



Spanish Curriculum
Centre of Modern Languages – University of Granada

I. INTRODUCTION

The Spanish Curriculum of the Centre of Modern Languages (CLM Spanish Curriculum) is built upon a global and integrative conception of students’ learning and aims to foster both their communicative competence and their personal development. The CLM has therefore developed a curriculum that tackles students’ learning from multiple perspectives, following the European guidelines for language learning set out in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) published by the Council of Europe (2001), and carefully adapted for Spanish as a foreign language by the Instituto Cervantes in its Language Curriculum (2006). The three main perspectives are:

1. **The student as a social agent**, who carries out tasks in the course of social interaction with other members of the society. These tasks imply the implementation of the appropriate linguistic competences in daily transactions, social interactions, and the reception and production of certain texts.

(The CLM Spanish Curriculum describes this dimension in the following parts:

PART 3: *Communicative Competence: language activities, texts and additional immersion tasks.*

PART 4: *Pragmatic Competence: notions, functions and texts.*

PART 5: *Grammatical Competence.*

PART 6: *Phonological and Orthographic Competences.*

2. **The student as an intercultural speaker**, who develops intercultural skills, acquires knowledge of the world and develops his/her existential competence. All these aspects enable him/her to come closer to new cultures, create connections between his/her own culture and new cultural phenomena, and overcome possible intercultural conflicts.

(PART 1: *Intercultural Competence*)

3. **The student as an independent and cooperative learner**, who uses appropriate learning and communicative strategies, as well as the skills involved in cooperative learning, during and after formal instruction, and thus becomes a life-long learner.

(PART 2: *Learning Competences*)

Together with this integrative and action-centred learning and this teaching philosophy, the CLM Spanish Curriculum complies with the six language reference levels from the CEFR, which have been broken down into nine levels following the “branching approach” suggested by the CEFR in order to serve CLM specific needs. These levels have also been developed in accordance with the Instituto Cervantes curricular recommendations:

CEFR MAIN LEVELS	CEFR LEVELS	CLM LEVELS
LEVEL A	A1	1 – Beginner
	A2	2 – Elementary
	A2+	3 – Pre-Intermediate
LEVEL B	B1.1	4 – Intermediate
	B1.2	5 – Upper Intermediate
	B2.1	6 – Advanced
	B2.2	7 – Upper Advanced
LEVEL C	C1	8 – Superior
	C2	9 – Proficiency

Here follows a description of the main features of each CLM level, as well as all the competences covered within them.

II. PROFILE OF STUDENTS AT EACH LEVEL

Under the term ‘profile’ the CLM Spanish Curriculum states what the student can actually do with language following the descriptors from the CEFR and the three learning dimensions prescribed in the Language Curriculum of the Instituto Cervantes (daily transactions, social interactions and oral/written texts). The specific characteristics of the CLM learning setting are also outlined.



II. 1. PROFILE OF A-LEVEL STUDENTS (BASIC USER)

Overview:

The A-Level student is referred to as a 'basic user' of the language, which means that he or she is able to use language as a social agent during basic social transactions and understand/produce oral/written texts related to his/her basic needs, as well as take part in social interactions within his/her immediate spheres of action or domains.

Description from the CEFR:

Level 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.

Level 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.

Description from the Language Curriculum of the Insituto Cervantes:

- As for **daily social transactions**, the A-Level student is able to take part in very usual and predictable situations which involve basic social services and immediate needs. He/she is also able to run through simple procedures in daily situations such as a shop, office, bank, hospital or transportation, provided the interlocutor fully cooperates.
- As for **social interactions**, the A-Level student is able to communicate with native speakers within his/her immediate social environment or domain. He/she is also able to participate in daily social situations with highly predictable and routinised schemata related to daily and personal topics such as family, hobbies, home, etc., provided they are based on basic social conventions.
- As for **texts**, the A-Level student is able to understand and produce oral/written texts related to the basic communicative situations described above. These texts are simple in terms of form and concepts, and only demand a moderate effort in order to interpret and infer meaning. Written texts have an easy layout. Oral texts have no background noise, the speech is clearly and slowly articulated, the pronunciation is standard, and they are highly redundant.

CLM specific characteristics:

- Due to the fact that the CLM operates in an immersion learning setting, in-class instruction is always connected to real life outside. This is achieved by providing the student with the strategies and sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to face real-life social transactions, social interactions and texts.



II.2. PROFILE OF B-LEVEL STUDENTS (INDEPENDENT USER)

Overview:

The B-Level student is referred to as an “independent user” of the language, which means that he or she is able to use language as a social agent in daily social transactions and interactions, and understand oral/written texts to such an extent of autonomy that he or she is able to carry out most of the tasks that involve the use of language in a Spanish-speaking country.

