Australian Education Review

Second Languages and Australian Schooling

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ACER

Foreword

Children born into the world on any given day arrive already equipped with a universal potential for acquiring language, any language(s) to which they are exposed and with which they interact. In the case of these same children, within 2–3 years, this potential will have transformed itself into over 5000 different languages being spoken. This suggests that a life lived monolingually misses out on something that is essentially human. Yet, as a result of global and other forces, many of the 5000 or more languages are heading for extinction. Many of them are the first languages of their speakers who, as Professor Lo Bianco confirms, are often relatively few in number. The world's multilingualism is further compromised by serious attrition from the learning provision of additional languages in the educational system. In Section 1 of his review Lo Bianco shows how the odds are stacked against the successful teaching of additional languages in an English-dominated world. He vividly illustrates the many differences between most contexts for a child's successful acquisition of their first language in the home and local community and their often much less successful acquisition of an additional language in a more formal educational setting.

The state of language learning in Australia

It is not that Australia has lacked policy documents for languages, and in Section 2 Lo Bianco discusses five major policy-related reports published in recent years. He also discusses what he considers to be the four main voices in Australia's languages debate: language professionals, immigrant community organisations, Indigenous community organisations, and those working in diplomacy, trade and security. Despite there being an erosion of public confidence, it is not claimed that the policies which have been put in place have been a complete failure (though the large number of reports and programs suggests too much chopping and changing, p18) and due recognition is given to the 'multicultural language ideology in which Australia was an undisputed world leader' (p. 19), exemplified by provisions such as telephone interpreting and an accreditation system for community interpreters. I came to fully recognise this world-leading position, when reviewing the translation, interpretation and communication-support provision in my home country of Scotland, as part of the government's strategy of inclusion with regard to minority groups. As a well-disposed outsider looking in on Australia, I was impressed to see how advanced Australia was in this important area.

In his discussion of policy issues, Lo Bianco draws attention to three main areas of possible tension. One tension is that between conceiving of additional language provision as serving economic and employment ends, and conceiving of it as serving the ends of social justice,

educational access and personal satisfaction. Another tension is between increasing provision for English, given a widespread perception that English language literacy is in a state of national crisis, and increasing provision for languages other than English. Yet a third tension is between the respective claims of regional languages such as Indonesian, Japanese and Chinese and languages belonging to other categories such as European and Indigenous. I believe Lo Bianco is entirely right when he argues that in a modern, highly multicultural country such as Australia, one should be cautious about applying fixed labels to particular languages. For some people, for example, Italian may be a foreign language, but for others it may be a heritage or community language. Whatever category a language may belong to, there are 350 of them in regular use in Australian homes and in particular Australia possesses a 'largely untapped resource of community bilingualism' (p. 4), so the starting point for moving forward in a planned and principled way is by no means 'Square One'.

The value of intensity and quality in language provision

A successful policy for languages will of course take due account of societal factors, as exemplified above, but it will also address provision and process factors. In Section 3 of the review, Lo Bianco takes us into this area, with a particular and welcome focus on the classroom teacher, when he affirms that 'Good teaching is the single most important controllable variable in successful language learning …' (p. 28). In Section 4 he addresses the provision and planning which seem most likely to support good teaching; with teacher supply and teacher education (both initial and continuing) being viewed as central to achieving improved outcomes.

Two other key provision factors are 'time' and 'intensity'. Without high-quality teaching, these may not amount to much, but with high-quality teaching they can make a big difference. Lo Bianco identifies immersion models (whether early total, early partial or more delayed total or partial forms) as holding promise, in that they provide a substantial increase in time and also in intensity (with students challenged not only to learn the language but also to learn important aspects of subject matter through the medium of the language). The review discusses immersion education in some detail and sets out a range of benefits which research suggests can arise if it is well-implemented. Among these benefits may be a significant increase in target-language proficiency but also gains in cognitive flexibility, creativity and intercultural awareness. I have drawn similar conclusions as a result of my mainly European research perspective, and feel compelled to question seriously whether the conventional model of what we term MLPS (modern language at primary school) can deliver what society would like it to do. The failure of the conventional MLPS model is not surprising, given it is based on a 'drip-feed' approach of only a few minutes per day, amounting to a relatively limited number of hours overall across the whole of primary school education – Lo Bianco's data indicates a total of only 200 hours for the learning of an additional language is common in Australia. It is not clear what level of proficiency in the additional language could be expected of such provision.

In a review of research on modern languages in pre-primary and primary education across the European Union (Blondin et al., 1998), almost all of it reflecting the MLPS model, my colleagues and I certainly found that children enthused about learning a modern language, but that the gains in proficiency were relatively modest and did not necessarily transfer all that well into secondary education. Large numbers of children were able to reproduce fixed phrases, but were not able to make use of an internalised rule system in order to create their own utterances. That is one of the reasons why immersion holds promise, provided, as Lo Bianco rightly points out, the process of instruction includes a focus on form as well as on meaning; a lesson which has been well-learnt in Canada which for many years has led the world in immersion research and development.

My experience of directing large-scale immersion evaluation research in Spain leads me to share Lo Bianco's view that immersion deserves serious consideration. Spain is rapidly becoming a leading country in the world for early bilingual education (EBE) – well-known for several years for its first-language maintenance and second-language immersion programs in Basque and Catalan, but in recent years accompanied by an increase in EBE for English that is breathtaking in its scope and its speed of implementation, and laudably intended for ordinary children in state schools rather than restricted to privileged elites. The innovation in policy and provision has national and regional community drivers, with neither decision-makers nor parents being satisfied with what MLPS has delivered.

Issues associated with moving forward

It is worth noting that the nationwide implementation of even a limited provision such as MLPS has cost several nations substantial sums of money and can take several years to put in place. Therefore, it would not be possible to envisage immersion models as completely replacing MLPS. Lo Bianco is right to focus the main thrust of his argument on teacher supply and teacher education, in order to ensure that teachers who are teaching in any valid model of language education (immersion, MLPS or other) are able to sustain a high level of quality.

In addressing possible ways forward, Section 5 sets out a number of key assumptions, which if accepted, further developed and implemented, might lead to a more successful and sustainable future for languages in Australia. Perhaps the most central assumption is the importance of asserting cultural, intellectual and humanistic reasons for learning additional languages 'with the practical application of language proficiency an accrued benefit' (p. 59). In other words, learning and using an additional language at school should provide a rich educational and practical experience, rather than be limited to a utilitarian preparation for using languages for business or other instrumental purposes post-school.

Australia's excellent language education effort may have been held back by 'a proliferation of programs of questionable value, and limited duration and effect' (p. 63). The needs, interests and good ideas, not only of teachers but also of students, should be taken into account. Lo Bianco argues this is all the more important because 'students, both at primary and secondary levels, show an acute sensitivity as to the level of seriousness of what is offered to them' (p. 7). The word 'seriousness' deserves particular attention, and I am reminded of a large-scale research project, designed to ascertain why so many students were dropping out of languages when they became optional, which colleagues and I undertook in Scotland (McPake et al., 1999). Those dropping out included substantial numbers of students who were gaining the highest grades in the national languages examinations at age 16. The education system was implicitly telling these students that they were excellent languages students, but we found that the students were not deceived. They did not greatly value the high grades they were receiving, because they knew perfectly well that they were still not able to use their foreign language at a level which they considered to be sufficiently challenging or useful. They considered their languages curriculum as failing to challenge their intellectual powers. Since then, a major policy effort has been made to raise the intellectual challenge of languages for students, resulting in benefits to uptake, attainment and motivation, along with new perceptions of identity.

This review's broad strategy for moving forward has four main components:

- cultivating existing language competencies
- learning how to learn languages (that is, a universal apprenticeship in pre-school, infants and upper primary years)
- articulated learning and teaching of languages (linking the primary and secondary sectors and also secondary school to Higher Education)
- language training for commercial purposes.

In addition, Lo Bianco proposes a three-stage implementation timescale over seven years. In order to move forward effectively, hard decisions would have to be taken such as discontinuing programs which do not meet minimum needs; providing a significant national investment in the preparation of teachers; and deciding which languages should be prioritised and at which levels.

Lo Bianco offers cogent arguments in setting out his proposed way forward. No doubt, questions may be asked of what he is proposing, especially the cost of such an endeavour (though he reports on some recent work done on this aspect). In addition, there will be much research work to be done by researchers in ascertaining what constitutes highly effective teaching in relation to the different models (MLPS, immersion etc) that are being implemented, and also the minimum conditions to be met if a particular model is to prove highly effective.

However, the review rightly does not attempt to provide all the answers, but instead it sets out to offer 'pointers towards securing a permanent place for continuous, high-quality and representative second language education in Australian schooling' (p. 1). It achieves this objective in a way which merits serious consideration.

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Society and education

Second language education is a subject of continual public debate in Australia, reflecting a widespread perception that the cultivation of bilingual skills among young Australians serves economic, cultural and intellectual needs. However, this positive appreciation of the importance of language learning translates to low school completion rates in second languages, high rates of attrition from university language programs and a decline in the number of languages taught, their duration, spread and level of seriousness. A deep and persistent malaise afflicts language education in Australia, regrettably shared with other English-speaking nations, and the expressions of concern, even frustration, at the fragility of languages suggests a public refusal to accept this state of affairs.

During 2009 there has been an ongoing debate in the pages of newspapers and through the electronic and digital media, but in the past energetic policy development, media commentary, political promise and public agitation have only partially redressed the language learning problem. It is in this context that the present Australian Education Review has been produced, to reflect on the wider purposes for language study, and some of the deeper issues involved in forging a stable solution for their place in Australian schooling. As a result, the review addresses the state of the national language teaching effort, reflects on the guiding purposes and offers pointers towards securing a permanent place for continuous, high-quality and representative second language education in Australian schooling.

Section 1 discusses the widest context for second language learning in Australia, that of society and education. The critical distinction between niche or specialised learning and mass learning of languages, influenced by the obligations that arise from compulsory schooling, comprises the first part of this section. On the basis of this, there is a description of the current distribution of language competence throughout Australian society. This leads to a discussion about languages within and outside Australia, our national relationship with Asia and Europe and other parts of the world, and some discussion about the role of languages in this context. The role and, indeed, the problem of English is discussed in the final part of the section, which contains a comparison with the language learning efforts in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Context and scope

The Australian context is one of the more complex linguistic demographies in the world, made up of three internally complex groupings: (i) the Indigenous category, highly differentiated

with several English varieties, pigeons, creoles and its (vastly eroded) original languages; (ii) the settler group with the transplanted southern forms of British English, the interaction of these with other languages, mostly Irish, leading to the emergence of a relatively homogenous English across the country and; (iii) the immigration group of the second half of the 20th century, introducing more than 350 languages according to the 2006 Census, into the homes of Australians, each subject to modification reflecting the new landscape, new communicative ecologies and new statuses.

Public debates about language in Australia, however, make recourse to a simplified set of categorisations. For the most part, debates rely on simple groupings of Asian, European and Aboriginal, or foreign and community, and are premised on the teaching of foreign languages to the mainstream section of the population, which is predominantly monolingual.

First and second languages

The field of language learning should be informed by the most basic of possible comparisons: between the overwhelming success of virtually all first language acquisition (the 'mother' tongue, MT) and the comparative failure of most second language learning (the 'foreign' language, FL). With first language learning we have the ideal conditions for progressive mastery over a communicative code; so much so that its very success changes the nature of what is later possible. The prior existence of this first code, the MT, makes second language learning a radically different process. The MT is usually, though not always, the dominant and primary language, and not simply the first to be acquired chronologically, meaning that it becomes the code for most intimate identities and earliest memory. As such, it becomes the psychological grounding for the individual person and the cognitive vehicle through which a subsequent alternative language is constructed. The process of learning the MT is never completely focused on itself; that is, it is never a completely *linguistic* process. MT acquisition involves becoming a social and socially participating person, gaining knowledge of the world, control over the immediate environment, fashioning behaviour, uncovering how society is organised and devising a personal identity. The learning of a second language is shaped, constrained or influenced by the possibilities afforded by mastery of the first, but it too is deeply involved with issues of identity as much as cognitive development, and achievements with third languages are influenced by relative success with second languages.

While not everyone supports the idea that cognitive and linguistic constraints influence patterns of language acquisition, these do offer a useful way to explore second language learning processes. This can be discussed in relation to 'stages of acquisition' as proposed in *Processability Theory* (Pienemann, 1998). Essentially these stages operate like 'stepping stones', making possible, but also constraining what is learnable at any given point of language knowledge and cognitive maturity. Processability Theory is influenced by Levelt's model of human cognition (Levelt, 1989) for speech production. Pienemann's theory predicts which structures of a language are acquired at each stage, depending on their 'grammatical' complexity.

Different cognitive-linguistic processing requirements are needed to produce different language structures. At Stage 1, learners can produce 'memorised' words or sentences but cannot 'change' them in any way. At Stage 2, learners are able to change 'parts' of words to express grammatical relations; for instance, learners of English as a second language, can produce plural forms of nouns by adding the suffix 's'. At Stage 3, learners are able to 'match' grammatical information within a phrase (noun phrase or verb phrase). At Stage 4, learners are also able to 'match' grammatical information between phrases. At Stage 5, learners can process grammatical information between main and subordinate clauses. The process is cumulative, so that no stage can be reached except on the basis of the previous stage. These processes occur 'unconsciously' and do not result directly from grammar teaching. They differ radically from currently more popular social constructivist thinking about language acquisition which instead places emphasis on dialogue, activity and interaction rather than cognitive processes.

These mental 'constraints', however, do connect with the social settings in which language input is provided to learners, a key focus for social constructivist approaches. These qualities of linguistic input are a critical determinant in effective learning, and so the sociological setting and the psychological domain intersect. Linguistic input for learners is what FL teaching, that is the curriculum, is designed to provide, and it varies in quantity, intensity, frequency, regularity, quality and significance. One key variation of the FL input is its relation to the MT. (For example: Does the teacher code-switch and offer translation when learners are struggling to grasp certain messages? Can the learner utilise the written channel of communication to increase and diversify the input he or she gains in the second language?) The quality of linguistic input is structured by the biggest change between first and second language learning; that is, the formal context of the latter. Input is provided in time-bound lessons, in age- or ability-based class groups, and through activities and tasks organised by an individual who is not intimate with the learner, a professional teacher. Importantly, the teacher–learner ratio is reversed from the intimate setting of infancy. With first language acquisition there is a one to many ratio (one learner and many 'teachers'), while for second language learning a many to one ratio prevails, with many learners and a single source of target language input. For first language acquirers everyone who is encountered in a vertical social arrangement provides input: parents, other caregivers, siblings, visitors and others, even strangers. This input is targeted at the specific and immediate meaning needs of the child, and made comprehensible to the child, often with great effort from all involved. For second language learners, in a horizontal social arrangement, formality replaces intimacy. Each individual competes for small units of linguistic input, often generalised rather than targeted at them specifically. Moreover, the linguistic input usually involves non-significant communication and often opaque meaning.

