



*Ministry of Education*

VANUATU  
NATIONAL LANGUAGE  
POLICY  
2012



*Ministry of Education*

## ***Vanuatu National Language Policy 2012***

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## **1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- I. Support the development of bilingual education.
- II. Provide the overall authority and guidance for teaching and the learning of all languages at the classroom,<sup>1</sup> school and system level.
- III. Support the teaching and learning of French and English as the official languages of education from Year 3 to Year 13 and recognise the importance of beginning education using children's first language or mother tongue.
- IV. Support the use of local vernacular languages and Bislama, our National language, to fulfil educational and cultural needs and practices.

## **2.0 POLICY**

### **2.1 Language of Instruction**

Schools<sup>2</sup> and teachers must:

- a) Teach in either French or English in all schools. However, in the first two years of school, Bislama or a local vernacular can be used while either French or English is introduced by the second semester of Year 3. By the end of Year 3, the language of instruction should be either French or English. However, teachers will continue to use, for as long as is necessary, the agreed local vernacular languages to support children as they make the transition to English or French.
- b) With the approval of the Minister, on the recommendation of the Director General, teach some subjects in Bislama or a local vernacular. Curriculum developers will recommend to the Director General those subjects to be taught in the local vernacular or Bislama.
- c) Continue to use Bislama or a vernacular language to assist children to understand concepts or acquire skills.
- d) Decide which language, either French or English, will be used as the language of instruction after consultation with and the approval of their communities and in consultation with Provincial and MOE officers to consider resource requirements and availability.
- e) Use the agreed language of instruction to teach all subjects in the approved curriculum with the exception of those approved by the Minister for Education to be taught in Bislama.

### **2.2 Language requirements**

The system must ensure:

- a) The curriculum is the same for all schools with respect to content;
- b) The structure of syllabuses and teacher guides is the same for all schools;
- c) All syllabuses and other curriculum documents for each 'subject' are written in French and English and with the approval of the Minister that some are written in Bislama;

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<sup>1</sup> In this policy a Classroom is inclusive of preschool centres and all other places where structured learning and development takes place.

<sup>2</sup> In this policy a school is inclusive of all premises where teaching is conducted including preschools.

- d) The curriculum learning standards in the form of outcomes are the same for all schools at each level and are written in French and English and sometimes Bislama;
- e) All students are required to achieve the same learning outcomes in all subjects studied irrespective of their language background;
- f) Specific methods of teaching reading, writing and speaking including agreed approaches for teaching handwriting are identified and supported by early childhood syllabuses and materials;
- g) All teachers are provided with guidelines in either French or English about methods to be used to teach reading, writing and oral communication and handwriting;
- h) A minimal level of competence in either French or English for all Year 5 children is determined using available data and this standard is monitored and reported;
- i) All children have the opportunity to achieve a minimal level of competence by the end of Year 5 sufficient for them to read, write and speak at this level using either French or English;
- j) Seventy-five percent (75%) of all students achieve an agreed standard of literacy in either French or English by the end of Year 8, and can make themselves understood in the other two official languages;
- k) An agreed benchmark for literacy is determined for students completing Year 8, the second year of secondary education, and use it to monitor standards of literacy over time;
- l) All students at junior secondary, from Years 7-10, will learn French and English. When the school's language of instruction is French then students will learn English as a foreign language<sup>3</sup> and if the school's language of instruction is English then students will learn French as a foreign language;
- m) All students at senior secondary will learn French and English and, as at junior secondary level, they will learn either French or English as a foreign language depending upon which is the language of instruction;
- n) All students at Year 12 are examined in French and English either as a foreign language or additional language (L3)<sup>4</sup> or as a second language (L2);
- o) A satisfactory level of proficiency at this level in both languages is determined for entrance to Year 13 and results from the Year 12 Languages examinations are entered on the Year 13 Certificate;
- p) All students' language competence in reading, writing and speaking French and English and where appropriate a vernacular or Bislama is assessed and monitored at agreed levels of schooling and at intervals determined by the Ministry of Education; and

<sup>3</sup> The phrase 'learn (English or French) as a foreign language' refers to the methods used to teach either of these L3 languages.

