



Inquiry into Australia's relationship with Mexico

TR point "c": potential opportunities for enhanced trade and investment ties, in particular those emanating from the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP);”

“Submission into the teaching of Spanish– from a Global Language to a national priority language in Australia, and the promotion of English as a priority language in Mexico to expand bilateral trade and investment opportunities”

Dr. Victor Del Rio

Australia, New Zealand and Mexico Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ANZMEX–Australian Chapter)

Dr Elizabeth Kath, School of Global, Urban & Social Studies, RMIT University.

“Translating from one language to another, unless it is from Greek and Latin, the queens of all languages, is like looking at Flemish tapestries from the wrong side, for although the figures are visible, they are covered by threads that obscure them, and cannot be seen with the smoothness and color of the right side.”

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote-



Executive Summary

The teaching of Spanish as a national priority language in Australia and the promotion of English in Mexico¹

For many decades the positive relationship between international trade and linguistic competence has been recognised. In fact in 1990, an Australian study led by John Stanley and others from the Australian Dept. of Employment, Education and training demonstrated this positive correlation.

Both Australia and Mexico could work together to promote and support the teaching of Spanish and English respectively. This proposal is aligned with the four pillars that support Australia's economic diplomacy strategy² of the Government.

There are more Spanish speaking people in the USA than in Spain (55 million)³. 35% of the TPP countries (Mexico, Peru, Chile) have Spanish as their main official language representing a potential market of 164 million people – almost 8 times the population of Australia. Mutual language skills is a leader factor in developing trade and economic opportunities as well as jobs, and will be a key driver in achieving the objectives of the TTP agreement in more than a third of the countries under that agreement.

This Submission, based on the evidence analysed, recommends the following:

Recommendation

Forming a bi-national language taskforce to identify ways to promote, support and expand the teaching of Spanish in Australia and English in Mexico. By exploring:

- 1. the possibility of re-instating Spanish as a National Priority language in Australia⁴.**
- 2. the possibility of providing at least five Spanish language advisors at**

¹ The Teaching of English as a second language is already a priority in Mexico (see relevant Submission's section).

² <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/economic-diplomacy/pages/economic-diplomacy.aspx>

³ <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/29/us-second-biggest-spanish-speaking-country>

⁴ The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2011 Point 110, page 36

⁵ Spanish is classified currently as a Language of global importance but stopped being a national priority language in the late 1990's.



Federal and State level, to complement the two Spanish language advisors paid by Spain who are already working in Australia.

- 3. The feasibility to develop a program to train at least, 200 Australian teachers in the Spanish language, and 200 in English in their own respective countries.**
- 4. The feasibility to develop a mobility program to upgrade the Language skills of prospective Master's Degree and Doctoral degree Students**
- 5. The feasibility to develop a teacher's exchange program to allow them to learn methodologies, identify, examine and adapt resources available in both languages.**
- 6. The feasibility to exchange relevant methodologies to articulate the teaching of Spanish and English from kinder to University.**
- 7. The feasibility to start a pilot program with Universities in Australia to lower the IELTS and TOEFL's Mexican students entry score (by 15%) in order to create opportunities for Mexican students to improve their English skills in Australia⁶.**
- 8. The feasibility to allow Mexicans to apply for visas using the eVisa and the EST categories.**

Introduction

In this brief Submission we propose a number of strategies to increase the trade and investment opportunities between Mexico and Australia by elevating the status of the teaching of the Spanish Language in Australia and by creating a framework to expand

⁶ Mexican Students can not get access to Mexican scholarships without the University and/or VET Institution's acceptance letter.



the teaching of the English language in Mexico through exchange programs, institutional collaborations, scholarships etc. In this Submission we took into consideration the analyses and recommendations made by previous inquiries. This proposal is aligned with the four pillars that support Australia's economic diplomacy strategy of the Government⁷.