It might seem redundant to make such a fundamental distinction, but it is necessary when we reflect on the rather startling but usually overlooked fact that while every child learns his or her MT, achieving fluency, accuracy and culturally appropriate norms of use, only a minority, probably a small minority, of those who study a FL in school achieve even modest fluency or accuracy and have only patchy control over culturally appropriate norms.

This inverse success ratio serves to remind us of the inherently difficult task of second language teaching. The odds are stacked against it. While research has shown that a child's primary caregivers tutor, coach, encourage and elicit correct and fluent language from the child, this doesn't constitute formal instruction in anything like the way in which school teaching is ordinarily understood. The move from home to school carries with it a series of reversals which transform both the psychological and the sociological reality, and dramatically affect outcomes: from primary socialisation and purposeful communication to secondary socialisation and non-naturalistic communication.

Compulsory schooling

It is as well to keep in mind that our society compels children to be schooled. Since the mid-1880s in the British colonies of Australia, and reiterated in subsequent education legislation after Federation in 1901, schooling is premised on non-voluntary attendance. There is practically no dissent from the idea that society ought to deprive small children and young people of their liberty and require them to be schooled. It follows that we have a moral and an intellectual obligation to ensure that the experiences offered to learners assists them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to function as mature, independent, capable and productive citizens of a democratic state.

Though the parallels ultimately dissolve, it is sobering to reflect that only law-breakers and individuals legally deemed incapable of independence are similarly deprived of liberty. In neither of these cases is the deprivation for an 'unappealable' fixed term. Since both imprisoned wrongdoers and schooled children are deprived of their freedom, the public community of adults and citizens is obligated to ensure this deprivation serves high purposes. Of course, for criminals deprivation is punishment or rehabilitation, while for children it is a deferral of freedom in a societal compact with the future. This arrangement transfers responsibility from parents to

the state, to privately or publicly managed schools with teachers *in loco parentis*, undertaking society's most crucial task of social reproduction and citizenship preparation. The curriculum represents society's conclusion about which stocks of knowledge and skills, which attitudes and ethical orientations, will be selected for imparting to the young, based on personal attributes which public debate generates and imagines for the future citizen. At a time of rapid and deep globalisation, acute competition for prosperity and influence, highly literate communication ability, bilingualism and intercultural knowledge and skill assume great importance both within our enduringly pluralistic society, and in a 'shrinking' multilingual world.

Language competency of Australians and its sources

How has Australia generated its present stocks of second language knowledge? Bilingual skills, as opposed to bilingualism, which this review takes to mean high levels of proficiency in both languages, can be generated *ab initio* in institutions or transmitted via the intimacy networks of child-raising within families and communities. These two sources of second language effort, public and private, should be combined in a 'joined-up' process of national language planning. If Australia were able to articulate the public 'donation' of bilingualism offered by minority communities with the focused and instructed language skills produced in public institutions, the nation could generate a widespread, effective and less wasteful distribution of bilingual human capital. Combining the largely untapped resource of community bilingualism with the expertise of education institutions would refine, extend and apply latent bilingual skills to the national repository. Such an approach is both possible and necessary, and is increasingly the focus of language policy in the United States of America through the heritage languages movement (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2006) and in Europe through initiatives of the Council of Europe to 'value all languages equally' (McPake, 2008).

If we trace the sources of the nation's bilingual capability today, it is clear that Australia relies principally on the language maintenance activities of its immigrant communities. This is the first of three sources of Australia's present language competencies; the others are those Indigenous communities able to pass on language skills through the family to new generations and Anglophone individuals who have learnt (foreign) languages. While education and training and especially universities are indispensible for generating high-literate and discipline-based knowledge of language, and along with diverse private providers generate most of the new language competencies in society, overall they contribute relatively little of the total stocks of national bilingual capability.

The two other repositories of national bilingual skill, Indigenous populations and individuals interested in bilingualism, are far smaller than the bilingual competence encompassed by immigrant Australians. The question arises whether these three population categories, immigrant Australians, Indigenous Australians and individual bilingual Australians, are sufficiently resilient in their language transmission efforts to ensure intergenerational transfer of their language skills. The evidence is generally not favourable.

The largest of the three bilingualism-generating groups is recently arrived immigrants, and some communities of longer standing who have successfully managed to transfer their internal language resources to later generations. However, while some immigrant Australians have low rates of language shift (Clyne & Kipp, 1997, 2002; RUMACCC, 2007), all are experiencing language shift away from first languages, through a transitional stage of bilingualism, to English only. This process of subtractive bilingualism is the universal experience of immigrant populations. Whether more or less rapidly, new Australian communities are all experiencing language loss of their ancestral, heritage or community language. Such communities are located somewhere along a four stage sequence: (i) first language dominance (or monolingualism) in the language other than English; (ii) bilingualism in the community language plus English; (iii) English language dominance with diminished first language competence and use; (iv) English monolingualism. In a perfect model of wastefulness some children, having lost knowledge of the home language, available to the society at no cost to the public purse, are then offered the same language in schools as beginner learners of a taught foreign language. This pattern

of language attrition is slower in Australia than in other immigrant receiving countries (Clyne, Hajek, & Kipp, 2008; Fishman, 2001), but appears inexorable.

The second bilingualism-generating social category, Indigenous Australians, is perhaps even more heterogeneous than immigrant communities. For Indigenous communities language shift often means language death. This is because local speaker communities are the world's only speaker communities of the languages concerned. The home transmission system for Australian languages is massively disrupted (Schmidt, 1990; Lo Bianco & Rhydwen, 2001; Walsh, 2005) so that today there is heavy reliance on the public sphere of schools and community services to support any prospects of language retention across generations. The original repertoire of Australian Indigenous languages, some 250–260 containing a dialect range of 600, has been heavily depleted (Dixon, 1980). Despite this, and the clear evidence that first language maintenance reinforces and supports English acquisition, bilingual education in Australian languages is continually subject to challenge and contest (Nakata, 1999; Nicholls, 2001; Simpson, Caffery, & McConvell, 2009).

The third bilingualism-generating social category is the least specifiable. It comprises mainstream, English-speaking Australians, usually individual enthusiasts, language professionals, who through residence abroad, personal motivation or professional occupation have acquired effective competence in non-English languages. While enthusiasm and commitment often accompanies the language skill gained by such individuals, their language capability is often a personal rather than a family accomplishment, diminishing the chances of its effective transmission to their offspring. In any case, these people comprise a numerically small percentage of the population.

These three groups are the repositories of second language capability in the population. A far-sighted and pragmatic national language cultivation approach would facilitate interaction among these groups, and connections between home language skills with schools and universities to develop latent bilingualism. This approach should constitute one major strand of the ambitious language education plan that Australia needs in order to enhance its effective interactions with the world, the immediate Asian region and the European-sourced formative cultural traditions of Australian society. The other strand should address the majority of the population, monolingual English speakers. The overriding language planning question here should be how to efficiently stimulate usable second language proficiency in school and university beginner programs.

This dual approach seeks to conserve and develop the latent bilingual capabilities existing in the population, and to generate new language knowledge among English-only speakers through formal education.

Community and foreign

There are no languages that could realistically be imagined as subjects on the school curriculum which are not present in the Australian population. Despite this the term 'foreign language' remains dominant in discussions about language policy. This is because language policy is often based on the idea of teaching monolingual learners languages spoken in 'foreign places'. This is an old-fashioned assumption for an overwhelmingly multicultural country, and while this is clearly not true for many learners and many languages, even the presence of the taught language somewhere in the community doesn't automatically make that language available to learners for interaction and practice. Overcoming this limitation should be a major objective of a pragmatic language policy, given the clear findings from research (e.g., Baetens Beardsmore, 1993) documenting how using a local social context productively in formal teaching programs greatly accelerates both the pace of learning and ultimate proficiency.

The 'community' presence of a language is therefore important for language pedagogy. Community languages are typically supported by 'owned' schools, local clubs and societies, religious and cultural centres. In effect, a community language is one which is available to learners in a setting through its presence in a range of institutional structures that aim to teach, reinforce or transmit the language. This supplies a potential and naturalistic context for the

language bringing with it local occupational opportunities, local media in various genres, and local activities of recreational, economic, civic and religious life.

These contexts mean that a community language is associated with a diaspora culture, so that local experiences and expressive norms arise in local settings in which the community language is the exclusive or main linguistic code. By contrast, a foreign language taught in mainstream schools relies overwhelmingly on teacher input and occasional foreign immersion. There are important pedagogical and sociological repercussions arising from these differences which are taken up throughout this review.

Policy energy in second language learning

Australia has an impressive record of policy development and program innovation in second language education, but a relatively poor record for consistency of application and maintenance of effort. A large number of reports, enquiries, official policies and implementation programs is testimony to a lively concern for improvement, unfortunately undermined by lack of consensus about priorities and failure to devise an enduring rationale for what is ultimately needed: high standard, articulated, compulsory language education. While there appears to be public appreciation of the importance of second languages, there is less appreciation of the degree of institutional commitment, levels of funding and provider change required to achieve effective language knowledge through formal education.

Influencing choices of second language are demography, geography, tradition and national interest. Australia is a cosmopolitan society with western culture traditions and institutions and a predominantly English monolingual inheritance; a middle-sized, trading- and services-based economy located at the edge of the Asian landmass and rapidly integrating into the dynamic regional context. Asian integration imposes several demanding adjustments to language education planning, as does connecting with the new transnational Europe and embracing emergent areas in Latin America. All these 'foreign' considerations pose a heavy challenge for policy makers and educators alike, to which they have responded with remarkable energy.

A recent study surveyed the language policy history of 40 years from 1970 (Lo Bianco & Gvozdenko, 2006) and identified at least 67 policy-related reports, investigations or substantial enquiries into the problem and challenge of instituting an effective language education experience for Australian learners. Commencing with the 1970 Auchmuty Report on Asian Languages and Studies, this impressive list of reports, studies, advisory committees and investigations has paid far lower practical dividends than it is reasonable to expect and represents disappointing failure for language advocates. The most recent example is a claim that the present shortfall in Asian language capability requires an urgent $11.3 billion investment to 'quadruple' within a generation the number of Australians studying an Asian language, also aiming to achieve two-thirds of the population under 40 speaking a second language (Asia Institute, Griffith University, 2009).

Policy effects

Unfortunately the large number of reports and programs represents too much chopping and changing and has served to weaken the place of languages due to continual shifting of priorities and ineffective interventions. Some of the interventions have been driven by crisis-mode responses to short-term needs, imposing on schools and universities timelines and expectations they are ill-equipped to meet. Occasionally such reports do not make a sufficient analysis of either the distinctive needs and role of schools or the constraints they face. Of course energetic debate, pressure group lobbying and public participation are inevitable and desirable features of public life in an open and vigorous democracy, and they ensure that diverse interests are heard and represented. However, policy interventions should be sensitive to the practical demands and limitations on schools and the nature of language learning and teaching, and should be informed by evidence and principles relevant to language education planning.

Perhaps this policy instability also suggests lack of a widespread appreciation of the deep change required at school, policy maker, university and provider levels to secure for languages a prominent and permanent place in mainstream education. As a result, a certain erosion in public confidence about the sustainability of the Australian language learning enterprise can be detected. Redressing systemic language deficiencies today requires co-ordinated policy action, expert guidance and consultative processes of debate and public engagement and, as noted earlier, articulation between the latent and largely untutored bilingualism of the Australian population and its more monolingual public institutions.

While this challenge seems onerous, it is eminently achievable with appropriate planning and especially with collaboration between community-based effort and public institutions. It is a planning objective that other English-speaking nations are also beginning to embark on, as evidenced by the large heritage languages movement in the United States of America, linking the language resources 'naturally' available in the community more closely with the language needs of the society (Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001).

The most recent large-scale survey looking into the 'state and nature' of Australian language teaching, undertaken by the University of South Australia, has made precisely this observation. Observing that in many countries compulsory second language study is an unproblematical, taken-for-granted part of secondary schooling, and increasingly of primary schooling, the report notes:

> *The countries in which compulsory language learning is least well established are English-speaking countries in which only one language is used for official purposes. It is also in these countries that concern for participation in language learning is most commonly expressed*

(Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 29)

Unfortunately this is the Australian pattern too: repeated public affirmations that 'something must be done' married to underperformance in policy delivery. As will be shown in Section 3, there has been a decline in the number of languages taught at school and university level, the result of promising more than is delivered. It is a pity that researchers have often overlooked the views and experiences of students. When consulted about language education as they experience it students, both at primary and secondary level, show an acute sensitivity as to the level of seriousness of what is offered to them. In research undertaken between 2005 and 2008 in Melbourne with students taking Italian and Japanese (Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2008), a considerable number expressed clear preferences for more academically serious programs, for more evidence of school and system commitment and for a more diverse curriculum linked to 'actually using the language'. The most committed students wanted disruptive peers removed to alternative classes and many called for more public display of school and system support of the importance of language study.

General social effects of existing second language policy

The shrinkage of effort noted in the 'state and nature' report (Liddicoat et al., 2007) applies to both policy and delivery of languages, to reduction in the number of languages offered, and to weaker links between community-based language offerings and public institutions. The overall effect is a diminution of ultimate effectiveness in both schools and universities. The cumulative effect is damaging for high-quality research and teaching, narrowing the intellectual range on which academics, and through them the wider community, draw ideas about the world, past and present. These effects include limitations to our direct knowledge about the world and its traditions and experiences which have been generated through languages other than English. Research and study are often the conduit for making available this knowledge to inform public decision making in politics, economics, society, culture, media and the recreational pursuits.

Although the impact of such a loss of cultural sophistication is generally slow, long-term and indirect, it is potentially devastating. Incapacity with the languages that the vast majority of the world's population use to conduct their economic and social lives produces two kinds of self-imposed dependency. The first is to limit oneself only to what is translated, and the second is to become reliant, even dependent, on mediators, rather than encountering other societies and their intellectual and cultural traditions directly. Encountering important others only through English-knowing mediators and through English translations involves being limited to the quality and scope of what is translated and also to rendering oneself vulnerable to the autonomous interests of mediators.

Human capital and rankings

Education policies the world over are often premised on human capital theory, and specifically the connection between study, credentialing and the labour market. English-delivered instruction reflects and helps to strengthen a distinctive marketplace for competence, certification and exchange. Internationally compared degrees, international universities and student mobility are not exclusive to English, but it is the most consistent element in such arrangements. Representing English as a post-identity language, or a 'basic' and foundational skill (Graddol, 2006) is part of the way English is talked of in education planning the world over, marking it as a commodity (Lo Bianco, 2005; Lo Bianco, 2007a; Tan & Rubdy, 2008).

School and post-school effects

It is instructive to apply a comparative lens to the Australian language policy effort, and its effects, through reference to other English-speaking nations. The two closest comparisons are the United Kingdom and the United States of America with whom Australia appears to share an Anglophonic reluctance to become bilingual.