Description from the CEFR:

Level 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.

Level 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.

Description from the Language Curriculum of the Instituto Cervantes:

- As for **social transactions**, the B-level student is able to carry out the tasks involved in satisfying his/her personal needs (beyond the basic ones) when living in a Spanish-speaking country and related to a great variety of situations (public services, work, school, health, etc.) This also means that he or she is able to cope with setbacks he or she may have when fulfilling these tasks.
- As for **social interactions**, the B-level student is able to communicate with native speakers in a wide variety of situations within different social, work and academic domains in Spanish-speaking countries. He or she is able to convey both concrete and abstract information.
- As for **texts**, the A-Level student is able to understand and produce oral/written texts related to topics of his/her interest, likes and dislikes, and to his/her field of specialisation. Furthermore, he or she is able to recognize the conventions of the genre being used, to discern main ideas and other type of less relevant information, and to express his/her opinions by reacting to the information conveyed in the texts. Although these texts have a clear layout, due to their medium level of complexity, all the information may not be completely explicit. They may also require quite a degree of familiarity with the target culture.

CLM specific characteristics:

- Due to the fact that the CLM operates in an immersion learning setting, in-class instruction is always connected to real life outside. This is achieved by providing the student with the strategies and sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to face real-life social transactions, social interactions and texts.
- Moreover, students carry out tasks both in class and outside the class that help them develop the strategies and sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to be a successful and independent user of the language when interacting with native speakers.
- In-class instruction is connected to students’ needs and therefore fosters the development of the linguistic functions necessary to face the above mentioned social interactions. For example, as for the B-level students who want to get involved in the academic community of Granada in order to pursue a degree or take content-based courses at the university, in-class instruction focuses partly on the linguistic and academic skills necessary to succeed in such a domain.



II.3. PROFILE OF C-LEVEL STUDENTS (PROFICIENT USER)

Overview:

The C-Level student is referred to as a “proficient user” of the language, which means that he or she is able to use language as a social agent in all kinds of daily social transactions, no matter how complex they may be, to take part in all types of social, academic and professional interactions, and to understand oral/written texts of every genre, topic or linguistic context.

Description from the CEFR:

Level 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.

Level 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.

Description from the Language Curriculum of the Instituto Cervantes:

- As for **social transactions**, the C-level student can efficiently use language to satisfy his/her needs in all kinds of locations and can even face problems, setbacks or emergencies.
- In the course of instruction, the C-level student will develop the strategies and sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to face these transactions outside the classroom. Furthermore, he or she will be able to propose any new transaction he or she is having problems facing as the content of the lessons.
- As for **social interactions**, the C-level student can efficiently communicate within all social domains either with interlocutors known or unknown, cooperative or tense, or even hostile. These interactions may be about abstract and complex topics the student may not be familiar with.
- As for the **texts**, the C-level student is able to understand and produce oral/written longer texts about abstract, technical and specialized subjects, as well literary texts, including all kinds of linguistic register. The information may be conveyed implicitly and may also contain irony and humorous connotations which may mean relying on cultural references and knowledge shared between the writer and the reader. The layout of the texts may be confusing and may call for extra effort when identifying their structure.
- Oral texts may include colloquialisms, set phrases and idioms. These linguistic features will be of paramount importance during in-class instruction by means of activities and tasks that will allow the student to become familiar with frequent formal texts (applications, complaint forms, academic registration forms, etc.), as well as more non-formal linguistic registers. Due to the immersion setting of the CLM, these tasks will be carried out by students partially or completely outside the class.

CLM specific characteristics:

- Due to the fact that the CLM operates in an immersion learning setting, in-class instruction is always connected to real life outside. This is achieved by providing the student with the strategies and sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to face real-life social transactions, social interactions and texts.
- Moreover, students carry out tasks both in class and outside the class that help them develop the strategies and sociolinguistic knowledge necessary to be a successful proficient user of the language when interacting with native speakers.
- Therefore, in-class instruction will primarily focus on students’ needs. For instance, C-level students may face academic situations such as the need to validate their previous Spanish courses in order to become part of the academic life at the University of Granada. They may also need to apply for a job or respond to a job offer. Likewise, they may need to cope with other problems arising in situations such as renting a flat, complaining about household problems or making requests in more formal situations.



III. COMPETENCES

III.1. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

The student is considered to be an intercultural speaker and this perspective complies with different aspects set out in the CEFR, such as:

- Intercultural skills.
- Existential competence.
- Knowledge of the world.
- Intercultural awareness through personal reflection and adequate linguistic performance.