<sup>4</sup> For clarity the numbers of languages spoken by students have been given a numerical label. These are:

- L1: the dominant language children use at home and in the community where children and their parents live. This language is usually their mother tongue, which in Vanuatu might be a vernacular language, Bislama or French or English.
- L2: One of the principal languages of education that children will learn and is either French or English, whichever has been agreed to be the language of instruction (LOI).
- L3: The principal language of education not used as the LOI. This language will be taught as a foreign language from Year 4.
- L4: Other foreign languages studied by students specialising in Language studies at a senior level of schooling.

- q) Students at senior secondary can undertake specialist studies in French and/or English at Year 13 as well as other foreign languages (or Bislama or a vernacular language)

## 2.3 Languages to be taught

Schools<sup>5</sup> and teachers must:

- a) Provide all students with the opportunity to learn French, English and Bislama irrespective of the language background of their communities.
- b) Emphasise either French or English depending upon the agreed language of instruction determined by the community. Schools whose agreed community language is French will emphasise French and schools whose agreed community language is English will emphasise English. All schools will provide opportunities to use Bislama or a vernacular language.
- c) Introduce a school's agreed community language (French or English) from Year 1 with a gradual transition from a Vernacular language or Bislama from Year 1 to Year 3. The school's agreed community language must continue to be used to teach all subjects throughout the Primary and Secondary school.
- d) Introduce another official community language (L3) (either French or English) from Year 4 and teach this language as a foreign or additional language throughout the remaining years of Primary and Secondary school.
- e) At the senior secondary level, offer languages other than English and French to students with demonstrated abilities in languages at senior secondary level and give preference to learning approved foreign languages for which there are syllabuses such as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish.

## 2.4 Time allocations for teaching languages

The system and schools must:

- a) Provide guidelines for time allocations for teaching all subjects including the amount of minutes each week to be allocated for teaching of languages at each level of schooling;
- b) Allocate time to introduce either French or English as the language of instruction (LOI) and to learn as a language (L2), as determined by the community when children enter second semester of Year 3;
- c) Allocate time to teaching French or English until by Year 3 eighty percent of the time for teaching either French or English (L2) is allocated. The remaining twenty percent of time can be allocated to continue to teach a vernacular language and or Bislama (L1);
- d) By Year 4, allocate thirty percent (30%) of the time to teaching a language (L3) that is not the agreed language of instruction and the remaining seventy percent (70%) should be allocated to learning the language (L2) of instruction as a subject;
- e) By Year 7, allocate forty percent (40%) of time to the language (L3) that is not the agreed language of instruction so reducing to sixty percent (60%), the time given to the agreed language (L2) of instruction as a subject;
- f) From Year 4 to Year 8, teach some subjects in the early years and with the approval of the Minister in either Bislama or an appropriate vernacular language (L1) and these subjects will be supported by locally produced curriculum materials;

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<sup>5</sup> In this policy a school is inclusive of all premises where teaching is conducted including preschools.

- g) Allow teachers, children and students to use Bislama, the national language or if preferred a local vernacular language, for day-to-day communication and to support students' learning;
- h) In Year 9 and 10, allow students to continue to receive instruction in either French or English and study French or English (L2) except where some subjects have been approved to be taught using Bislama or a vernacular (L1);
- i) In Year 9 and 10, allow students to be taught either French or English as a foreign or additional language (L3) depending upon which of these is not the agreed language of instruction;
- j) In Year 9 and 10, allow forty percent (40%) of the time allocated to languages teaching to be devoted to the language (L3) that is not the agreed language of instruction; and
- k) Determine time allocations for teaching languages in the senior secondary school in accordance with those determined by and approved by the National Education Commission (NEC), the Minister for Education and the Council of Ministers giving due consideration to the time allocation requirements of other subjects studied at a senior level.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Language teaching and learning is integral to curriculum development and the implementation of curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 13. This policy recognises the significant role languages have in children's learning and teaching.