The British Academy has long expressed concern about the malaise facing foreign languages in UK education. Documenting the decline in language study at the General Certificate of Secondary Education, the academic qualification awarded to 15–16-year-olds in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, a current British Academy report, *Language Matters*, notes that '[By] 2008, the proportion of pupils taking no language at GCSE in England had more than doubled, rising to 56%' (BA, 2009). This fall has occurred since 2001 when language study was made optional for students aged 14 and over. The report notes that this large deterioration over a seven-year period considerably shrinks the base from which higher education is able to recruit students to language study.

The erosion of languages at university and school level, however, has other subtle and less subtle deleterious effects. One of these is evident in the connections between high school language study and indicators of academic potential and persistence. Languages are one of the few subjects in schooling that are based on obvious sequences of cumulative learning of taught material. Unlike some other learning areas, progress in languages is highly sequenced, so that conceptual and academic progress is dependent on mastery of specifiable prior knowledge essential for each subsequent phase of education. In this way, languages contribute substance, cohesiveness and perceptible continuity to curricula. It is possibly for this reason that research increasingly identifies success in school languages study as a predictor of persistence in the independent learning required in higher education, making school language study a kind of high school apprenticeship for university study.

Ongoing results from the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the SAT, in the United States of America shows that students who study a foreign language in serious programs, usually four or more years, regularly outscore other students on the verbal and mathematics portions of the test (Eddy, 1981; Cooper, 1987; Olsen & Brown, 1992; Cooper et al., 2008). A link between school study of languages and university persistence and completion rates was directly assessed by the US National Center for Education Statistics (Horn & Kojaku, 2001). In this study curricula were divided into three levels of rigour; the findings clearly demonstrated that students in the most

'rigorous' high school programs (which included three years of foreign language study) were likely to earn better grades in college and were more likely to complete their tertiary program. A rigorous curriculum is also associated with substantial increases in total college enrolments and more students opting for four-year rather than two-year college enrolment programs.

Some of these relations might not be causal, and the extent or direction of causation is not always clear. Nevertheless, the correlations between academic performance and serious study of foreign languages are multifaceted, and persisting. Apparently confident that the indicators are significant, many US universities conduct independent research of relations between high school subject choices and university persistence and completion rates, and increasingly specify minimum years of foreign language study for admission, with four years at high school strongly recommended.

The problem of the dominance of English

The British Academy report (2008) cites 'the perceived global dominance of English' (p. 3) as a key reason for foreign language weakness in UK education. For non-English speakers the simple experience of travel, including in other non-English-speaking countries, navigating airports, highways, hotels and meetings reinforces the auxiliary function of English and the substantial return on investment that English provides. Even if intellectually convinced of the importance of second language knowledge, English speakers are denied this continual pragmatic demonstration of the practical utility of bilingualism.

In study and in commerce the 'advantages' of English multiply. Altbach (2004) has conducted studies of academic life identifying the many ways in which English constitutes a material advantage for individuals and institutions. These include being freed of the additional purchase cost of English-language databases, products and resources which non-English institutions must acquire, the intimacy English 'native speakers' have with editing and housing scholarly journals and the many procedural advantages in peer review and academic writing they enjoy.

Formal university rankings are an overt manifestation of the prestige hierarchy that attaches to languages in the integrated global marketplace, linked to the operation of education markets and student mobility. One of the most cited rankings is the *SJTI*, the *Shanghai Jiao Tong Index*. Commenting on the 2006 edition, Marginson points out that rankings:

> *… favour universities … from English language nations because English is the language of research (non English language work is published less and cited less); and universities from the large US system as Americans tend to cite Americans.*

(Marginson, 2007 p. 133)

In the 2006 edition of the *SJTI*, (cited in Marginson, 2007)19 of the 20 top-ranked universities were American or British and 66 of the top 100 were located in English language settings. A recent assessment of the global role of English (Graddol, 2006) found that up to 2 billion people, about one-third of humanity, could know or be learning English by 2015, rising rapidly to about half of the world's current population at some future point, making English less like a foreign language and more like an international 'basic skill'.

In this context native speaker institutions and industries gain considerable financial and intellectual advantages. This is evident in the extensive scientific publication industries attached to UK and US universities, and in the revenues which English-medium education attracts to Australia. However, English has many varieties and forms, and not all provide the same advantages to 'old' native speaker countries. Some varieties of English in the world (Jenkins, 2007), especially in South Asia (Kachru, 1986) where indigenous norms are long-established, and increasingly in China (Chang, 2006; Feng, 2007), are more equitable.

This view of English as a 'pluri-centric' global code, what many scholars call World Englishes (Bhatt, 2001), has given rise to debate about who owns English. The past distinction between foreign and second language English 'privileged' the original old native speaker varieties from America and Britain, unrealistic and inappropriate in South Asia where English has many local

native speakers and vibrant standard forms. Critical writing on Asian Englishes (Canagarajah, 1999; Rajapopalan, 1999; Ramanathan, 2002, 2005; Holliday, 2005; Pennycook, 2006) has labelled this 'linguistic imperialism', and proposed ways to resist it, all the while acknowledging the pragmatic presence and multiple functions of English in many parts of Asia, advocating acceptance of Asian Englishes as legitimate varieties of the world code, and English as an Asian language.

Research, curriculum writing, theorising and reflection on the pedagogy and linguistics, as well as the politics, of English as a *lingua franca* (Seidlhofer, Breitender, & Pitzl, 2006; Jenkins, 2007) in many parts of the world and across Asia (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Tan & Rubdy, 2008) continually grapple with the educational consequences of localised versions of English and are a counter image to the debates in English-speaking settings about the place of languages other than English. These important ideas about negotiation and variety in English and its pluri-centric forms actually strengthen the pragmatic and intellectual case for bilingualism in English-speaking countries. Globally today so called 'non-native' users of English have outstripped the numbers of so called 'native' users and possibly the majority of conversations in English are conducted between non-native speakers. Significantly, in 1997 Graddol estimated that the 375 million native speakers of English were exceeded almost fourfold by the 1120 million second or foreign language speakers (Graddol, 1997, p. 10). This would make a total number of users of English even a decade ago close to 1.5 billion people. It is apparent, as Crystal (2006) documents, that Internet usage, and especially the resources of the World Wide Web extend familiarity with English, though in both cases its proportional representation is declining relative to other languages (Danet & Herring, 2007). Nothing comparable is occurring with regard to scientific publishing (Coulmas, 2007) and academic publishing in general, in which English domination has recently intensified.

Some scholars (Cha & Ham, 2008) believe a 'single global society' is prefigured in these developments, especially because of mass basic education through English. However, Wierzbicka (2006) exposes persisting layers of culture and ideology in the grammar, semantics and communication structures of English, which render problematic assumptions that English can be considered a mere tool of international communication without imprint of its history and culture. This represents a strong argument for treating foreign language education seriously among English speakers, for the traditional reasons of providing access to intellectual and cultural systems forged outside the English semantic mainstream.

English as first-choice foreign language

Links between language teaching and major world events, economic developments and geopolitical power are highlighted in the analysis by Cha and Ham (2008) who compare the choice of first foreign language (FFL) in the curricula of primary and secondary schools across the world over the past 155 years. Their data reveal dramatic and rapid redistribution of the languages learned for communicating beyond national frontiers. Dividing the period 1850–2005 into seven phases, they compare five languages – English, French, German, Russian and Spanish – as FFL in education systems, in a number of countries (initially 15 and 12 for the primary and secondary levels 1850–1874, to 151 and 154 for primary and secondary respectively in 1990–2005).

In Asia, English was represented in only 33 per cent of primary curricula during 1945–1969; growing to 83 per cent in primary and 100 per cent for secondary by 2005. By 2006 practically all instances in which foreign languages were employed to teach mainstream subject matter in Asian universities involved English. In the latter two periods Russian had achieved a presence of up to 5 per cent in curricula as first foreign language; it was the preferred foreign language in many Soviet Bloc states in Eastern Europe and among the ideological allies of the then USSR in central Asia, plus China, Vietnam, and other states. However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the bulk of Russian's enrolment numbers transferred, not to German in Eastern Europe, a traditional zone of strong

German language and culture presence, but to English, and progressively in Asia English has consolidated its position.

Table 1: First foreign language, world survey

Period	% German	% French	% English
1850–1874	50.0	33.3	8.3
1875–1899	44.4	38.9	5.6
1890–1919	24.3	45.9	27.0
1920–1944	14.8	35.2	33.3
1945–1969	00.0	28.1	59.4
1970–1989	00.0	17.0	67.4
1990–2005	00.7	13.6	82.1

(adapted from Cha & Ham, 2008)

There is ample research, both Australian (Bradshaw, Deumert, & Burridge, 2008) and British (CiLT, 2005) which verifies the limitation that is imposed on trading economies by the self-inflicted handicap of dependence on the English of others. It is a truism, but still true, that to buy, one doesn't need to know other languages, but to sell, well that's a different story (CiLT, 2005). There is documentary evidence that a lack of German language skills has prevented Australian wine exporters from making effective inroads into German wine consumption markets (Go8, 2007a). The forging of sustainable relationships on which to build business partnerships and trusting relationships over long periods of time has been found to be strongly affected by language skills, attested to by nearly 2000 export businesses in Europe (ELAN, 2006). Export planners emphasise the crucial importance of relationship building, allowing individuals to go beyond simple transactional relationships. In highly competitive business practice, market sensitive information, product differentiation and personal or direct acquaintance with customers and their purchasing trends, taste and disposable income levels are all language connected advantages. As Graddol (2006) has predicted the practical universal advantage represented by knowing English, is reversed when it 'becomes a near-universal basic skill' (p. 15).

Bilingualism in other societies

The Eurobarometer is a regular data collection exercise 'taking the pulse' of various aspects of social life in the European Union, affording a rare insight into the social distribution of bilingualism (EC, 2006). The overall policy is for all EU citizens to speak two languages in addition to their MT, for lifelong learning, an early start along with portability of recognition, qualifications and support across borders and jurisdictions. A strong overall conclusion of the surveys is that bilingualism is stronger in small countries than in big countries and more prevalent among non-native English speakers than among English natives. This is a picture of power differences and their alignment with languages. However, among individuals the data show a strong association of bilingualism with occupation rewards, education, social mobility, professional seniority and cultural interests. These categories are more bilingual, in more languages and with higher levels of proficiency than at previous periods and compared to other groups. In effect, the predictors of mass population bilingualism appear to be related to influence and power. The most bilingual categories are the more educated, well remunerated, mobile and future oriented.

By contrast, in the Anglosphere bilingualism is confined to minority communities adjusting to English, or, as argued earlier, to isolated or privileged individuals or language professionals. To some extent, Europeans have overcome a historic tendency of nation states towards

monolingualism; however, there are also pressures towards English-only efficiency thinking in the European Union (Phillipson, 2003).

Our region

The terms 'the region' or 'our region' have been added to the Australian socio-political lexicon in the past 15 years and now function as recurring tropes to mark future national directions and key relationships. What is essentially a vast geographic zone, not naturally linked in particular ways, is increasingly used to mean a geopolitical structure for economic organisation, military security and interpersonal relations. These are important for Australia's emergent identity (Milner, 2002) as much as for immediate interests gradually replacing decades-long anxiety and perceived threat or cultural dissonance. Today, regional integration enjoys a broadly bipartisan acceptance, ultimately a subset of a global process through which the world is galvanising into gigantic geographic zones, 'the regions'.

In Australia teaching 'regional' languages, once the preserve of small numbers of individual enthusiasts or area specialists is at least rhetorically now perceived as a project of widely endorsed national importance. The prevalence of English in Asia should neither negate nor minimise the case for Asian languages if those arguments are premised on educational, cultural and civilisational grounds, with the bulk of pragmatic communication training allocated to flexible and rapid delivery niche providers.

In her thorough examination of the policy effects of Asian language teaching in recent years in Australia Yvette Slaughter (2009) has argued that exclusive promotion of Asian languages premised purely on volume of trade figures has the effect of 'devaluing' other languages, not only European languages but non-included Asian languages (Hindi, Vietnamese, Filipino and even Indonesian), which in turn 'devalues' languages education itself. The education jurisdiction which has most strongly pursued a regionally focused languages policy is Queensland; which today has the lowest proportion of students studying languages, even Asian languages, to school completion in any state (Fotheringham, 2009).

The present argument is in accord with Slaughter's observations and builds on a previously made case (Lo Bianco, 2005) for a comprehensive and co-ordinated response to Australia's language needs. The argument is a response to multiple language interests and motivations, explicitly promoting community (immigrant and Indigenous) and foreign (Asian and European) languages, recognising that it does so in the face of global English and utilitarian tendencies in educational debates. Languages have more in common with each other than their internal category differences suggest. Being classified as 'Asian' or 'European' actually obscures needs and issues that are particular to individual languages, rather than shared by languages belonging to the same classification. For example, both Greek and Italian share with Chinese the quality of having large numbers of background speakers among their learners, while in most states Japanese has fewer; the obstacles facing a more secure future for Indonesian are unique to that language and are partly influenced by aspects of its relationship with Australia and issues such as travel restrictions on school groups planning to visit, a circumstance not shared by other Asian or European languages. A strong presence of Asian languages in Australian schools also makes Australian education distinctive, interesting and worldly.

Concluding comments

Section 1 has provided a wide-ranging framework for thinking about the role, challenges and possible improvements to language education in contemporary Australia. It has discussed the relationship of languages to formal education and to the home, the presence of English in the world and in the immediate region and some of the consequences of this rapid institutionalisation of English as the world's auxiliary tongue. Section 1 has also discussed how bilingualism skills are being cultivated in the unique setting of contemporary Australia compared to other countries. Initial ideas of the scope of language study have been sketched out as a preamble to

Section 2 which will discuss the history of Australian language education planning, including the ideologies, social interests and voices that have influenced policy making.

The central argument made in this review, culminating in Section 5, is for major improvement in the quality of language teaching across the nation. This qualitative improvement will require investment in specialised and more substantial preparation for language teachers, considerably more time devoted to second language teaching in schools, significant increases in the number of bilingual and immersion programs, and co-ordination of effort across school and post-school sectors.

2

Policy and programming

Australia is one of the most multicultural and multilingual societies in the world. Results from the 2006 Census (Clyne, Hajek, & Kipp, 2008) document the extent of this multilingualism. More than 350 languages are in regular use in Australian homes and workplaces to organise the lives of children, arrange functions, convey reports about the health and well being of others and to transact all the personal, familial and commercial activities of mundane daily life. The calculations about the proportion of these languages which are Indigenous to Australia vary from 150 to 155 and while this is a large number most are deeply eroded and few are spoken by children.

No language is 'pure' in the company it keeps, English being a prime example having integrated into its grammatical and lexical stock the influences of its primary Germanic system, with an immense secondary Latin (and Greek) based vocabulary, especially for higher order reasoning functions (directly from Latin, but also through French and other Romance languages). English utilises the Roman orthography, making alphabetic writing the semantic basis of information and communications technologies. Borrowing words and expressions from a vast number of languages gives the already rich literature of English, now a vehicle for creative and academic writing from a myriad different national cultures, unprecedented expressive power .