The Spanish Language in the World

The Spanish Language is spoken by 559 million people in the World and occupies the second place in the importance in the international ranking of languages classified by its international importance (exports, number of countries, number of people etc) after English⁸. Twenty-one countries in the world have Spanish as their official language. There are more than 21 million students of the Spanish language scattered in 106 countries⁹. There are more Spanish speaking people in the USA than in Spain (55 million)¹⁰. A quarter of the TPP countries (Mexico, Peru, Chile) speak Spanish as their main official language representing a potential market of 164 million people - tenfold the population of Australia. If we include the people who speaks Spanish at home in Canada and the USA the population figure reaches the 217 million.

| TPP's Spanish-Speaking Population 2013 Figures | |
|---|--------------------|
| Mexico | 117,147,000 |
| Peru | 30,476,000 |
| Chile | 16,841,000 |
| Sub-Total | 164,464,000 |
| USA (*) | 52,600,000 |
| Canada (8) | 250000 |
| Sub-Total | 52,850,000 |
| Total | 217,314,000 |

* People who speaks Spanish at home

It has been estimated than the 15% of the value of the PIB is related to the language of commerce¹¹. The Spanish Language is the third most used in the Internet (after English and Mandarin) and occupies the second place in Facebook in relation to the number of users.

⁷ <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/economic-diplomacy/pages/economic-diplomacy.aspx>

⁸ Moreno Fernández (2015), p. 27. Ponderaciones: número de hablantes: 0,15; IDH: 0,25; número de países: 0,35; exportaciones: 0,09; traducciones: 0,09; oficialidad en la ONU: 0,07. (quoted in El Español: Una Lengua Viva).

⁹ El Español: Una Lengua Viva, Informe 2015 Instituto Cervantes

¹⁰ <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/29/us-second-biggest-spanish-speaking-country>

¹¹ Á. Martín Municio et al. (2003), El valor económico de la lengua española (quoted in El Español: Una Lengua Viva).



Its importance has been acknowledged by Australia in several reports and inquiries.

The 1992 Senate Inquiry on the Australia and Latin America relationships analysed in detail the strategic importance to promote and teach the Spanish Language in Australia (points 7.23 to 7.79). It made five recommendations:

7.54 Recommendation Thirty five: The Committee recommends that, in the implementation of the Government's Language Policy, the Federal and State Education Departments ensure that they themselves are fully aware, and ensure that potential students of foreign languages are made fully aware of the importance and value of Spanish an international language.

7.65 Recommendation thirty seven: The Committee recommends that DEET, in cooperation with State education authorities, institute a scheme whereby native Spanish speakers who do not have Australian teaching qualifications may be employed as assistants in the teaching of that language in Australian schools.

7.68 Recommendation thirty eight: The Committee recommends that DEET, in cooperation with State education authorities, actively explore the possibility of arranging teacher exchanges between Australia and the countries of Latin America as a means to overcoming the serious shortage of Spanish language teachers in Australia.

7.72 Recommendation thirty nine: The Committee recommends that DEET institute a system whereby language skills developed outside the formal schooling system can be assessed and acknowledged as a recognized education qualification.

7.79 Recommendation forty: The Committee recommends that relevant Government Departments and authorities, such as DEET and Austrade, support, as a matter of priority, the inclusion of Spanish language training in the establishment and operation of Language Export Centres.



None of these recommendations were included in the Government's 12 pages response to the 1992 Inquiry.

The 2007 House of Representatives Inquiry - Australia and Mexico highlighted:

“Australian business’ awareness of and interest in Mexico has been limited by distance, inadequate transport links, *differences in language* and culture, trade barriers, and unfamiliar business environments. These limitations are reciprocated in Mexican business’ perceptions of engagement with Australia”¹².

5.5 Enrolments of Mexican students have grown steadily in recent years with the most significant increase in the ELICOS (English language) sector where there has been a 54.7% increase in this sector in the year to date August 2006.⁴

5.33 The Committee notes the opportunity to develop long distance education and an exchange program for Spanish teachers.

The Committee acknowledged, Hon Carlos de Alba, the then Mexican Director for International Affairs within the Ministry of Education, strong intention to work closely with Australia:

7.19 They were also interested in developing a relationship between Mexico and Australia in long distance education and an exchange program for Spanish and English language teachers.