A curriculum policy for teaching and learning languages is essential in order to develop a curriculum that maximises children's opportunity to be successful learners.. At present, there are clear statements in the nation's Constitution and in the Education Act 2001 about the languages of education and about what languages should be taught in Government supported schools and there are statements about language in the Government approved Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement, 2010 (VNCS).

This policy:

- Acknowledges the current legal framework and national curriculum policy statement;
- Recognises the need to ensure that the official languages of Vanuatu are treated equitably;
- Ensures children are provided with the opportunity to learn French and English and to become confident in these languages (be bilingual);
- Ensures the national language of Bislama and the country's rich endowment of vernacular languages are supported; and
- Recognises the need to strengthen the language curriculum, support materials and teacher training.

### **3.2 Purpose**

This statement provides guidance about the languages of instruction, what languages should be taught and when so that current curriculum development at K-3 and at Years 11-13 and their implementation is supported by the curriculum.

As supported by the Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement (2010) this policy recognises that language learning is of critical importance to all children's educational development. A curriculum policy is essential to guide the development, writing and implementing of the reformed curriculum. A clear policy about language and language teaching is essential and needs to be consistent with the legal framework provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu and the Education Act 2001. These documents provide the legal framework for education and include statements about the use of languages in education. The reform of the curriculum advocated by the National Curriculum Statement will place pressure on existing resources and require schools and teachers to take on new challenges.

There is a need for the current approach to language development to be strengthened and bilingual education to be supported by the MoE. Current planned curriculum reforms, along with developments such as Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), will provide many opportunities to do this without causing disharmony and without making unrealistic demands on resources and teachers' competencies. However, it is anticipated that this policy will be gradually introduced as resources including trained language teachers; pre-service and in-service training and support materials are planned, developed and implemented.

A major goal for language teaching and learning is that all children by the end of the Year 8 should be able to read, write, and speak competently one of the official languages and make themselves understood in the other two official languages. All students in Vanuatu should be assisted to become bilingual.<sup>6</sup> A curriculum policy for language teaching and learning is required to achieve this outcome and must be implemented.

Children bring with them to kindergarten and school, language experiences using their vernacular languages and/or Bislama (L1)<sup>7</sup> and from knowledge gained living in their communities. This knowledge and experience needs to be supported by the curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 3 and beyond. These experiences, informal and formal, form the foundation for all future development of language and communication. Language and communication using children's first language (L1) must be a major focus for all children's learning at K-3 and this foundation should be built upon throughout the years of schooling. The language of instruction (LOI)<sup>8</sup> in K-3 should be one of the local vernaculars or Bislama. With the approval of the Director General, an L1 language such as Bislama can be used to teach some subjects. At Year 3, there should be a gradual transition to the second language (L2)<sup>9</sup> as the language of instruction and as a focus for language learning throughout the years of schooling.

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<sup>6</sup> Many children in Vanuatu are polylingual but usually one language is dominant. This dominant language can be regarded as a child's first language (L1).

<sup>7</sup> L1 refers to the dominant language children use at home and in the community where children and their parents live. This language is usually their mother tongue, which in Vanuatu might be a vernacular language, Bislama or French or English.

<sup>8</sup> LOI is the language that the school community has agreed will be the language of instruction used in their community school and must be by law one of the principal languages of education, either French or English.

<sup>9</sup> L2 refers to one of the principal languages of education that children will learn and is either French or English, whichever has been agreed to be the LOI.

Either French or English should be introduced as a third language (L3)<sup>10</sup> from Year 4. Some subjects may continue to be taught in Bislama or a vernacular.

In the junior secondary years, students will continue to be taught in either French or English and will learn L2 and L3 languages with an emphasis on one of these principle languages of education.