Australian languages, uniquely expressive of the Indigenous experience and interpretation of Australian life, are also creative and flexible. Since there are many creolised, mixed, and hybrid varieties of communication, alongside traditional languages, it is more accurate to speak of Indigenous communication systems (Dixon, 1980; Schmidt, 1990; Walsh, 2005).

Overall about 17 per cent of Australians reported to the 2006 Census takers that their dominant home language is not English, so the number involved in regular and occasional use of a language other than English is much higher. This home use is co-extensive with many domains in the wider community, well beyond the internal networks, clubs, religious and social gatherings of minority-language using Australians.

Language ideologies

In his discussion of the potential to connect this vast and mostly untutored language resource for the national benefit, Clyne (2005) has contrasted the multilingual demographic reality with a 'monolingual mindset' at the level of institutions and public policy. This disjuncture between the celebratory media clichés of linguistic diversity and the regular lamentations in the same media about Australian unpreparedness for the communicative demands of a shrinking world

are stark and instructive. During 2009 alone newspapers have regularly reported a string of stories about language problems with the adjective 'crisis' regularly a feature of these accounts (*The Australian*, 2009a; 2009b; Taylor, 2009).

Clyne (2005) points to periods in the national historical past in which the prevailing climate of public attitudes, if not always in formal policy, was of tolerance and openness towards languages other than English. In the middle to late 19th century, with much of Australian society being first generation immigrant, there were vibrant community language schools in both rural and urban Australia, flourishing non-English media and vibrant community institutions creating domains of natural use of a large number of languages. These periods of relative and occasionally extensive tolerance of multilingualism were followed by closure and opposition. One prominent example was during the First World War when, as Clyne describes, forcible closure of mainly German language bilingual schools was the nationalist response to conflicts waged in Europe in which Australian soldiers served.

As we have seen with the evidence of Cha and Ham (2008), attitudes to languages are subject to change due to world events, or new possibilities emerge that had not been anticipated. In 1918, education laws in several Australian states banned instruction in and through languages other than English (Ozolins, 1993), encountering little overt opposition because the affected minorities were small, dispersed and relatively powerless. By the 1970s local decision making was common and teaching choices were influenced by local needs leading to a vast expansion of community language teaching in primary schools, the first since the 1918 closures. This was despite the provisions banning bilingual education remaining on the statute books, which were ultimately removed.

Informed by this history, the author of this review has previously described (Lo Bianco, 2003) the phases of Australia's language planning as a sequence consisting of overlapping periods of Britishism, Australianism, Multiculturalism, Asianism and Economism.

Comfortably British

Safely ensconced within the political and economic certainties of British imperial loyalty, Australian language norms and styles of English expression, and the choices and purposes of foreign language teaching reflected essential British prestige choices. The overarching goal was the pursuit of English monolingualism, based on Southern British norms of pronunciation and usage. Challenged by the social and environmental reality of the new continent in which convict, free settler, Indigenous inhabitant and new immigrant negotiated new social realities far from the western European originating source, both English and languages other than English evolved and were adapted. The teaching of second languages favoured choices and methods of instruction dictated by attachment to the western canon of literary prestige, principally for reading and cultivation rather than active use. Indigenous and immigrant languages and the languages of Australia's immediate location were either neglected or repressed.

Assertively Australian

A 'demotic' movement of asserting local perspectives and understandings arose, at different times with different intensity and varying according to regional circumstances, but ultimately effective in its effort to contest the dominance of British forms of speech and replace these with, or add to them, Australian norms. Reflecting both a strong Irish influence (O'Farrell, 1986) in the wider Australian speech community and the new environment, Australianism began as speech and extended into literary activity. It included both efforts to document and record local usage and promotion of its acceptance. While less focused on languages other than English, Australianism did occasionally align itself with a preference for the languages of the geographic region and occasionally with community languages. Australianist approaches to understanding language and communication issues, and their link with national identity emerged in the documenting of local forms of expression and their literary forms, but they have also been used as a bolster for assimilation of immigrants and Aborigines. In 1947, after the

trauma of the Japanese incursions over Sydney and the bombing of Darwin, Australia initiated its transformative experiment with recruited immigration and linked admission to English instruction. From humble beginnings in shipboard instruction of English emerged the Adult Migrant Education Program, Australia's largest language policy action, and in some ways the nation's most successful language policy initiative. It was not until the 1969, however, with the adoption of the Child Migrant Education Act that the effort to teach the national language was systematically extended to children.

Ambitiously multicultural

A new ideology undergirding language choices commenced during the early 1970s. The public rhetoric of forging a new Australian identity, fusing contributions from all parties drastically changed the emphasis in language policy from the eradication of problems to the assertion of rights. For the first time in Australian history languages other than English became the object of positive and direct attention. This shift was caused largely by the active engagement of second generation 'new' Australians in policy making. More secure in their knowledge of English, using the instruments of compulsory voting and secure citizenship, a new discourse of treating the community languages of the nation as a resource and seeking intergenerational multilingualism took hold.

The important outcome was agitation for comprehensive language planning for both schools and other institutions, culminating in the adoption in 1987 of the National Policy on Languages as the first explicit language policy in Australia and the first multilingual language policy in an English-speaking country.

Energetically Asian

There had long been voices calling for Australian accommodation to its Asian geographic and security context. However, during the 1980s an increasingly economic character to such regionalism took hold after Britain's accession to the Common European Market in the mid-1970s. This had the effect of transforming previously marginal voices into the dominant language policy interest. The main claim was that curricula were forged in a Eurocentric prism and that Australia should make the teaching of Asian languages and studies national priorities in a program of urgently pursued 'Asia literacy'. Initially uncompromising, Asianism aimed to reverse the historical preference for European languages as well as the more recent preference for community languages, with a strong advocacy of selected Asian foreign languages.

During the 1980s and 1990s, federal governments adopted several reports on Asian languages and Asian studies, the main beneficiary of which has been the teaching of Japanese which in 1990 replaced French as the most prominent language in secondary schools. By the early 2000s this prominence of Japanese was under challenge from the buoyant interest in Chinese (Liu & Lo Bianco, 2007).

Fundamentally economic

During the 1990s, a new approach to public policy has become the 'backdoor' mode of making language policy. Belief in the virtues of small and non-directive government replaced the confident immersion of government in making language policy, favouring market-based choices over public policy, and substituting commercial principles of efficiency and return on investment for ethnic advocacy or regional integration. This approach dominated until the current global financial crisis and has transformed language policy into a series of responses to concerns about international economic competitiveness.

The focus of competitiveness has been threefold, with a concentration on :

- English literacy standards
- the vast expansion of the teaching of commercial English
- commodification of English education as an export industry.

During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the ideas of micro-economic reform and the unique contribution education could make to the upgrading of national skills had a direct bearing on language policy.

These moves were supportive of a nationally co-ordinated curriculum, with key learning areas specified and a strong focus on skills. The Finn report (1991) and the Mayer report (1992) directed attention to the intersection between secondary education and the labour market. The Finn report proposed national targets for participation and levels of attainment in post-compulsory education and training, reform of entry-level training arrangements, and identified six key areas of competence essential for all young people in preparation for employment. These were developed in the Mayer report as key competencies for education and training. Two of these were collecting, analysing and organising information, and communicating ideas and information. Some version of these, which became incorporated as part of the outcomes based education movement have persisted since the 1990s. In all iterations, literacy and English communication skills featured, but languages other than English often struggled for inclusion. The school version of this process specified Key Learning Areas (KLAs) with languages nominated as the eighth KLA. Accompanying statements and profiles for these KLAs were intended to act as guides to national curriculum provision.

Language professionals often criticised the KLAs, and the statements and profiles as reductionist, or simplistic, or overly functional. The whole outcomes based education movement of the 1990s, with its focus on specifying the skills, competencies and various qualities of these skills and competencies, was directed into state-based curriculum formulations. But the economistic logic, which governed the process in its most active period of the early 1990s to the mid-2000s, remains committed to associating school educational practices closely with labour market needs.

The policy parade

The term 'policy' is not as straightforward as the word implies and contemporary policy analysts accept a wide definition of what constitutes an actual policy. Ball (1993, 1994) argues that policy is both 'textual'; that is, a document that announces an authoritative position and allocates resources in a given area, and also 'discourse'; that is, the debates and discussion that surround decision making about what is to be done in a particular area. Using these terms, Lo Bianco (2008) has added 'performance' or 'practice' as an essential element in how we understand what policy can be taken to be.

The parade of policies outlined concentrates on formal texts, or declarations, of intent, and it needs to be read in conjunction with the language ideologies previously outlined. These account for much of what language education policy has been for decades, and indeed as later sections of this review will discuss, what current language education policy actually is in practice. An additional useful distinction is also made by Davis (1994), who talks of language planning existing at three levels, the intended, the enacted and the experienced. While these focus on different elements of the policy process from those highlighted by Ball, they are also important to our overall understanding of the fact that policy making has inside and outside actors, and those who are 'on the receiving end' of policy, those who 'experience' it, are able to respond to its intentions, occasionally transforming or even subverting it altogether.

Languages 'available' for policy attention

Linguists have calculated that prior to the establishment of the British colonies of Australia about 250 or 260, distinct Australian languages, representing a range of some 600 dialects, (Dixon, 1980; Walsh, 2005) were spoken across the continent. The majority of people were multilingual, knowing languages of proximal groups as well as their own and the languages of linked clans. While the first British settlers and the convicts were almost exclusively monolingual speakers of English (Clyne, 1991), the colonies did not long remain monolingual. The immense

Indigenous diversity of languages was supplemented and extended by immigration with large numbers of early language speakers using Chinese, French, German, Irish and Scottish Gaelic, Italian and Welsh. Broome's (1984) estimate is that in 1861 Victoria had a total population of about 600,000, of which some 60,000 were made up of non-British and non-Irish origins (O'Farrell, 1986), with Chinese and Germans being the largest two groupings.

Policy as text, discourse and practice

As in all colonial enterprises the British colonies of Australia endeavoured to replicate the society with which they were familiar, and so juridical, educational, political and social institutions of Britain and its wider European cultural inheritance were transferred to Australia. However, the European national states, particularly in the 19th century, famous as the century of the nation state asserting its pre-eminent interests, were not renowned for their linguistic toleration. Yet broad patterns of passive toleration of language pluralism emerged, and there were also instances of promotion of language diversity, evident for example in the existence of bilingual schools. Beginning in the 1850s and concentrated in South Australia and Victoria, many communities set up bilingual instruction and language specific schools. In Clyne's many writings (1988, 1991, 2005) on this period and its unique role in Australian language education history, he has identified more than 100 French, German, Hebrew and Gaelic bilingual programs, and numerous non-English newspapers and community publications of various kinds, primarily as language and religious maintenance activities within individual communities, but he also notes some examples of elite school programs using bilingual education methods. The mid-1870s is evidence of what Clyne calls the 'accepting but laissez-faire' mentality, in which colonial governments were broadly neutral but, as Clyne obverses: 'there were no explicit limitations' (Clyne, 1991, p. 24) on the use of languages other than English in key domains of the public life of communities.

For the most part this toleration was not extended to Indigenous languages, which were considered pejoratively as primitive dialects, not even called languages, and where active repression alternated with occasional periods of toleration or neglect, depending on the link between a language action and a wider policy objective. The policy as practice for Indigenous languages involved forcible relocation of people, aggregation of non-mutually communicating groups together, frontier conflict, and introduced disease, all of which had devastating effects and brought about massive language death in a short period (Schmidt, 1990).

A clear dividing line can be drawn with the formalised creation of state schooling from the 1870s onwards. Overwhelmingly, this introduced the policy as text model, and its aim of literate monolingualism became the norm as Education Acts of the various colonies prepared the population for possible political independence. The main features of the formal creation of education were compulsory attendance, secularism in religious orientation, and freedom from cost, with the creation of Ministries responsible for standardising teacher employment practices and curriculum. The more directed and directing pattern in Australian language planning which had been applied to Indigenous languages came now to apply to all languages.

The consolidation of the colonies into a federated Commonwealth in 1901 brought into sharp relief the interacting forces of population planning, issues of racial composition of the emergent nation, and geographic proximity to religiously, linguistically and skin colour different large populations. The labour markets of the gold fields, the ports, and the agricultural zones had already become highly diverse, with South Pacific, Asian and European adventurers and labourers. The presence of such free arrivals, indentured and recruited workers served to stoke sharp awareness of cultural difference, and racist sentiment towards Chinese (Jayasuriya, 1987). Britain's European context also involved tension with an emergent Germany and the 'British outpost' sentiment of Australians led to the adoption of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, the first legislation of the federated Commonwealth, which came over time to be called the White Australia Policy, lasting until its dismantling in the late 1960s.

One of the most notorious elements of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 was the Dictation Test. This was applied to applicants for entry, and consisted of a test which could be

given in any European language an applicant did not understand. The intrinsic unfairness of the procedure was provided with the 'cover' of it being simply a routine and 'objective' language assessment. As noted above, amendments to the Education Acts in several states during the 1916–1918 period effected a national language policy, a policy as text, whose message, unlike the excerpts read out in the Dictation Test, was entirely clear. English and only English was the language policy, and particularly undesirable was German, whose publications were banned and whose place names in many rural towns were forcibly anglicised.

The period between the world wars, until the transformative effects of the 1947 recruited immigration program, were the most aggressively monolingual in Australian history, with repressive policies applied uniformly to both immigrant and Indigenous minorities.

Post-war mass migration was accompanied immediately by a second language provision: the ship board English classes that laid the foundation for the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP). While ostensibly to allay concern of mainstream Australians that the recruitment of large numbers of immigrants would not produce enclaves of unassimilated strangers, the ultimate effects of the policy as practice was far more deeply changing. In effect the AMEP represents a commitment to make explicit policy on language issues and to declare the purposes for this. The mass national insecurity brought about during the conflict with Japan in the Pacific, and especially Britain's defeat and withdrawal from Singapore, had left Australians acutely aware that the nation required a larger population for the development of the domestic economy. The Post War Migration Program commenced in 1947 actively favoured British and northern European entrants. But eventually, when economic recovery in Europe meant that fewer British applicants were attracted, the Policy was expanded (Jayasuriya, 1987; Jupp, 2007) to include displaced persons from refugee camps in Europe, Mediterranean immigrants from southern Europe, the Levant, and eventually the Middle East.

Community languages

One of the clichés of language planning in Australia is the 'Greeks and Italians' phase, which is used in referring to the 1970s and 1980s. In truth this period was also Asian, and European other than Mediterranean, involving Indochinese and northern and eastern European languages as well. Greek and Italian Australians were merely the most numerous, and perhaps the best organised of the new citizens, many of whom were assisted by the AMEP to integrate into the wider society by acquiring English and citizenship. They reflected the settlement basis of the 1947 Immigration Program and they were encouraged by compulsory voting into active participation in public life.