The development of the intercultural competence goes through a three-phase path (as stated on the Language Curriculum of the Instituto Cervantes):

- 1st: Approximation phase.
- 2nd: In-depth analysis phase.
- 3rd: Consolidation phase.

The student will become aware of **cultural diversity** and the fact that his/her own cultural identity may have an influence on how he or she interprets other cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. This process will allow the student to accept new cultures and overcome any culturally based prejudice they may have, which in turn will serve as a basis for personal enrichment and development of his/her own cultural competence.

As for **social norms and conventions**, the student will identify and assess the distinctive characteristics, norms and conventions of Spanish-speaking societies using his/her own culture as the starting point of analysis. The student will also analyze and clarify different aspects of these social conventions (i.e. values, attitudes and social behavioural patterns) from a critical and understanding intercultural perspective.

Since the student takes classes with students from other cultures worldwide, he or she will be able to compare the Spanish social conventions with his/her own and those of other students. By doing so, the student will become aware of **cultural diversity** as a source for personal enrichment.

Teachers will design tasks to be carried out in class and outside the class to explore all these aspects. Students' needs will be taken into account since a student-centred approach to lesson and course planning is always followed.

Some of the possible cultural contents for each level are listed in the curriculum, although each specific group of students will decide together with the teacher which ones (listed or not) are to be covered during the course.

III.2. LEARNING COMPETENCES

The student/user of a language must see his/her language learning as a life-long process. Therefore, it is very important for students to develop learning strategies in order to make the most of their learning experience, as well as to become independent learners when learning outside the classroom and once the course is over.

Different learning competences are developed by students during their language courses at the CLM, especially those related to becoming aware, monitoring and improving the learning experience as members of a group in an immersion setting.

These learning competences are especially important for those students who seek to become part of the academic community in Granada and want to take content-based courses. Having for the most part academic experience, students are helped out by teachers in order to adjust their own learning strategies to the immersion setting they are now experiencing.

Taking into account students' needs, interests and previous academic experience, teachers at the CLM help them develop the skills, strategies and knowledge related to the following areas (as recommended by the Instituto Cervantes in its Language Curriculum):

- students' ability to plan and monitor their learning process by means of self-exploration of learning habits.
- learning strategies to assess the linguistic performance and to compensate for possible communicative breakdowns.
- positive affective attitudes and an in-class cooperative atmosphere (group work management, cooperation, active listening, good social interaction, etc.)



III.3. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES, TEXTS AND ADDITIONAL TASKS.

This section of the curriculum lists the “**language activities**” (that is, the “language skills”) to be developed in the courses at each level:

- Listening comprehension.
- Reading comprehension.
- Spoken interaction.
- Oral production (speaking).
- Written production (writing).

There are also **samples of oral and written texts** that the student will be able to understand and produce at each level.

The student will develop these skills by means of in-class pedagogical and real activities and tasks, as well as some additional tasks to be carried out outside the classroom as a way of connecting in-class instruction to the immersion setting it takes place in.

III.4. PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE: NOTIONS AND FUNCTIONS.

At each level, the student will gradually work on notions and functions related to the following general pragmatic domains:

- Asking and giving information.
- Expressing opinion, attitudes and stating knowledge.
- Stating likes, dislikes and expressing feelings.
- Asking the interlocutor to do something.
- Interacting with others.

III.5. GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE

The following grammatical categories are gradually described for each level:

- Nouns.
- Adjectives.
- Articles.
- Demonstratives.
- Quantifiers.
- Pronouns.
- Adverbs.
- Personal forms of verbs.
- Non-personal forms of verbs.
- Sentence coordination.
- Sentence subordination.
- Other topics.

III.6. PHONOLOGICAL AND ORTOGRAPHIC COMPETENCES

General principles

1. The teaching of pronunciation will be based on **communicative interaction** and will not consist in meaningless drills of isolated forms. The phonological instruction will always be connected to students’ communicative needs at each specific level.
2. From this communicative perspective, **suprasegmentals** (i.e. stress, rhythm and intonation) will be of greater importance than segmental elements (i.e. phonemes and sounds). Therefore, instruction will focus on the correct intonation of utterances rather than the correct or incorrect pronunciation of isolated sounds.
3. From a pedagogical point of view, special attention will be paid to **differences and similarities** between the students’ mother tongue and Spanish when working on pronunciation issues.
4. Students will work on both competences (phonological and orthographic) by means of in-class activities and additional work packets provided by the teachers.