At the senior secondary level, students will receive instruction in either French or English in accord with the Education Act 2001. The VNCS states that ... *either English or French will be compulsory depending upon the language of instruction used by the school* ... which means that both languages will be studied at the senior level by all students. One of these languages will be studied as an L3 language depending upon the L2 language chosen as the language of instruction. Recently, the Council of Minister's approved the examination of Languages at Year 12 and the results from these examinations will be carried forward to the Year 13 Certificate. Some students may specialise in languages and continue to study and be examined at Year 13 in French and or English and may choose to study other foreign languages (L4)<sup>11</sup> such as Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese (or Bislama or a vernacular language) at the senior secondary level. Currently there is no policy about studying languages at this level of schooling.

### **3.3 Policy Decisions to be Made**

Before the curriculum can be developed and written, it is essential that a language policy is agreed that informs curriculum developers, schools and the community about what will be:

- The languages of instruction;
- Which languages will be taught; and
- The time to be provided for learning languages each week at each level of schooling.

The reformed curriculum development will take account of these decisions.

### **3.4 The Language Curriculum**

The Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement (VNCS) has been approved by the National Education Commission and the Council of Ministers. A major reform of the curriculum can now begin and the first development activities will focus on Kindergarten to Year 3 and the senior school curriculum Year 11 – Year 13. The subjects for K-3 are listed in the VNCS and the National Examinations and Assessment Taskforce is currently developing the subject syllabuses for the senior school curriculum. These development activities will require a review of all syllabuses, student and teacher materials and all documents will be harmonised. The VNCS makes clear that all students will study the same curriculum in accord with a national language policy.

Languages and communication is identified as a Learning Area in the VNCS. The VNCS makes the following statements about Language:

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<sup>10</sup> L3 refers to the principal language of education not used as the LOI. This language will be taught as a foreign language from Year 4.

<sup>11</sup> L4 refers to other foreign languages studied by students specialising in Language studies at a senior level of schooling.

- The VNCS ...*Promotes the use of many languages including our national language of Bislama and other vernacular languages and our three official languages of Bislama, French and English and supports learning languages that are economically and socially important to our country's future.*

(VNCS 2010:1)

- The VNCS recognises ...*Languages have sustained our cultures from generation to generation over many thousands of years. Vanuatu has a rich cultural heritage and oral traditions that have survived because our languages have survived. Keeping our languages alive is essential otherwise, many of our cultural practices will die or survive only in museums. Schools have an important role to play in working with local communities to ensure local languages are used, understood, and valued by children and students. Children and students should be encouraged to use their local languages and be proud of this heritage.*

(VNCS 2010:34)

- The VNCS recognises children arrive at kindergarten and school speaking their first language and probably other languages. ...*Children and students begin using their first language (mother tongues) in their homes and in their communities. Frequently a local language is used or increasingly Bislama and sometimes French or English. Children experiment and play with language and adopt many of the conventions of their first languages quite naturally. However, when English or French are learned as second languages in schools students have to be taught the conventions of these languages and practice using them in familiar and unfamiliar situations. However, there is considerable research evidence that supports children having a good understanding of their first languages to begin with because it assists their intellectual development and learning of other languages. The evidence suggests that if children are stopped using their first language too soon it can hinder and slow down their intellectual development and they find it difficult to fully recover from this.*

(VNCS 2010:34)

The VNCS recognises the importance of using vernacular languages and Bislama in the early years of schooling and states:

- ...*Continuing to use their vernacular in the early years enables children to transfer their learning from home to school and to build a sound foundation for learning to read and write. ... Developing literacy in a vernacular language leads to stronger intellectual development.*

(VNCS 2010:47)

### **3.5 Languages of Instruction.**

All students will receive instruction in either French or English, the principal languages of education. Article 3(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu states:

... *The principal languages of education are English and French.*

and the Education Act, 2001 states:

### *...6. Language policy*

- (1) In accordance with Article 3(1) of the Constitution, the principal languages of education are English and French.*
- (2) All students during their primary education are to be taught in either French or English.*

In accord with the Constitution and the Education Act the language of instruction in schools at all levels must be either French or English and where the Minister approves ... *acting on the advice of the Director-General, may by order determine that one or more specified subjects at a specified school or schools are to be taught to students in the local vernacular or Bislama* (Education Act, 2001, 6 (3)).