In relation to the role of COALAR in this topic, the 2007 Inquiry says that it should:

“...strengthen links with Australian academics engaged in the delivery of Spanish language and Latin American studies;”

The Current Language Policy in Australia

¹² Inquiry into Australia's trade with Mexico and the Region Trade Sub-Committee, House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, August 2007, Canberra



According to Alfredo Martínez Exposito¹³, the Australian Public policy does not favor the teaching of Spanish Language in Australia: “...the 2008-2012 National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP), a Commonwealth initiative to foster the teaching of Asian languages in schools by making compulsory for schools to offer at least one of four strategic Asian languages (Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean), regardless of any other language offering. The 2012 Australia in the Asian Century White Paper maintains this policy with a slightly different choice of languages (Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, Hindi).”

The Teaching of the Spanish Language in Australia

Spanish is classified in Australia as a Language of global importance and it is recognised as one of the country’s community Languages. According to the ABS Census 2011, 117,00 people spoke Spanish at home. There were almost 31,315 Australians studying Spanish in 2014. Out of this number 15,142 were primary school students and 9,558 were secondary students. These figures showed a substantial increase of 188% and 186% over respectively in relation to the statistics presented at the 1992 Senate Inquiry. The Spanish Language is growing at a good pace despite the lack of public policy encouraging it and the limited resources available in Australia for expansion. The figures, in relation to students of Spanish in higher education, are astonishing. According to Estela Valverde, there were 1077 students studying Spanish in 1988¹⁴. By 2013 this number was 514% higher. The Spanish language is taught in 21 universities in Australia. Melbourne University obliges students to study a language as a requisite to graduate. Most students are choosing Spanish.

| Students of the Spanish Language in Australia (2014) | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Level | Public | Private | Total |
| Primary | 10198 | 4944 | 15142 |
| Secondary (YR 7 to 12)) | 6598 | 2960 | 9558 |

¹³ Alfredo Martínez-Expósito (2014). Vested Interests: the Place of Spanish in Australian Academia. Coolabah, No.13, 2014, ISSN 1988-5946, Observatori: Centre d’Estudis Australians, Australian Studies Centre, Universitat de Barcelona

¹⁴ Dr. E. Valverde, Language for Export (quoted in the Inquiry into Australia’s relationship with Latin America, Senate Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade , November 1991 -published in 1992).



| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| University ⁽¹⁾ | 6615 | | 6611 |
| Total | 23411 | 7904 | 31,315 |
| ⁽¹⁾ Statistics from 2013 | | | |

Source: El Mundo Estudia Español, Ministerio de Educacion Cultura y Deporte, España

Alfredo Martinez Exposito made an excellent summary of the Spanish Language history in an academic article Australia published in 2014¹⁵. So far Spain has been the only country that has supported the teaching of the Spanish Language in Australia. In his paper Alfredo reports that: “...for several decades Spain has maintained a strong program of language support in Australia that includes a Spanish language teaching scheme aimed at second generation migrants (ALCE); a network of language advisors who seek to collaborate with Australian education officers in resourcing and training; a network of university lecturers funded by the Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID). The Spanish Embassy in Canberra is one of only a few that has an Education Attaché in the country. Since 2009 Spain is one of a small number of countries that has its own language and culture institute (Instituto Cervantes) in Australia”. Exposito added: “...The group of Latin American embassies in Canberra (GRULA) actively lobby in Canberra for an enhanced visibility of the Spanish and Portuguese languages at all levels.” There is a clear opportunity for Mexico to join Spain and provide additional resources to expand the teaching of Spanish in Australia.

Main barriers to expanding the teaching of Spanish in Australia

According to Manuel Moreno¹⁶, Spanish Language Advisor working in Victoria, there are three main barriers that block the expansion of the teaching of the Spanish language in Australia:

Lack of financial support to primary and secondary schools to run additional language courses (in addition to the ones already established)

Lack of enough Spanish Language Advisors at Federal and State Level (for curricula development and the supporting of language resources) and qualified Spanish teachers

¹⁵ Ibid. Pag 76

¹⁶ Manuel Moreno is one out of two language advisors paid by the Spanish Government to work with the Victorian, Tasmanian, South Australia and Western Australia's Departments of Education to develop curricula and resources for the teaching of the Spanish Language in those States.



