Studies in grades 4 and 6, which we found corresponded to the A2 and B1 levels.

• Equivalences were validated through a close examination of the students production collected in the Spanish Language Arts Performance Assessment Tasks.

• Feedback from local Spanish teachers, school administrators and stakeholders has been extremely positive.

• This method of correlation is now being applied towards the French Immersion and French Second Language of Alberta.
Acknowledgements

• Alberta Education
  – Curriculum Branch
  – Learning Technologies Branch
• Calgary Board of Education
  – Collingwood Elementary School
  – Senator Patrick Burns Middle School
• Department of French, Italian and Spanish, University of Calgary
• Edmonton Public Schools
• Instituto Cervantes Madrid
  – Department of Curriculum
• Spanish Bilingual Subcommittee of Alberta