Historically, schools in Vanuatu have been developed with the support of local communities with a particular historical connection to the French or English languages. Where the community language is French, the local school is likely to use French as the language of instruction. In schools where the community language is English, the local school is likely to use English as the language of instruction. Some parents have made decisions to send their children to schools that do not reflect their community language. This is their choice. In some instances, a few community schools support English and French. However, the language of instruction is still either French or English with parents opting for their children to be taught in either English or French. The Education Act 2001 also makes clear that students transferring from Primary to Secondary can be taught in a language different from that used in the Primary school.

### **3.6 Essential Language Requirements**

All syllabuses and other documents for each ‘subject’ must be written in French and English and some may need to be written in Bislama. The reformed syllabuses will identify curriculum learning standards in the form of outcomes. All students, irrespective of their language background, will be taught and be required to achieve the same learning outcomes. The majority of students will be expected to achieve a majority of these outcomes in each subject for each year level. The number of outcomes for each subject will be determined by the curriculum writers. The number of outcomes to be achieved in any subject will be limited by the amount of time allocated for each subject and the degree of conceptual difficulty.

All children in the early years of schooling must be provided with the opportunity to achieve a minimal level of competence in literacy as reflected by the requirements of the reformed curriculum. In the early years of schooling, children should use and be taught using an agreed vernacular or Bislama. The minimal level of competence should be determined using externally moderated instruments such as EGRA data, other literacy and numeracy data, and the experience of the teachers and curriculum writers. Given the crucial importance of literacy and numeracy, it is anticipated that a significant proportion of time will be allocated to teaching Languages and to Basic Mathematics. By the end of Year 5 all children should achieve a minimal level of competence, to be determined, sufficient for them to read, write and speak at this level using one of the official languages of Vanuatu. They should also have developed a basic understanding and some skills in the other official languages. All children

should also achieve a minimal level of numeracy and be able to perform simple number operations to be set out in the reformed curriculum.

Currently, no specific methods are advocated for teachers to develop basic literacy and numeracy in the early years. The National Language Policy should advocate agreed methods of teaching reading and writing including an agreed approach for teaching handwriting supported by materials and training. Oral communication is the traditional way of communicating. Language conventions associated with this form of communication should be taught, and the curriculum should provide opportunities for children and students to develop skills in speaking and listening.

The reformed curriculum must be well supported with student and teacher materials that demonstrate agreed ways of teaching basic literacy and other areas of the curriculum in French and English. Current curriculum documents will be reviewed and decisions made about whether to continue to use them, revise or abandon them and determine what new materials are needed to be developed and written.

### ***Summary of Stages of Language Learning and Teaching<sup>12</sup>***

<b>Stage 1 Years K-3</b>	<b>Stage 2 Years 4-6</b>	<b>Stage 3 Years 7-10</b>	<b>Stage 4 Years 11-13</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build fluency &amp; comprehension in oral L1 (for children)</li> <li>• Begin comprehension in written and reading L1</li> <li>• Use L1 as LOI K-2</li> <li>• Begin oral learning in L2 in Y2</li> <li>• A minimum level of competency to be determined in L2 by end of Year 3</li> <li>• Introduce L2 as LOI in Year 3</li> <li>• Continue using L1 for some subjects and to explain concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build fluency &amp; comprehension in oral, written and reading L2</li> <li>• Begin learning oral L3 language</li> <li>• Continue to use L1 for some subjects and to explain concepts and for community events and celebrations</li> <li>• Build fluency &amp; comprehension in oral and written and reading L2 language</li> <li>• Continuing using L2 as LOI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue L2 literacy</li> <li>• Continue using L2 as LOI</li> <li>• Build fluency &amp; comprehension in oral, written and reading L3 language (7-8)</li> <li>• Bridge to literacy in L3</li> <li>• A minimum level of competency in L2 to be determined by end of Year 8</li> <li>• Continue to use L1 for some subjects and to explain concepts and for community events and celebrations</li> <li>• Use L1, L2 and L3 as LOI for some subjects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use all languages in continuing education when appropriate</li> <li>• Begin additional L4 languages for some students, as desired</li> <li>• All students continue to study L2 and L3 and examined at Year 12. Some students examined in L4 languages.</li> <li>• Continue to use L1 for some subjects and to explain concepts and for community events and celebrations</li> </ul>