Lack of articulation between the teaching of the Spanish language at the various levels of education

Lack of financial support to primary and secondary schools to run additional language courses (in addition to the ones already established)

Many Primary and secondary schools face a teachers' resources dilemma. Schools have already contracted specific language teachers. These teachers tend to be permanent members of the school's staff. As the teachers have only specific language skills, they cannot teach other languages to the students. This teacher resource limitation applies even in those cases where all: the parents, the school principals, the other teachers and the students want the children to learn a different language. In other multi-lingual environments like in Europe, the issue would be resolved by hiring a new teacher with the right set of skills. However in Australia there are not enough resources to do so (the teaching of second languages appears to not be at the top of the Government(s) agenda (within the OECD countries, Australia has the lowest level of Y12 students studying a language other than English - only 12%-2013). The only option left to the school's principal is to wait until the relevant language teacher retires and/or can be replaced.

Lack of enough Spanish Language Advisors at Federal and State Level (for Curricula development and the supporting of language resources) and Qualified Teachers of Spanish

There are currently only two Language Advisors. One of them covers Queensland, NSW and Canberra. The second one (Manuel Moreno) covers Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia. It is clearly insufficient and they are overworked.

The Spanish Embassy in Canberra is one of only a few that has an Education Attaché in the country. Since 2009 Spain is one of a small number of countries that has its own language and culture institute (Instituto Cervantes) in Australia". Exposito in his 2014 article added: "...The group of Latin American embassies in Canberra (GRULA) actively lobby in Canberra for an enhanced visibility of the Spanish and Portuguese languages at all levels."



There is a clear opportunity for Mexico to join Spain and provide additional resources to expand the teaching of Spanish in Australia in the form of either Spanish language advisors (to have at least one per State), resources and methodologies and/or through providing and/or training qualified Spanish Teachers in Australia. Australia needs Mexico if it decides to promote the teaching of the Spanish Language but Mexico also needs Australia if it wants to do the same in relation to the English language in the Country.

The Mexican organization “Mexicanos Primero” published in January 2015 the Report “Sorry, El Aprendizaje del Inglés en México -The Teaching of English in México”¹⁷. This study is an excellent assessment of the state of the teaching of English as a second language in México. This Report notes that since 1941 the teaching of the English language is a compulsory subject in the Mexican secondary school system. The Education Regulation approved by the Mexican Ministry of Education in September 2011¹⁸ states:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>“Que el Plan y los programas de estudio de la Educación Básica deben favorecer un currículo que propicie el aprendizaje de los alumnos en su lengua materna, sea ésta el español o alguna de las lenguas indígenas reconocidas en nuestro país; el aprendizaje del inglés, como una segunda lengua”</p> | <p>“The Plan and the Curricula of the Basic Education system must take into consideration the learning of the students in their mother tongue, either Spanish and/or an indigenous language recognized in our country; and the learning of English as a second language”</p> |
|--|--|

The Report states that the Mexican Ministry of Education (SEP) run “El Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica¹⁹- The National Program for the Teaching of English in the Basic Education (PNIEB). This program has not achieved its goals for a number of reasons:

- **Lack of English Teachers: In 2013 there were only 50,724 teachers of English in Mexico, 20,000 less than the PNIEB had planned to have for 2012.**
- **It means that one out of ten English teachers has more than 10 groups**

¹⁷ Sorry. El Aprendizaje del Inglés en México, Mexicanos Primero, January 2015, ISBN: 978-607-8438-00-6

¹⁸ Acuerdo 592 (SEP, 2011).

¹⁹ The Basic Education in Mexico includes 1 year of Kindergarden and the equivalent of YR1 to YR9 in Australia)



of children to attend.

- **There are no English teachers in one out of every two Secondary Schools, in nine out of ten primary schools and in ninety-five of every hundred kindergarden schools.**
- **In 2015, there is a deficit of 308,826 English Teachers in Mexico.**

Mexico needs Australia to cover part of this English teachers' deficit.

There are a number of Institutions in Mexico and Australia that share synergies in this area. The Universities in Mexico run their own English programs. For instance, UNAM the biggest University in Latin America has Language Centres like the Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras (CELE)²⁰. The Australia's English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS)²¹ runs these courses in English locally. Although there is not a Mexican counterpart of ELICOS, it could establish agreements with a number of University Centres like CELE. One of the main issues that Mexican English Students at UNAM have is to get the opportunity to practice their language skills in an English speaking country. There are great opportunities to link both organisations to allow student's mobility for language up-skilling purposes.