The first manifesto of a multicultural lobby was a Statement on Immigrant Education, Cultures and Languages in 1973 (cited in Clyne, 2005, p. 146), initiated within the Melbourne Greek community and signed by representatives from a range of ethnic communities, teachers, academics and teacher organisations in four states.

The 1950s and 1960s were the period that produced the population whose descendants in the 1970s overturned assimilationist English-only language policy and produced the multicultural language ideology in which Australia was an undisputed world leader (Clyne, 1991; Ozolins, 1993; Ozolins, 2001) for its wide array of socially progressive innovations (e.g. the world's first Telephone Interpreting Service, the world's first national accreditation system for community interpreters). In this process, and because improved English and extending the AMEP to children were key aims of the multicultural phase of language policy, tension never arose between the claims for English compared to claims for language maintenance. This is not the case in the United States of America where the discourse of language rights had an uneasy relationship with English teaching policies (Huebner & Davis, 1999). In the Australian context the two were always seen to be in a complementary relation: English as the undisputed, convenient, common and national language, with the other languages as a source of both sentiment and investment in a skilled resource.

Today the AMEP is frequently celebrated (Martin, 1999). Even as its role has changed significantly from its earliest days, the AMEP has always served as a critical adjunct to the

overarching policy of immigrant recruitment and facilitated the creation of an articulate advocacy, which had the effect of reversing its own restrictive remit.

In the schools and universities

The year 1968 is often invoked as a key date in language education policy. It refers not to students ripping up pavement stones and rioting in Paris, but to the date, actually spread out over several years, in which universities removed the requirement for school language study as a criterion for entry to certain tertiary programs. While in 1986 the total number of matriculants taking a second languages was 44 per cent, Bonyhady (1965) calculates that in 1964, 75 per cent of secondary language students were studying French. Also present were German and Latin. This selection reflected both principles of intellectual cultivation, access to prestige literature and the privileged canon of western writing. The dominant mode of teaching was the classic 'grammar–translation' in which language analysis prevailed, conducted on literary texts, with a low expectation of spoken competence (Wykes & King, 1968, p. 3; Lo Bianco, 1987). The effect of this removal was immediate: language candidates in Year 12 dropped precipitously, to about 10 per cent.

From the commencement of compulsory schooling in the late 1880s, and in private education from the 1850s until the late 1950s, French had enjoyed a practical monopoly in Australian school language choices (Cryle, Freadman, & Hanna, 1992, p. 38). As in all foreign language education the speakers were presumed to be far away, with little likelihood of encountering the learner, though, occasionally, to be visited. By the mid-1970s the centre of attention in language education planning had moved away from elite languages taught for elite reasons at high school to community languages taught for community purposes in primary schools.

During this period a debate emerged advocating (Clyne, 1986) or questioning (Hill, Davies, Oldfield, & Watson, 1997) 'an early start'. The contours of the discussion related to the extra time an early start provides and advantages that young learners are seen to have in language acquisition compared to an 'establish English first' position, deployed according to different circumstances. There is no ultimate resolution since the configuration of languages involved, and programs proposed is vast, though general research is encouraging regarding early learning (Birdsong, 2004).

Whitlam–Fraser–Hawke

The Labor Government led by Gough Whitlam and elected in 1972, introduced many of the still prevailing policies of multiculturalism. But the abolition of the White Australia Policy and the extension of English as a second language (ESL) teaching to child immigrants were introduced by its predecessor Liberal Government. Short-lived, the Whitlam years were followed by the Liberal Government led by Malcolm Fraser, who came to power in 1975 and presided over the formalisation of multicultural policy. Robert Hawke returned Labor to government in 1983 and essentially continued the core multicultural accommodation which his predecessors had pioneered, though it was Hawke who introduced the National Policy on Languages. Practically the entire apparatus of Australia's response to linguistic pluralism was fashioned by these Prime Ministers.

In discussing this period, Clyne (1991) points out that in several countries there was an 'ethnic revival' movement during the 1970s, but what was unique about Australia was that both sides of politics produced responses based on permitting cultural diversity a role in shaping policy. Despite differences (the Australian left seeing cultural diversity as a subset of class issues, and conservatives directing attention towards celebratory aspects of culture), considerable consensus prevailed. Cultural diversity was to be the basis for language education policy choices until adoption of the 1994 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) report, in which four trade-connected Asian foreign languages (Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian and Korean) were made the exclusive priority of language policy funding. In either formulation,

connections with Britain were attenuated and domestic interests, whether for Asian engagement or multiculturalism, became the drivers in language policy determinations.

In fact Asian languages had garnered a minor presence in Australian education from the early 20th century. The University of Sydney introduced Japanese in 1907, and Japanese was first taught to Melbourne school students in 1936. During the 1960s there had been a significant push for the introduction of Indonesian to some high schools in major urban centres. Asian languages were part of the community languages movement of the 1970s, especially Cantonese, Vietnamese, Khmer and Indonesian, and the COAG languages were first declared languages of national priority in the 1987 National Policy on Languages.

Regardless of how or where languages were taught they could be assessed as matriculation subjects, and progressively over all these phases of policy the number of assessable languages grew substantially. Over time provision was made in Saturday, weekend and after-hours arrangements with complementary providers taking on associate roles in what became in some instances seamless delivery between community and public institutions.

National curriculum moves

The creation of the Commonwealth Schools Commission by the Whitlam Government dramatically extended the role of the Commonwealth Government in schooling. Concerned in its initial years mainly with alleviating economic disadvantage, it progressively expanded its consideration to look into issues around the purposes of schooling. During the 1980s and 1990s, this function came into great prominence through the Curriculum Development Commission, then the National Board on Employment Education and Training and various other permutations of a progressive federal claim to substantive involvement in the determination of what is taught in schools. Three 'declarations' mark key moments in this move towards greater specificity from the Commonwealth, ultimately reflecting a deep change in the distribution of power attached to education in Australia.

Hobart Declaration

In 1989 collaborative discussions between state, territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education as the Australian Education Council (AEC) produced the Hobart Declaration, the first in a series of efforts to develop unifying statements of purpose for Australian schooling. The Hobart Declaration represented the first attempt at a consensus on national goals for schooling. It declared that in compulsory schooling Australian students would encounter, study and develop knowledge of languages other than English. Moves towards either a nationally co-ordinated approach to curriculum, or a full national curriculum, were motivated by the meta-policy identified earlier as 'economism'. In pursuit of national micro-economic reform, the critical role of education in fostering the skills needed by an increasingly exposed middle-size trading economy and has resulted in the introduction of economists into education planning discussions.

Adelaide Declaration

The 1989 national goals were revised and issued as the Adelaide Declaration in 1999, with the retention of languages as a KLA. It states that all students should:

> … *understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally.*

(MCEETYA, 1999, p. 3)

However, in a continuation of what was identified in Section 1 as the 'chopping and changing' character of so much practice in Australian education policy, epitomised by language education

policy, the Adelaide Declaration was superseded on 5 December 2008 by the Melbourne Declaration, with further innovations in tone and content.

Language planning declarations

Five policy reports have had a deep impact on language planning, though not all were conceived as formal language planning, these were formally adopted as policy texts making them official policy declarations. While many other documents have influenced thinking and action, the following shaped language planning as formally adopted policy positions. These have come about through either top-down imposition of priorities and funding, or have been the result of bottom-up lobbying directly influencing policy. At different times various interest groups have combined with academic research to shape what policy is implemented, a process especially clear in the case of the NPL of 1987. In chronological order, the five decisive reports are:

1 Report on Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants (Galbally, 1978)

2 National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987)

3 Australian Language and Literacy Policy (DEET, 1991)

4 National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (COAG, 1994)

5 Commonwealth Literacy Policy (embodied in various reports, media statements and funding programs since 1997).

These policies differ from each other in remit, scope and style, but through formal adoption and implementation they received government endorsement, disbursing public finances and shaping action.

1 The Galbally report, 1978 was the key multicultural text of the Fraser Government, commissioned to review services. It did not address Indigenous languages, nor mainstream English, literacy or foreign relations issues, but nevertheless had a substantial national impact on language education policy and practice. The *Report on Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants* (the Galbally report) signalled the acceptance of multiculturalism by Australian conservative political forces and instituted public support for complementary language providers, the so-called ethnic schools. Under post-Galbally policy there were also extensive increases in funding for multilingual services.

2 The National Policy on Languages (NPL), 1987 was the first comprehensive national language policy. It was a bipartisan report receiving public endorsement from all political parties. The NPL was fully funded and produced the first programs ever in at least the following areas: deafness and sign language, Indigenous languages, community and Asian languages, cross-cultural and intercultural training in professions, extensions to translating and interpreting services, multilingual resources in public libraries, media, support for adult literacy and ESL. It provided for the co-ordination of research activity, including the creation of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia and its 32 constituent research centres across Australia.

The NPL identified nine 'languages of wider teaching': Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Modern Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish, and attached these to a program of first language maintenance via complementary provision. The NPL was declared a watershed report, cited internationally as a model (Clyne, 2005) and was judged to be one of the events that changed Australia by the Macquarie Encyclopedia (1997), and to be unique among English-speaking settings (Romaine, 1991).

3 Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP), 1992 positioned itself as a re-authorisation (claiming to 'build on' and 'maintain and develop' NPL), it was widely interpreted (House of Representatives, 1992; Moore, 1996; Nicholls, 2001; Singh, 2001) as restrictive of the scope in the NPL, changing the emphasis away from domestic pluralism towards a foreigner understanding of languages. The ALLP initiated a financial incentive scheme to stimulate language learning. Eight of fourteen priority languages were to be chosen by each state from

this list of choices: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.

The ALLP, however, continued funding many NPL programs, changing only titles and was more comprehensive than policies that followed.

According to Herriman, the key change was:

> … in a narrowness of focus and a construing of the goals of a policy in terms of clear economic and employment ends rather than ends of social justice, educational access and personal satisfaction.

<div align="right">(Herriman, 1996, p. 52)</div>

4 The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS), 1994–2002 made available extensive federal outlays (well over $200 million by the program's termination in 2002), but only for four languages: Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Japanese and Korean. As a result, there was accelerated growth, mainly of Japanese, which continued its growth spurt of the 1980s and surpassed French enrolments. NALSAS was the culmination of the 1986 National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia, issued by a national advisory body, the Asian Studies Council (ASC, 1986). The National Strategy shifted ground from its previous arguments for Asian studies on civilisational and other grounds, to strongly base its claim on pragmatic, economic rationales, often using the rhetorical language of 'national survival', and both it and NALSAS conceived Asian languages in strictly foreign, rather than community, terms.

At the conclusion of NALSAS, enrolments in the four languages had expanded to 23.4 per cent of all school students, with the maximum at Years 5 to 7 levels. During its implementation, Japanese and Indonesian doubled and Chinese increased one and a half times, but there was little expansion for Korean (Wyatt, Manefield, Carbines, Moore & Robb, 2002). However, these successes were often in programs of short duration and often of low seriousness, and were in any case dissipated after the strategy's abolition in 2002. By 2006, total Australian enrolments returned to around 18 per cent (RUMACCC, 2007). Already, by its conclusion, the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) was expressing alarm at a crisis in Australia's Asian language capability (ASAA, 2002).

5 Commonwealth Literacy Policy, 1997, signalled a strong move away from a focus on languages towards making English literacy a priority for educational intervention. No single policy announced this change; it was policy as text and discourse. With the dramatic elevation in political discourse of concern about English literacy standards, a 'national crisis' of literacy was invoked (Freebody, 1998). Arising out of interpretation disputes of research data on children's assessed English literacy performance in 1996, the new literacy approach had the effect in many schools of diverting resources and energy away from second languages and ESL and towards literacy teaching.

Melbourne Declaration

State, territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA, 2008), released the *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians*, claiming to set the direction for national schooling for 'the next ten years', but, perhaps predictably, being in turn replaced by other developments.

In its distinctive and new kind of wording the Melbourne Declaration identifies priority learning areas and adds to the proliferation of ways to describe language choices by stating that among the learning areas are 'languages', inserting, in parentheses ('especially Asian languages').

Comments on recent developments

The five key reports cited above are distinguished from the Hobart, Adelaide and Melbourne Declarations and also from other compromise positions issued by various national meetings of Ministers which continued to direct attention and resources to languages. These documents and declarations cannot be considered 'policy' in the same sense as the five reports, because essentially they restate existing positions, or lacked determinative effect, administrative impact and provided little additional resourcing.

A 2005 program, for example, the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools containing a 'National Plan for Languages Education' was issued from Adelaide, and guided Commonwealth and state collaboration in school languages education between 2005 and 2008. This was a commendable re-statement of the value of language study and affirmed in a positive way the efforts of schools and teachers. Though partly superseded by the Melbourne Declaration and the creation of the new NALSP (see below), the 2005 National Statement essentially only continued existing arrangements This, and several previous declarations, essentially retained funds for languages from the federal government which had been in place since the National Policy on Languages, often rewording commitments or understandings but asserting the importance of languages, asserting a priority for Asian languages associated with key trading partners, and calling for greater public awareness of the importance of languages in general. Most of the funding was given to the states and territories to support the teaching and learning of European, Asian and Indigenous languages and Auslan in schools, and government and non-government out-of-hours ethnic schools (MCEETYA, 2005).

At the time of writing, mid-2009, the federal government had already begun implementing a new program of language funding, specifically $62.4 million over 2008–09 to 2010–11 for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP). Aiming to 'significantly increase' the number of Australian students 'becoming proficient' in the languages and 'understanding the cultures' of China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea, NALSSP is targeting (unspecified) increases in the number of Asian 'language classes' offered in schools, increases in the number of Asian language teachers and aims to develop a specialist curriculum for 'advanced' language students. A target described as 'aspirational' is attached to NALSSP, such that 'by 2020, at least 12 per cent of students will exit Year 12 with a fluency in one of the target languages' (DEEWR, 2009).

Policy voices and policy interests

Over this long and productive period of agitation for language education policy, some voices have been more prominent than others. Four protagonist voices have shaped the priorities and focus of language education policy, sometimes in concert, at other times antagonistically. These voices taking up speaking positions on issues of languages education have a persisting interest in the outcomes and focus of language education choices.

The four voices represent:

- language professionals (language teacher organisations, learned academies, interpreters and translators, etc)
- immigrant community organisations
- Indigenous community organisations
- diplomatic, trade and security representatives.

Essentially these groups constitute the agitation around the national language decisions which in recent decades have debated, argued, disagreed and occasionally collaborated. The result has been a continuous policy conversation about how to manage the language resources of the nation and how to redress language competency deficiencies identified in various reports or advocated rhetorically.

That such a dynamic range of interests has engaged in the debate has meant that the issue itself has been a prominent part of general public policy in Australia for a considerable time. When the policy voices have collaborated the result has been remarkable success, producing explicit and comprehensive language policy leading to public investments for multilingualism beyond what is typically found in English-speaking countries.