### **3.7 Languages to be taught.**

The official languages of the Republic of Vanuatu are French, English and Bislama. Citizens of this nation should be provided with the opportunity to develop a level of competency in these languages taking into consideration the policy implications identified above. Children emerging from the Primary school should be plurilingual that is to say they should be able to make themselves understood in the three official languages of Vanuatu. However, they will not be ‘fluent’ and in all three languages. The term ‘fluent’ is the subject of academic debate and an agreed level of ‘fluency’ will need to be agreed. Children are educated in Vanuatu schools that have a particular bias to French or English based on the local historical context prior to Independence. Consequently, children should reach a reasonable standard of fluency by the end of Year 8 in either French or English. However, they must also have a foundation to become fluent in the other language of education and become bilingual.

<sup>12</sup> Susan Malone, *Education for multilingualism and multi-literacy in ethnic minority communities: the situation in Asia*, SIL International Bangkok, Thailand, 2003 also published in ABD (Asian/Pacific Book Development), 34(2), January, 2004. This table is derived from the table entitled Features of strong MLE programs, page 5.

It is not anticipated that children will have the same level of competency in both languages. It is anticipated that children are likely to be more ‘fluent’ in one of the languages, either French or English.

Students in the senior secondary school may wish to learn languages other than English and French. They may wish to learn other foreign languages or Bislama or a vernacular language. Consideration should be given to students learning other languages of global and economic importance to Vanuatu, such as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish.

### **3.8 Time allocations for teaching languages**

The language of instruction used specifically for teaching all subjects is either French or English and is not allocated separately. Time allocated for specifically teaching languages is different for each level of schooling and the time allocated in the senior school will reflect the degree of specialisation in particular languages. Time allocations will be approved by the National Education Committee and published in the syllabuses.

#### **Primary level**

Children begin school with many different experiences and are familiar with a range of languages. Some children will have been to Kindergarten and have developed the beginnings of basic literacy. This literacy may be in Bislama, one or more vernacular languages and some will have begun to develop literacy in French or English. The language used by the teacher is sometimes different from children’s mother tongue(s) and teachers need to be aware of the problem this creates for children beginning Year 1. Teachers will need to provide techniques of scaffolding language and other support strategies to enable children to learn effectively in a new environment. Gradually teachers will introduce children to the agreed language of instruction at Year 3 which will be either French or English and one of these will also be taught as a subject.

By Year 3, priority should be given to teaching and learning either French or English and at Year 4, the other community language, English or French (L3), should be introduced. The majority of the time for language teaching should be allocated to the school’s first community language (L2) from Year 4-6 with the rest of the time given to teaching the other official community language (L3) and teaching some subjects in Bislama or a vernacular.

#### **Junior Secondary level**

At Year 7 and 8, more time should be allocated to the second community language (L3). By the end of Year 8, all students should be competent in reading, writing, and speaking the school community’s agreed language of instruction (French or English) and be capable of making themselves understood in the other community languages (French or English and Bislama or a vernacular language). Bislama or a vernacular language will be recommended for teaching some subjects that have a strong local community or cultural association such as crafts, agriculture.

At Year 9 and 10, all students will continue to learn French and English with more time devoted to the school’s agreed language of instruction (L2) rather than the other language of education (L3). At this level, students should have achieved an agreed level of literacy and be reasonably fluent readers, writers and speakers of French and

English and will continue to use Bislama in some subjects. As Bislama is the nation's national language it will be used to conduct day to day affairs and celebrate events and will provide an important means of communication for many irrespective of their community language (L1) background.