Lack of articulation between the teaching of the Spanish language at the various levels of education

Mexican organisations could help to develop a methodology to articulate the teaching of Spanish between the different education levels in Australia. For example, UNAM also have the Centro de Enseñanza para Extranjeros (CEPE)²², that specializes in running Spanish courses for foreigners. The Centre has highly qualified Spanish Language teachers who can complement the efforts of the Government of Spain who has been paying for Spanish Language advisors at the Federal and State levels in Australia.

The feasibility to start a pilot program with Universities in Australia to lower the IELTS and TOEFL's Mexican students entry score (by 15%)

²⁰ <http://cele.unam.mx>

²¹ <http://www.elicos.com>

²² <http://www.cepe.unam.mx>



The proposal will imply the provision of English language services for those students who need to improve their language proficiency scores in the knowing that they have already been accepted by an Australian Institution and obtain the relevant scholarship from the Mexican Government.

The lack of English language proficiency is a clear barrier to attract more Mexican students to Australia. Most of the organisations granting scholarships in Mexico (Conacyt, Banco de Mexico, SRE etc) require, as a condition to approve the scholarship, the letter of acceptance from an Australian University an/or a VET Institution and a Certificate of knowledge of languages²³. The student has to have achieved a minimum of 550 TOEFL, 6.0 in IELTS.

In order to provide this letter of acceptance most Australian Universities request at least 6.5 overall and a minimum of 6.0 in each sub-band of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent test. But there are some minor differences from University to University. For example at the University of Queensland²⁴ “...some programs have higher English proficiency requirements; see individual program requirements. Other equivalent tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic are also accepted, and other qualifications and experience may also be considered. Study Abroad and Incoming Exchange students are only required to meet the overall score (eg 6.5 IELTS or 870 TOEFL or 64 PTE)”. The University of Melbourne require for undergraduates a 577 TOEFL and an overall band score of 6.5 or more in the Academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with no bands less than 6.0²⁵. For Graduates UniMelb requests IELTS from 6.5 to 7 and TOEFL from 577 to 600²⁶

There is an eligibility language score entry mismatch of around 8% in IELTS and almost 60% in the TOEFL.

²³ <http://www.conacyt.mx/index.php/becas-y-posgrados/becas-en-el-extranjero>

²⁴ <http://future-students.uq.edu.au/applying/english-language-proficiency-requirements>

²⁵ <http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/admissions/entry-requirements/language-requirements/undergraduate-toefl-ielts>

²⁶ <http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/admissions/entry-requirements/language-requirements/graduate-toefl-ielts>



The feasibility to allow Mexicans to apply for visas using the eVisa and the EST categories.

Mexicans are not eligible to apply for the eVisa and the EST visa categories. A more detailed analysis of this proposal was conducted in the ANZMEX “Submission into the allocation of strategic resources to readdress the trade imbalance Australia-Mexico”

Recommendations:

The Australian and Mexican Governments to explore the possibility of:

1. the possibility of re-instating Spanish as a National Priority language in Australia²⁷²⁸.
2. the possibility of providing at least five Spanish language advisors at Federal and State level, to complement the two Spanish language advisors paid by Spain who are already working in Australia.
3. The feasibility to develop a program to train at least, 200 Australian teachers in the Spanish language, and 200 in English in their own respective countries.
4. The feasibility to develop a mobility program to upgrade the Language skills of prospective Master's Degree and Doctoral degree Students
5. The feasibility to develop a teacher's exchange program to allow them to learn methodologies, identify, examine and adapt resources available in both languages.
6. The feasibility to exchange relevant methodologies to articulate the teaching of Spanish and English from kinder to University.
7. The feasibility to start a pilot program with Universities in Australia to lower the IELTS and TOEFL's Mexican students entry score (by 15%) in order to create opportunities for Mexican students to improve their English skills in Australia²⁹.
8. The feasibility to allow Mexicans to apply for visas using the eVisa and the EST categories.

²⁷ The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2011 Point 110, page 36

²⁸ Spanish is classified currently as a Language of global importance but stopped being a national priority language in the late 1990's.

²⁹ Mexican Students can not get access to Mexican scholarships without the University and/or VET Institution's acceptance letter.