Among the language professionals are teachers, academic linguists, translators and interpreters. While their specific interests differ slightly, they have mostly pushed for an enhanced second language learning effort for the whole country, calling for increased investments in research and public services around languages. By contrast, immigrant groups have mostly advocated for support for intergenerational maintenance of specific languages, for specialist English as a second language services and also for national planning on languages in general. Indigenous groups have been associated with questions of language recognition, survival, land claims based on language continuity, documentation of dying languages and various language revival efforts such as 'language hospitals'. Diplomatic and trade elites have tended to advocate in favour of a select group of prestige, trade and security linked Asian foreign languages.

Concluding comments

Section 2 has traced the major ideologies shaping thinking about the role and place of languages in Australia and discussed the main policies among the many which have been adopted over recent decades, as well as looking at the key social interests and voices that have influenced policy making. Section 3 will look at how these policies and voices are played out in schools, bearing in mind exigencies of theoretical and practical issues associated with teaching and learning.

3

Teaching and learning: Choice, pedagogy, rationale and goals

Section 3 will discuss issues related to the availability of choice in second language offerings. There is a discussion of some of the ways in which innovation and change can be effected in education systems and a description of the range and nature of provision in Australian language education today. It concludes with a discussion of key ideas about how to teach and learn languages, with particular analysis of the various kinds of immersion pedagogies. The section concludes with a consideration of the broad reasons and aims for language programs which determine the kinds of provision that are supported.

Effecting change

In his examination of successful innovation and change in education in many settings, Fullan (2001) identifies the three broad options for effecting change that public authorities have at their disposal. They can seek to bring about change through imposing accountability (system-wide or targeted), or through providing incentives (either 'negatively' as pressure or 'positively' as support), or they can direct their attention towards 'capacity-building' for key agents in the field being addressed, such as teachers, schools or universities.

> *It is exceedingly difficult to combine accountability, incentives, and capacity-building, as evidenced by the fact that no government has ever done it effectively. It is complex and there are in-built tensions. It is easy to err in providing too much or too little control.*

(Fullan, 2001, p. 232)

The review of Australian language policy shows that rarely has there been a consistent process of building on previous innovation and rarely are these three meta-strategies of accountability, incentives and capacity-building used in the judicious combination which is most likely to succeed. A central feature of education policy making is the critical, professional role of teachers and it would be to this that a capacity-building approach would be directed.

> *Capacity-building at its heart is a system of guiding and directing people's work, which is carried out in a highly interactive professional learning setting.*

(Fullan, 2001, p. 236)

Languages provision

The picture of which languages are provided, studied and learnt involves a complex interplay, an ecology, of interacting and therefore dynamic forces. There are top-down pressures and bottom-up pressures. There are constraints in availability of needed resources, such as suitably qualified teachers. There are the confounding effects of private decisions. There are the residue effects of past policy choices. There is an inescapable influence from prevailing attitudes, ideologies and biases.

Ultimately language learning is the preoccupation of individual students, in the same way as language teaching is the preoccupation of language teachers. In recent policies, written with the hand of diplomats, trade officials and other elites, there has been far less consideration of the practical issues involved in schooling, and therefore a tendency towards stressing accountability and imposition of numerical targets, with less focus on capacity-building, acknowledgment of the learner population, issues of motivation, resource constraints, personal aspirations, experiences and motivation, identity issues and family background. All too often it is assumed that the motivations learners have available to them are the prospects of employment and other material advantage that attach to language learning.

This outsider perspective on motivation is less tenable today in light of the powerful shifting of emphasis towards the internal perspective and experience of learners, and on the quality of micro-school experiences in influencing motivation, persistence and interest among language students (Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2009).

This research is important to language education planners because it shows that even in the face of negative attitudes students might inherit from the wider society, or from their parents, about languages being unimportant, or that 'everyone speaks English', micro-motivation effects (good teaching, concrete perceptible sense of achievement, success) can override negativity and sustain student interest. Here policy is practice, in the hands of individual teachers and schools.

Ecology of policy influences

Effective provision of a multilanguage education for Australian learners that is wise to the many problems of past implementation would pay close regard to close interaction between policy and attitudes. Commenting precisely on the many parties involved and their roles facilitating or obstructing effective language education (policy makers, schools, parents and students, etc.), Christ observed that:

> … *attention must be paid to the question of whether and to what extent educational policy measures … serve to strengthen or even create attitudes towards language … language attitudes possess their own political dimensions – a fact of which educational policy needs to take productive cognisance.*

(Christ, 1997, pp. 9–10)

Bringing about congruent action from the diverse array of players who impact on language education policy is often elusive and sometimes impossible. In Britain, the term 'joined-up thinking' is used to call for coherence and articulation across government departments in policy areas that are spread across more than one jurisdiction. Australia's federal and highly devolved system of governance, and the extremely large number of players involved in the multi-subject reality that is simplified as 'language teaching', mean that language policy is in strong need of having its various parts 'joined up'.

Administratively there is a complex interaction between the federal government which, while it is prominent in language education policy, does not hire a single school language teacher, nor does it run a single school in which a language is or might be taught. In recent years federal government language education policy has tended to work through positive incentives; for example through provision of discretionary funding and capacity-building and through initiatives in teacher education or professional development. State-level policy decisions are fundamental

to the effectiveness of the federal initiatives but are also independent and responsive to local conditions. School- and jurisdiction-based initiatives and priorities and their varying responses to federal and state initiatives further complicate this already complicated picture. In addition, there are complementary school systems conducted by ethnic minority communities whose priorities and practices are dictated by internal needs and ideas. There have been many attempts to co-ordinate and synchronise these administrative efforts with institutional ones and with the key policy voices identified above.

The most effective and celebrated case was the initiative of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia during the early 1980s (Clyne, 1991; Ozolins, 1993; Scarino & Papademetre, 2001). It is worth recalling that this small community-based organisation, working under the multicultural remit of general policy at the time, commenced with state level agitation conferences demanding a national language policy. This culminated in a national level conference and led directly to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Arts conducing Australia's first public inquiry into language needs. Reporting in 1984, the Senate recommended that a language policy be promulgated at the national level, but government interest had by this stage faltered, provoking bottom-up demands for change. Ultimately a new process of broad public consultation was embarked on in 1986 and this led to the formal adoption by Federal Cabinet in June 1987 of the National Policy on Languages. Subsequent policy was much more characterised by top-down approaches, and much more restricted in scope and remit of activity, concentrating not on broad whole-of-government language planning but specifically on the teaching of foreign languages in schools (Herriman, 1996).

Pedagogy

The teacher as the ultimate resting point

The ultimate target of all language education planning and policy work is the effectiveness of the teacher, such as the skills they are able to marshal and their persistence in their roles. Good teaching is the single most important controllable variable in successful language learning and this in turn depends crucially both on the receptiveness of schools hosting language programs and the quality of teacher education, ultimately determined by university and federal government support.

It is a frequently heard lament of the language teacher that they are not just teacher but also subject advocate, called upon continually to defend the integrity and presence of Indonesian or German in this or that school against complaints about the crowded curriculum, lack of student interest and a host of other pressures. Continuation of language programs is deeply dependent on replacement of departing teachers, attitudes towards language study in general and often to particular languages.

Languages are also hostage, as it were, to international relations. During the French nuclear testing at Muroroa Atoll in the South Pacific in 1994 protesting university students poured (presumably inexpensive) champagne into drains and refused to attend French classes. More insidiously, negative attitudes towards Indonesia, generated by Indonesian foreign policy, conviction of drug runners, extremist terrorist violence targeted at Australian tourists and other images, clichés and prejudices in the mass media have made Indonesian, certainly Australia's most important and only true regional language, subject to continual interruptions in its teaching. While Australia can boast a substantial effort in Indonesian language education, possibly the most extensive in the world, it is in truth fragile, continually endangered and disrupted, largely due to the vicissitudes of politics and conflict.

After the obliteration of many school language programs with the 1918 legislation banning bilingual programming, it was not until the mid-1970s that languages returned to the primary school. The 1970s policies resulted in one of the several school success stories of recent language planning. In some states very many students still experience second language study, and for many

of these it remains available throughout the years of formal education. Approximately half of primary students and one-third of their secondary school counterparts in the compulsory years engage in language studies. However, fewer than 10 per cent of tertiary students take up the option (Nettelbeck, Byron, Clyne, Hajek, Lo Bianco, & McLaren, 2007), leading these writers to conclude that 'Language teaching is beset by continual commissioning of new information that is hardly ever used to inform policy.'

Progress in pedagogy and program design

Over the 25 centuries of language teaching discussed by Kelly (1976) there have been major developments in methodology, understanding of language and confidence in the effectiveness of the enterprise. Here only some of the major phases of recent thinking and teaching in second languages are considered. For most of the 20th century the grammar–translation (GT) method prevailed in language teaching in Australia. Originating in the 1840s, the separate operations of grammatical analysis and translation practice constituted the bulk of activities in language learning and, while today the default position in discussions of method is to treat GT like 'the bad old days of yore', it had the virtues of being systematic, analytical, and many people learned languages quite effectively. GT is, however, oriented mostly towards accuracy rather than fluency, and to knowledge about language rather than competent use of it, and these are serious limitations when the goal is bilingual speaking skill.

The chief focus of GT was prestigious literary texts. Grammatical structures were introduced singly, and in an ordered sequence. Vocabulary was introduced and discussed, and then sentences were considered, employing the new grammatical structure and vocabulary, in patterned native speaker models. These were translated from the second into the first language, and vice versa. The main goal of GT was to read literature, the main cognitive justification was that mental discipline and intellectual rigour were associated with formal language study and the texts, prestige writings of the western literary canon, would connect a learner with his or her civilisation. Far less attention was devoted to verbal competency and in most cases little was acquired. As a learning method, GT is more strongly associated with classical languages, especially Latin.

Audiolingualism

From the 1950s to the 1970s a reaction against GT led to audiolingualism. This was informed by behaviourist psychology and emphasised learner responses to external stimuli. By patterned imitation, a learner was believed to emulate correct forms and master them. Audiolingualism coincided with the expansion of technology, specifically the introduction of the language laboratory and the dominant paradigm of the language sciences, structural linguistics, which viewed language as a finite set of patterns capable of generating an infinite number of correct utterances. Learners were expected to perform pattern drills and dialogues of accurate speech and through repetition they would form habits, which were essential to keep learner errors to a minimum. In 'language labs' students would listen to tapes, repeat and practise patterns and follow drills of substitution. The instructor would listen and correct errors.

Audiolingualism had a poor record of verbal fluency and was unpopular for its focus on rote-learning, which bore little resemblance to communicative situations in the real world.

Second language acquisition (SLA)

During the 1970s the field known today as SLA (second language acquisition) emerged (Hatch, 1978). This has grown to become a vast international discipline, relevant to the huge expansion of second language learning across the world in the decades since. Many social developments have stimulated major growth in SLA, especially the legislation of employment and residential mobility within the European Union, but also immigrant settlement policies in the United States of America and Australia, and Guest Worker schemes in Germany and northern Europe.

Communicative language teaching (CLT)

Combining SLA research, social science and humanities work on natural communication processes, CLT is based on the idea that learners are capable of more than imitation and in fact that they generate and manage their own meanings, that fluency is as important as accuracy, that communication is often a negotiated and iterative process between the participants in an interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Hinkel & Fotos, 2002). These developments and points of principle have led to what is today the dominant meta-method in language teaching, the so-called communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT). In some ways CLT is a meta-method rather than a method, since in practice what is called CLT appears to encompass many subsidiary and optional practices.

Since there is no one definitive text or technique of CLT, it is best seen as a set of beliefs about how language operates, and of principles about how language is learned, all of which are premised on a view of language as essentially, or most characteristically, social in nature and dialogical in form. In CLT learners are encouraged to:

- take risks, as errors are considered integral to learning, exposing for the teacher the learner's internal hypothesis as to the rules of the target language

- express their own views and ideas rather than repeating drill patterns

- teachers are expected to offer learners direct method instruction, i.e. use the target language at all times and deal with substantive content and meaningful communication.

Authentic texts are preferred over drills or idealised patterns and communication involving integration of different language skills is preferred over isolation of individual skills or components (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Other developments, or refinements such as task-based teaching, and more recently intercultural language teaching have refined and developed CLT. CLT is the now the dominant second language approach all over the world, though it is often not implemented systematically.

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)

Originating in Europe is the new major methodological innovation of CLIL, content and language integrated learning (Coyle, 2008). CLIL uses regular school subject content, carefully selected and supported by appropriate materials, to be taught directly in the target language. It thereby displaces the focus of language teaching away from language itself and onto meaningful and significant communication around concepts and information drawn from regular school subjects.

Intercultural language teaching and learning (ILT)

Intercultural language teaching and learning (ILT) responds to the idea that culture teaching should not be left until learners have acquired language competence and then taught as a series of items, or units, of study, but that cultural differences are inherent in all communication, and that since learners notice these, culture should be taught immediately. ILT involves close research of the linguistic and communicative elements of different languages, making these explicit to learners. Culture is therefore not 'a fifth skill', or separate content, or an afterthought to the traditional skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Kramsch, 1993; Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000; Lo Bianco & Crozet, 2003; Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003). ILT distinguishes between simply knowing about another culture and knowing the culture from within through learning the language.

ILT, CLIL and a new US-based focus on heritage languages, linking languages and identity, are the major forces for innovation and change in contemporary second language education. These three innovations share some common ground, in that they are all based on practical communication grounded in real-world settings in which the identities and purposes of learners are given central importance in curriculum design and which reflect the sociological reality of multilingual and multicultural contemporary societies. This is in contrast to older

conceptualisations in which the target language was assumed to be 'foreign', both physically distant from the lived world of the learner and culturally foreign as well.

Immersion

Immersion (Fortune & Tedick, 2008), bilingual education and CLIL all refer to the use of two languages in instruction. Students study particular subjects, or, as in CLIL, components of subjects, such as science or history (content-based teaching) or, typically, half the curriculum (partial immersion), or the entire curriculum, apart from first language literacy (total immersion), through the medium of a second language. Immersion education relies on the idea that children learn language by focusing on subject content; that is, they learn English via understanding, in the famous formulation of Stephen Krashen, 'comprehensible input'(Krashen, 1984). In this process the learner focuses on understanding messages, not on studying linguistic form, messages whose meaning is made more or less clear to the learner. The essential proposition of immersion education is that acquisition of structure (accuracy, or grammatical correctness) follows from the acquisition of meaningful input (i.e. immersion, communication and fluency).