### **Senior Secondary Level**

All students will continue to study French and English at Year 11 and 12. Time allocated for studying languages will need to be considered along with time allocations for other subjects studied at Year 13 level. Time allocated to language subjects at this level will be determined by the National Examinations and Assessment Task Force (NEAT) and agreed by the NEC. Time allocated for studying languages at Year 13 will be similarly determined and approved.

### **3.9 Support for the National Language Education Policy**

The Language Policy advocates many important aspects of teaching and learning languages and in line with this policy the National Language Policy supports:

- Bilingual education and plurilingualism;
- Defining and describing language outcomes and competency levels at different stages of schooling for French and English;
- The positive assessment of all components of language proficiency;
- Taking account children's' individual linguistic situations in the materials, methods and tools used for teaching and for teaching languages;
- Individual rates of language acquisition to avoid premature selection of children on the basis of the level reached in the languages taught;
- Taking account of children's first language by the school and the curriculum;
- Valuing every individual child's plurilingualistic profile;
- Teaching of some subjects in more than one language (French and English, Bislama or a vernacular);
- Specifying linguistic and cultural content corresponding to different levels of competence in vernacular, particularly in oral comprehension; and
- Encouraging innovative teaching methods in schools.

## **4.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND OTHER LINKS**

### **4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu**

The Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu, Laws of the Republic of Vanuatu Consolidated Edition 2006 states:

#### ***3. National and official languages***

- (1) *The national language of the Republic of Vanuatu is Bislama. The official languages are Bislama, English and French. The principal languages of education are English and French.*
- (2) *The Republic of Vanuatu shall protect the different local languages which are part of the national heritage, and may declare one of them as a national language.*

### **4.2 The Education Act 2001**

Part 1: 6 of the Education Act 2001, Language Policy states:

- (1) *In accordance with Article 3(1) of the Constitution, the principal languages of education are English and French.*

- (2) All students during their primary education are to be taught in either French or English.
- (3) All students who proceed to secondary education are to continue in their first language of instruction (e.g. French) and are to begin the study of the other language of instruction (e.g. English).
- (4) However, nothing in subsection (3) is to prevent a student who has undertaken his or her primary education in one language of instruction from undertaking his or her secondary education in the other.
- (5) The Minister, acting on the advice of the Director-General, may by order determine that one or more specified subjects at a specified school or schools are to be taught to students in the local vernacular or Bislama.

*Part 1: 6 Language policy, Education Act 2001, Assent: 30th December 2001, Commencement: 25th February 2002, Republic Of Vanuatu, No. 21 of 2001*

#### **4.3 Relevant Policies**

Ministry of Education (2010) Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement, Ministry of Education Republic of Vanuatu

### **5.0 EFFECTIVE DATE**

31 July 2012

### **6.0 REVIEW DATE**

December 2013

### **7.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS**

Language policy, plurilingual, multilingual, bilingual, timetable, teaching a foreign language, language of instruction, first language, second language, mother tongue, vernacular language, indigenous language, language competence, language acquisition, literacy.

## **8.0 APPROVAL**

### **8.1 Endorsed by DGE**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **8.2 Approved by NEC**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **8.3 Approved by Minister**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **8.4 Approved by Council of Ministers**

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## 10. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Table of Languages to be used as Language of Instruction and to be learned at each year of schooling

<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>	<b>K-2</b>	<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>YEARS 4-6</b>	<b>YEARS 7-8</b>	<b>YEARS 9-10</b>	<b>YEARS 11-13</b>
<b>Language of Instruction (LOI)</b> French or English but at K-2 should be a Vernacular or Bislama	<i>One of the official languages of instruction and approved by the school community as the language of instruction</i>	A vernacular language which could be Bislama, French or English if used by majority of children	Transition to French or English using LOI determined by the community and in consultation with MoE.	French or English (some subjects may be taught using Bislama)	French or English (some subjects may be taught using Bislama)	French or English	French or English
<b>Language 1 (L1)</b>  A vernacular language or if used by majority of children can be Bislama, French or English.	L1 is the language used by the majority of children and often referred to as the mother tongue which can be a vernacular or another language	Early literacy is developed in the L1 language agreed as the language of instruction (LOI) for children at this level	Continue to use L1 for informal communication and teacher may use to explain concepts.	Continue to use for informal communication and some subjects may be taught using Bislama and teacher may use L1 to explain concepts.	Continue to use for informal communication and some subjects may be taught using Bislama and teacher may use to explain concepts.	Continue to use for informal communication and some subjects may be taught using Bislama and teacher may use to explain concepts	Continue to use for informal communication and some subjects may be taught using L1 and teacher may use to explain concepts
<b>Language 2 (L2)</b>  French or English	An official language of education and approved by the community to be learned by all children	Introduce some oral French or English in second semester Year 2	Introduce formal learning of the language selected as the language of instruction - either French or English <sup>13</sup>	Continue to learn either French or English	Continue to learn either French or English	Continue to learn either French or English	Continue to learn either French or English and be examined at Year 12
<b>Language 3 (L3)</b>  French or English taught as a foreign or second language	An official language of education introduced at Year 4 but not the language of instruction.			Introduce learning the L3 language first emphasising speaking and listening and then reading and writing	Continue learning the L3 language of education building on Primary experience and continuing to teach as a foreign language	Continue learning the L3 language of education as a foreign language	Continue learning the L3 language of education as a foreign language and be examined at Year 12.
<b>Language 4 (L4)</b>  Additional languages learned by students specialising in languages at senior secondary							Additional languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese or Spanish

<sup>13</sup> Literacy levels will be determined by tests administered by the Ministry of Education at agreed year levels.

## Appendix 2: Terms

Anglophone	This refers to somebody whose first language is English or is used to describe a region or school where English is generally used. Historically some areas of Vanuatu are Anglophone and consequently local residents can use English. The term is not used in this paper.
Bilingual (ism)	A person who can read, write and speak competently in two languages is bilingual.
Francophone	This refers to a person whose first language is French or refers to a region or school where French is generally used. Historically some areas of Vanuatu are Francophone and consequently local residents can use French. The term is not used in this paper.
Language	This term describes the collective of symbols and sounds used to label, describe, and communicate ideas and actions. These symbols and sounds convey meaning to others and may be in the form of writing, drawing or visual cues or patterns of sounds or combinations of these.
Language of instruction	The Constitution identifies French and English as the languages of education and thus to be used by teachers to instruct children. The community can require services to be provided in one of these languages and the school can be required to use one of these languages as the language of instruction. The language of instruction used by a school usually reflects the official language background of the community it serves. Hence, historically French speaking communities have schools that use French as the language of instruction while historically English speaking communities use English. Bislama is not a principal language of instruction but it makes educational sense to use Bislama or a Vernacular in the early years, and schools are encouraged to do so at this level of schooling as well as to introduce French or English starting with oral work.
Languages	There are many languages and each language is used to communicate orally and/or visually the beliefs, values, cultural traditions, practices, and everyday life occurrences associated with a particular group of people. This association of language with particular groups of people identifies their cultural connections, who they are and where they live and from where they have come.
Monolingual (ism)	A person who can read, write and speak only one language.
Mother tongue language	The mother tongue language is the dominant language used in the home which may be one or more local vernacular language, Bislama, French or English.
Multilingual (ism)	A person who can read, write and speak fluently in more than two languages is multilingual.
National Language	Vanuatu's Constitution identifies Bislama as the national language.
Official languages	Vanuatu's Constitution identifies French, English and Bislama as the official languages to be used for all formal communications such as Government documents. These languages maybe referred to as a person's second or third language.
Plurilingual (ism)	A person who can make themselves understood in many languages but is not a fluent reader, speaker, and/or writer in all languages is plurilingual. Plurilingualism is a concept developed by the Council of Europe to refer to the totality of an individual's linguistic competences in and across different languages, which develops throughout life. Many Ni Vanuatu are plurilingual.
Vernacular language	This term refers to all indigenous, native languages and lingua franca or a person's first language.