Research into immersion

Consistently positive findings on key questions asked in immersion education evaluations have made increasing numbers of parents and education administrators the world over confident that it is a reliable method for teaching languages, for teaching content and for achieving success in these with no damage to the first language of learners. These three foci, second language teaching, academic success and first language maintenance, form the bulk of the research questions asked of immersion programs. The Australian experience with immersion is consistent with both the models and the findings from international research. De Courcy (2002) summarises the results of Australian immersion research in Chinese, German and French, confirming the international pattern. At the beginning of a new bilingual immersion program parents, administrators and teachers typically have concerns or ask questions about the likely effects on student learning in three areas:

1 What effect will studying through the second language have on the learner's mother tongue?

2 Will the learner be academically disadvantaged by learning subject content delivered in the second language?

3 What improvements will there be in the learner's acquisition of the second language?

Children who start early immersion and sustain it over the long term have been shown to gain additional advantages in general intellectual functioning. Australian research confirms and extends international findings into families, different scripts, and various aspects of learner reaction and experience as well as the academic functioning of Australian children in immersion programs (Eckstein, 1986; Döpke, McNamara, & Quinn, 1991; Rado, 1991; Berthold, 1995; Lotherington, 2001).

Eckstein (1986) found that Melbourne primary school children who studied science in German successfully transferred concepts learnt through their second language to their first, and demonstrated heightened cognitive flexibility and more divergent thinking than children who had learnt the same content through their first language. Australian schools typically offer only partial immersion, so that children are taught in the L2 for part of the day, or in particular subjects while the rest of their classes are in English (Truckenbrodt & De Courcy, 2002).

The three recurring questions are the main framework for addressing overall objectives in immersion teaching: second language, first language and subject mastery, with the majority of the evidence being consistent and reassuring on these questions. In broad terms, the research concludes that immersion methodology is a valid, effective and durable mode for second language learning as well as for imparting the general curriculum to young learners, while supporting their English development. Although the number of studies on immersion education is vast,

the results do not vary greatly. Reviewing many research studies Krashen (1984) summarised the findings as:

> • *Immersion students' English language skills are more or less the same as the performance of students taught only in English.*
>
> • *Immersion students' mastery of academic subject matter is on a par with students taught that academic subject matter only in English.*
>
> • *Immersion students learn the second language well, outperforming students who study that language only as a subject. After several years immersion students' performance on some measures comes close to the score levels for native speakers. Immersion students tend to speak with an English 'accent', and make minor grammatical errors, but are by most measures competent second language speakers.*

<div align="right">(Krashen, 1984, p. 61)</div>

Genesee's (1987) analysis finds that under standardised testing in English early full immersion students experience a lag in literacy-based language skills (reading, spelling and written vocabulary), but few problems with communication skills (speaking and listening comprehension). They overcome this lag usually within one year of receiving English Arts instruction.

As far as mathematics and science are concerned, standardised testing shows that both early and late Canadian immersion students who are also taught French throughout the primary grades do not encounter any lags in achievement as a result of being taught mathematics and science in French.

Writing specifically about Canada's huge 45-year experiment in French immersion education one of the world's foremost researchers in second language acquisition wrote:

> *Canadian immersion is not simply another successful language teaching program – it may be the most successful program ever recorded in the professional language-teaching literature. No program has been as thoroughly studied and documented, and no program, to my knowledge, has done as well.*

<div align="right">(Krashen, 1984, p. 61)</div>

Something like immersion style language teaching is in fact a very old practice in language and in fact has echoes of the naturalistic process of first language learning discussed in Section 1. Teaching languages through content has been done perhaps for hundreds of years (Kelly, 1969) – and is in fact more ancient than teaching language by focusing on language itself as the *object of teaching*. However, since Canada embarked on its vast program of immersion we have benefited from a massive database of research findings. The overall conclusion from this sustained research effort is that we can say with confidence that, properly implemented and sustained for a significant period of time, immersion education is a very effective method for achieving its three main goals: (i) learning a second language, (ii) learning subject matter effectively through the second language, and (iii) developing literacy and academic skills in the first language.

One reason why immersion works may be because it makes use of a key feature of language. It links *learning* (the principal activity of schooling) with *use* (out-of-school activation of what is learnt). In many societies today education is being reformed to give a much more prominent role to English in education. In 2002 Malaysia reverted to compulsory use of English to teach certain subjects, science, mathematics and technology in particular. In China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, and in many parts of Europe, there has been a growing emphasis on some kind of dual language education, often directed at enhancing the learning of English and recently this has been booming across China, including the use of English as a language of instruction from primary to tertiary levels (Feng, 2007). Conversely, in some English-speaking societies there is also a growth in two-language education, usually among elites keen to overcome the systemic failure of mass language education policy in English-speaking countries, through, first, immersion

education in key languages of global trade, often in elite schools, for English-speaking children; and second, bilingual education (mother tongue maintenance plus ESL) for immigrant and Indigenous children as a transition to English-only education or full maintenance bilingual education.

Immersion education aims to compensate for the absence of inductive learning of a second language; that is, picking up the language in ordinary life, by adding actual language use, in which the language that is being taught in school is used to do real communication.

Immersion education is also found in contexts of language revitalisation, such as in Ireland where the most successful language schools for the teaching of Irish (Gaelic) are the Gaelscoileanna; all-Irish immersion schools producing the highest levels of achievement in Irish, in general academic results and also very high in English (Harris, 2006). For many Irish students Irish is a foreign language, despite being the official and national language of the country, though in some parts of Ireland the language is used regularly. In the majority of cases where Irish is taught, either as a subject or in transitional bilingual programs, students achieve less well than in the full immersion all Irish schools.

Two-Way Immersion

Two-way bilingual education programs like the Irish Gaelscoileanna are growing in popularity in the United States of America and differ from the Australian and Canadian programs in that they involve approximately equal numbers of children from language minority (mostly Spanish) and language majority (English) backgrounds, usually in the same classroom. Both Spanish and English are used for instruction and assessment with the usual aims of immersion education; that is, bilingual proficiency and academic skills, along with multicultural harmony and integration. Lindholm-Leary (2001) analysed 18 schools conducting Two-Way Immersion programs looking at student linguistic and academic outcomes as well as socio-cultural and attitudinal variables. Her study compares the outcomes from various kinds of two language combinations typically found in the United States of America: transitional bilingual education (where the non-English home language is used for initial literacy but discontinued as soon as children have sufficient English to learn in it); English as a second language programs; and two models of Two-Way Immersion (90:10 Dual Language Model and 50:50 Dual Language Model). These figures refer to the proportions of Spanish to English. Lindholm-Leary concluded that:

- Reduced time in English did not negatively affect students' achievements in English compared to matched groups of learners in both ESL and 50:50 programs; students in both 90:10 and 50:50 programs were outperforming the California state average of English speakers who were taught only in English, by some 10 per cent on reading tests, and on several mathematics measures.

- 90:10 learners of Spanish achieved considerably higher proficiency in both Spanish and English than those in 50:50 programs.

- English proficiency for Spanish background learners was approximately equal for both the models of Two-Way Immersion.

- Increases in bilingual proficiency were correlated with higher reading achievements.

Immersion, explicit teaching and out-of-school use

A highly productive variation of immersion has been extensively trialled in Europe, finding essentially that while immersion in the target language is important to promote second language learning without sacrificing first language skill or academic results, the second language acquisition can be accelerated if the immersion is supplemented by explicit teaching, and links to out-of-school use. With immersion only, students often continue to make grammatical errors in language use, but when explicit teaching is added to immersion, either before or alongside the use of the target language as a medium of instruction, significant improvements have been recorded (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993).

The European School Model (ESM) is a Europe-wide network of schools located in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Norway with a strong reputation for academic achievement, equal linguistic treatment and high multilingual proficiency. In the early 1990s some 12,000 students were enrolled in this network of elite institutions, designed to provide a quality education for the children of civil servants working for EU institutions.

A key feature of the ESM is that the target language is taught formally as a subject, as the object of teaching, prior to being used as a medium of instruction (Walter, 2008). In this way students are given intensive target language instruction; that is, they learn *about* the language before they begin learning *in* the language. Even after the target language has become the medium of instruction, it continues to be taught separately as a subject. According to Baetens Beardsmore (1993, p. 123), this factor accounts for the high level of grammatical accuracy achieved by ESM students. The expectation of the ESM is that students will write and speak at levels comparable to native speakers.

Comparing the French skills of ESM students with Canadian immersion students' French, the research found that European children required 1300 classroom contact hours to achieve set scores, whereas Canadian immersion children required 4500 contact hours to get to the same point. This difference is also attributable to the different environments or settings in which the schools are located. French is the out-of-school language for the European learners but not for French immersion students in Canada. There is also likely to be a selective effect from the broader demographic represented in the Canadian case, but the difference is so great it cannot be ignored or discounted because of social origins of the two populations. This out-of-class role is a significant advantage for high-level academic work as well. Out-of-class use makes student language more varied and interactive, extending student's language skills beyond the academic register which classroom language requires.

Conclusion to immersion research

The broad generalisations that we can draw from this consideration of pedagogical developments and program design are crucial to what is advocated in Australian language education policy. The promising developments in second language teaching highlight that improvements are possible in the achievement of learning standards for ever greater numbers of learners. The program design developments, especially concerning immersion teaching (CLIL) and the practical importance of identity research and issues of out-of-school use of languages all point to the reasons and aims contained in language policy. The next section considers the reasons and aims in light of what is now a clearer set of understandings about what is involved in serious second language education.

Rationale and goals in teaching and learning

In this section key values and aspirations for proficiency in languages other than English relevant to the Australian context are explored. In Australia's first explicit language policy, the National Policy on Languages, adopted by Federal Cabinet in June 1987, four overarching legitimations for explicit language planning were proposed. These broad aims, reproduced below, remain relevant today and can help formulate the national language effort. The broad reasons sit along a continuum from instrumental and pragmatic to cultural and intellectual. All are important, each has a place and importance and a domain in which it is distinctively relevant. The overarching goals were:

1 **Enrichment:** cultural and intellectual

2 **Economics:** trade, commerce and enterprise

3 **Equality:** opportunities for minorities to acquire English and maintain their other languages

4 **External:** facilitating Australia's integration into regional affairs and fostering and global connections.

These four aims of the NPL were then specified in the document as four broad statements/principles of ultimate language planning goals:

1 **Literate English:** the aim of universal acquisition of standard Australian English supported by an array of programs for identified problem areas

2 **Second Languages:** the aim of all Australians knowing languages other than English, with opportunities and encouragement for speakers of other languages to retain those languages and transmit them to their children and that English speakers would acquire a second language through formal education

3 **Indigenous Languages:** the endangered state of Australian languages was signalled as a priority for maintenance and support, but also that all Australians would at least learn about the unique Australian languages

4 **Language Services:** the need for widespread and equitable language services such as interpreting and translating, and multilingual media, was identified.

These four aims and four principles were then elaborated into four interrelated strategies so that the bilingualism produced in the intimacy of families and communities can complement and extend the cultivation of language skills in institutions through deliberate planning. The four interrelated strategies were:

1 **Conservation** of Australia's existing linguistic resources

2 **Development** and expansion of these linguistic resources

3 **Integration** of Australian language teaching and language use efforts with national economic, social and cultural policies

4 **Provision** of services and information multilingually.

Language learning and use in Australia will always be a diverse and multifaceted activity. While individual interests cleave more to some purposes than others, and advocate often irreconcilable priorities, the realities of a diverse, democratic and participatory state inevitably mean that in practice we will always teach many languages and know and use them. However, from the review of progress in pedagogy, and especially the critical importance placed on the actual use of the studied language, the key message is that second language education policy should strongly target immersion teaching with active cultivation of out-of-class use. The latter will require connections between school language programs and community language providers, collapsing the rigid distinctions between providers and between the separation of foreign and community language education.

The real national effort in language education and use is always far more widespread than what occurs in formal systems and under the formal jurisdiction of policy. What goes on in school (*in vitro*) and what happens out of school (*in vivo*) though interconnected are also autonomous zones. While schooling increasingly tries to emulate the naturalistic patterns of use of language out of school, its primary function is instruction. As such, the primary aim of school language education, notably of instructed language, is to select from the vast range of uses and practices of communication only those elements which assist the acquisition of language accuracy. However, in the wider community, the *in vivo* context, the principal point about language is fluent usage. This is why the European School Model, able to combine instruction and usage in classrooms (i.e. grammar teaching and immersion) with out-of-school usage of the target language, and also support to learners on how to engage in strategic communication, produces such promising results in both accuracy and fluency.

In this way languages are like only a few other learning areas or subjects of formal education, in that they combine instruction with application, and become performance. In addition, since personal identity is negotiated and displayed in communication and must make use of the resources individual languages make available, a learner is required to take on the assumptions and cultural scripts the target language contains. These are special qualities that language

learning contains, making them rare if not unique in the curricula of schools with respect to the extent that they potentially challenge and extend the sense of self of the student.

Cultural and intellectual benefits of bilingualism

Many early views of bilingualism and cognition were either neutral or negative. A watershed in research, setting the pattern of more rigorous studies that repeatedly find bilingualism cognitively enriching, was Peal and Lambert's (1962) French–English Canadian study, notable for strictly controlling the socio-economic status and language backgrounds of its 364 bilingual and monolingual subjects. With careful control over sample selection, controlling for economic and social position, age and sex and language proficiency this work considerably raised standards of study design, finding that bilinguals outperformed the monolingual subjects on IQ. In the words of Hakuta and Diaz (1985, p. 322) this was 'the punctuation point in research' on the relation between bilingualism and intellectual functioning. The Peal and Lambert study was criticised for including potentially more intelligent subjects in their bilingual sample, leaving unresolved what distinctive contribution bilingualism itself makes to intellectual functioning. This possible oversight was addressed in the work of Hakuta and Diaz (1985), whose longitudinal approach isolated the independent contribution of bilingualism to cognitive functioning, in effect exposing a causal relationship between intelligence and bilingualism.

In educational settings a key hypothesis proposed to explain such results and the immersion education they have stimulated, is linguistic interdependence, most closely associated with Cummins (2000) for which substantial confirmatory evidence is now available. Linguistic interdependence builds on longstanding awareness of differences between mundane and academic language uses and a sense of implausibility that the two languages of a bilingual would be neurologically compartmentalised. The most common practical assumption encountered about second language learning is maximum exposure; that is, the more time spent studying the language, the greater will be the level of proficiency attained. By contrast, linguistic interdependence posits an 'additive bilingual enrichment principle' (Cummins, 2000, p. 175), meaning essentially that bilingual children's academic achievements are tied to the cognitive relations between first language skill and second language performance.

It has long been claimed that language learning enhances cognitive performance in unspecified ways; however, in recent decades a substantial body of empirical evidence has confirmed that this intuition is correct. The research has, moreover, identified the circumstances under which cognitive functioning is positively influenced by bilingualism. In the past 40 years more than 150 studies have confirmed some of the mutually reinforcing relationships between non-linguistic and linguistic intellectual functioning and bilingualism (Cummins, 2003, p. 61).

However, second language skill would not on its own necessarily nourish cognitive functioning, unless high levels of proficiency are gained. In some ways second language skill is like the process of becoming literate. Becoming literate involves a growing understanding that language is a system, governed by rules and patterns. Learning a second language leads to a similar, perhaps more intense, appreciation of this systematic character of language. This insight is called 'meta-linguistic awareness' and has been shown to have considerable academic benefit for children who are able to reflect on language in more careful ways, if they become aware that any one language is an arbitrary and not a natural system. Children who are exposed to two languages at home (Ng & Wigglesworth, 2007) can show enhanced cognitive flexibility and greater meta-linguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2001).

Meta-linguistic awareness is itself a precondition for becoming literate. Children need to learn to think about language as a systematically organised object, to analyse the continuous stream of sound into phonemes (which are then mapped onto graphemes), and understand that the relationship between word form and meaning is arbitrary (so that, for example, a small object need not be represented by a small word) (Garton & Pratt, 1998). Scientific hypothesising and functioning were also found to be favourably correlated with precocious bilingualism (Kessler & Quinn, 1982). Research has also isolated the way in which bilingualism itself directly contributes

to enhanced intellectual functioning and is not merely an artefact of flawed research designs, or a correlate (Ng & Wigglesworth, 2007).

However, despite the high level of proficiency condition, research has also shown how even limited contact with a second language (one hour of Italian instruction per week) can have a positive effect on the word awareness of Prep and Grade 1 students in Melbourne (Yelland, Pollard, & Mercuri, 1993). In several ways learning a second language supports and illuminates knowledge of the first, by permitting an objectification of the systematic character of the first language in comparison to features of the second. One of the key reasons why bilingual and immersion education succeed is because:

> *… the linguistic and literacy-related knowledge and skills that an individual has learned in his or her L1 will be brought to bear on the learning of academic knowledge and skills in L2.*

(Cummins, 2000, p. 190)

Concluding comments

The conclusion we must draw from these considerations is that language education policy should aim only for high-quality programs. It is an unfortunate aspect of past policy that utilitarian rationales, and the often crisis-driven pressure to establish programs quickly, have resulted in a proliferation of rather superficial second language teaching endeavours. In recent research in a range of disadvantaged schools Lo Bianco and Aliani (2008) found that students themselves are all too aware of the disparity between what policies, politicians and often even schools claim and proclaim for their language learning efforts, and what is actually delivered.

4

Data, provision issues and planning

Section 4 builds on the contextual ideas set out in Section 1, the policy history described in Section 2, the described specifics of teaching and learning, and the justifications set out in Section 3. This section provides a detailed picture of the state of play for languages from various recent research projects, and describes the overall pattern of provision and related information regarding language education planning and implementation in Australia today.

Data difficulties

The first, unfortunately predictable, comment that needs to be made about the knowledge base of language education in Australia concerns the limited availability and comparability of even quite basic information about the provision of language learning. There is no systematic, comprehensive and reliable documentation and reporting of participation rates, teacher qualifications, program types and other critically important information regarding languages study. The result is that some kinds of analysis are rendered difficult, comparability is not always possible, and all reporting must be accompanied by professional cautions about the interpretation of apparent 'facts'. While this deficiency certainly hampers policy and programming it also makes properly understanding the complex web of activities that make up the language education effort in Australia very difficult.

A recent national inquiry undertaken for the Ministers of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Liddicoat et al., 2007) comments on the limitations of gathering comparable, reliable and comprehensive data. They observe that data for enrolments across year levels was only available from six of 24 education jurisdictions. This review paper is in the more fortunate position of having access to participation figures for 2006, albeit retrospectively collected. These data were collected through a research project funded by the Australian Government and undertaken by the Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross Cultural Communication (RUMACCC, 2007) located at the University of Melbourne. This data set represents 21 to 23 of the 24 providers and therefore provides the most comprehensive collection of languages participation data in Australia currently available. As some enrolment figures were not available by year level, but as aggregates, not all available data can be represented in the tables and figures following. Any variation is specified where appropriate. There remain considerable gaps and deficiencies in data, a persisting problem in Australia whose resolution is a critical and often underestimated component in the needed improvement in language education policy.

The only comprehensive annual report on languages education by an education jurisdiction in Australia is produced by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and as a result this review uses several Victorian examples, but these are supplemented with the addition of other information and commentary, where possible.

Second language provision

The 2007 study by the University of Melbourne Research Unit for Multicultural and Cross Cultural Communication (RUMACCC) provides an overview of the range and number of languages taught in Australian educational institutions during 2006. Of Australia's estimated 350 spoken languages 133, including 50 Indigenous languages, were taught in some kind of formal education program in 2006 (Table 2). There are patterns of variation specific to the demography of different state and territory jurisdictions (e.g. the stronger representation of Indonesian in the Northern Territory, Italian in Melbourne, Arabic in Sydney, and Japanese in Brisbane), and to geographic proximity (e.g. the stronger representation of Indonesian in the Northern Territory). However, while it might be tempting to conclude that teaching 133 languages represents a vast dispersion of effort, it needs to be kept in mind that 97 per cent of students study only one of ten of these languages. This is like a mirror image of the distribution of the 6912 spoken languages in the world, the vast majority of which are spoken by communities of fewer than 10,000 people, and large numbers by communities of fewer than 1000 people, while a small minority is spoken by more than 10 million and only some 160 have official status of some kind (Gordon, 2005).

Together these locations, students and languages constitute the formal transmission system for second language knowledge in Australia, alongside the informal system of languages acquired through intimacy, that is in child rearing, which make up the remaining languages from the 350 total used daily by Australians. Table 2 provides the broad, undifferentiated list of the languages taught throughout Australia during 2006. Formal education here refers to providers within public education (government schools and TAFE colleges and universities, as well as state operated specialist language schools), independent schools whether systemic or individual, and complementary providers (mostly so-called 'ethnic schools' but also comprising foreign-operated, recreational private and commercial language schools).

Table 2: Languages taught in public, Catholic, independent and complementary provider schools across Australia, 2006

Adynyamathanha, Albanian, *Alywarre*, Amharic, *Anmatyerre*, *Arabana*, Arabic, Armenian, *Arrernte*, Assyrian, Auslan, Bangla, *Barhamah*, Bari, Bengali, Bosnian, Braille, Bulgarian, *Burrara*, *Butchulla*, *Central Arrente*, Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Mandarin), Classical Greek, Classical Hebrew, Colombian, Croatian, Czech, *Dalabon*, Danish, Dari, *Datiwuy*, Dinka, *Djabugay*, *Djambarrpuyngu*, *Djirrbal*, Dutch, Farsi, Fijian, Filipino/ Tagalog, Finnish, French, *Galpu*, *Ganalbingu*, German, *Golumala*, Greek, Gujarati, *Gumatj*, *Gungarri*, *Gupapuyngu*, *Guuge Yalanji*, *Guugu Yimithirr*, Harari, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, *Indigenous (other)*, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, *Kalaw Kawaw Ya*, *Kaurna*, Khmer/Cambodian, *Kija*, Korean, *Kriol*, *Kuku Yalanji*, Kune, Kurdish, *Kuuk Thaayorre*, Lao, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, *Liya-Dhalinymirr*, *Liya-Gawumirr*, *Luritja*, Macedonian, Madi, Malay, Maltese, Mandaean, *Mangarrai*, Maori, *Meriam*, *Mir*, Mon, *Murinh-Patha*, *Ndjebbana*, Nepalese, *Ngalakan*, *Ngandi-Mara*, *Ngarrindjeri*, *Ngaymil*, Nuer, Oromo, Persian, *Pitjantjatjara*, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, *Rembarunga*, *Ritharrngu*, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Sanskrit, Serbian, Sinhala/Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Tatar, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinia, *Tiwi*, Tok Pisin, Tongan, *Torres Strait Islander Languages*, Turkish, Uighur, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, *Wanguri*, *Warlpiri*, *Warramiri*, *Wik Mungkan*, *Wubuy*, *Wujul Wujul*, *Yankunyjatjara*, Yiddish, *Yolnu Matha*, Yoruba, *Yugambeh Djirrbal*

Note: Languages in italics are Indigenous, some of which are taught intermittently over the year.

Source: RUMACCC, 2007, p. 98.

The recent data reveal concentration within diversity: 97 per cent of all students are enrolled at mainstream schools, specialist public language schools or through distance education to study one (or more) of the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, (Modern) Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish (Table 3).

Community Languages Australia (CLA, 2009) is the national co-ordinating agency for part-time schools of language and culture, previously called 'ethnic schools'. CLA has supplied unpublished data on students enrolled in the study of languages in its member organisations: 75 per cent were studying Arabic, (Mandarin) Chinese, (Modern) Greek or Vietnamese, with the remaining 25 per cent studying one of 65 other languages, with only one, Kija, being an Indigenous language.

A different kind of provision model, that of 'insertion classes', is commonly found in some education jurisdictions in Australia. In this approach a community organisation hires teachers and makes them available to mainstream government or independent schools to teach the language concerned, which is then 'inserted' into the regular school curriculum. The insertion model tends to involve a rather small time commitment and is mostly, but not exclusively, associated with Italian. It originated and remains most heavily concentrated in Victorian Catholic schools, but has been extended in a smaller way to New South Wales, South Australia and other jurisdictions. This method of community-school interaction is now prominent in Western Australia too where some 30,000 students have some encounter with Italian through insertion classes each year.

A dramatic counterweight to the spread of languages is revealed in Table 3 below. While this is often described as a group of ten languages, in reality there are very important discrete sub-groups. A more accurate interpretation of this is the group of six, in order Japanese, Italian, Indonesian, French, German and Chinese (Mandarin), which make up the vast bulk of the formal language teaching effort in Australia. An additional internal concentration is evident in that of the 1,401,550 language students in mainstream public education, Japanese and Italian comprise about 47 per cent; the addition of Indonesian and French brings this to 77 per cent, and the inclusion of German and Chinese students accounts for 91% of the total. The total of all enrolments below those for Chinese, including 'other', are fewer than the total for German.

Table 3: Student enrolments by language, Australia, 2006

Language	Number of students
Japanese	332,943
Italian	322,023
Indonesian	209,939
French	207,235
German	126,920
Chinese (Mandarin)	81,358
Arabic	25,449
Spanish	20,518
Greek	18,584
Vietnamese	11,014
Other	45,567
Total	**1,401,550 (100%)**

Note: Data are from 23 of the 24 education providers across the states and territories, and do not include Tasmanian Catholic schools.

Source: RUMACCC, 2007: pp 6-9; plus aggregate figures throughout the report.

There is a great deal of variation in the status of language study across various education jurisdictions. These variations are examined in detail in Liddicoat et al. (2007, pp. 17–20) which is the main source of the discussion that follows (see Table 4). While some study of languages is mandated in New South Wales and Queensland, there is an 'implied mandate' or recommendation in the others, but neither the mandates nor their absence appears to be a good

predictor of either the duration, intensity or quality of language study. This is partly because when languages study is mandated, the expected requirements is not substantial. In New South Wales there has been a longstanding provision of mandated study, but the requirement is for a fixed 100 hours, concentrated in the junior secondary school years, widely recognised to be a very modest commitment. By contrast, the implied mandate or recommendation in some cases is associated with a broader or more intense expectation. The Western Australian recommendation is that languages be studied from Years 3 to 10, based on the requirement that students reach Level 3 in that state's course descriptors by Year 9. The advantage of this requirement is that it seeks to specify a qualitative outcome.

Table 4: Language requirements in Australian states and territories

State/Territory	Status	Extent of study	Comment
ACT	Not mandated		
NSW	Mandated	100 hours	Preferably in Years 7–8
NT	Not mandated		
QLD	Mandate being revised	Years 4–7	Under regional language plans the level of mandating for individual schools has been reduced.
SA	Implied mandate	R–10	Year levels not explicitly stated.
TAS	Not mandated		
VIC	Implied mandate	P–10	Government schools are expected to report student achievement in language learning against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards from Level 4 onwards.
WA	Implied mandate	Years 3–10	Students expected to reach Level 3 by Year 9.

Source: Based on Liddicoat et al., 2007, p. 17.

Most, but not all, jurisdictions focus attention on an early start to language learning, believing it to be most beneficial. While younger learners are not necessarily faster acquirers of language than older learners (Birdsong, 2004), they tend to acquire more native-like accents, have a lower psychological closure to the kinds of activities that language learning requires and the early start provides more time in aggregate than a later start. Given the importance of primary language study, and the need for articulation of provision across all sectors of education, the rather modest requirements evident in Table 4, often result in limited participation at the primary level and high rates of attrition beyond Year 8. The diversity of mandates for languages is likely to be more streamlined in the near future as a result of moves towards the creation of a national curriculum. From late 2009 the staged preparation of subject areas for inclusion in a national curriculum will focus on languages other than English. The national focus which will result from these developments promises to overcome fragmentation evident in the patterns of provision across jurisdictions and should also lead to a more comparable set of data collection with standard definitions.

Teachers and lecturers

While each sector of education, schooling (primary and secondary) and tertiary (TAFEs and universities) has its distinctive features, there are also common challenges.

The preparation and availability of teachers is one common challenge, arguably the one with the greatest traction to effect long-term improvements. While the federal government is far removed from delivery of languages programs and universities are autonomous institutions, patterns of funding and working relationships are such that it is by concentrating on university teacher preparation that the federal government could make its greatest impact on school language education. If teachers are competent speakers of both formal and informal registers of the target languages, and if they have a well-grounded knowledge of language pedagogies and programs, and ideally if they have been prepared to work with subject specialists (geography, history, science teachers) the kinds of programs that they can support in schools are greatly expanded. Such teachers would be able to teach the language as the object of their instruction but also to integrate content from other subjects and make classroom language use come closer to what applied linguistic research has long advocated as a critically important aspect of language acquisition. They would be able to implement CLIL immersion programs, one of the most successful language education models.

In this way the quality and quantity of teacher supply continue to strongly influence the possible outcomes for languages education in Australia. Teacher supply is arguably the most significant challenge facing languages education in Australia and the departure point for investigation of current provision and uptake.

Teacher supply

Research and documentation of teacher supply needs to meet the goals of language education policy has been continuous and extensive. Invariably these reports find shortfalls, deficiencies and inadequacies. Despite having different remits, and different areas of focus, the singular finding of these many investigations is of a yawning and never-breached gap between the announced aims of language policy and the paucity of planning effort to make available appropriately trained teachers in sufficient numbers.

One major report produced in 1996 by the Australian Language and Literacy Council and entitled *Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy* (ALLC, 1996) estimated that a 500 per cent increase in language teachers would be needed to fulfil the aims of then current language policies in primary and secondary schools. A decade later, the 2006 teacher supply survey produced by the Australian Secondary Schools Association (ASPA, 2008), reported that languages face the most significant challenge of all subject areas in maintaining teacher supply and therefore the delivery of language programs within schools. This period coincided with the implementation of the NALSAS program and its expansion of the four prioritised Asian foreign languages.

Under such constraints schools scramble to cobble together the best programs limited resources allow and teachers scramble to implement the best teaching limited guidance and support will sustain. But despite valiant efforts, not all succeed even in offering limited programs and, as Figure 1 shows, more than 100 schools discontinued their languages program between 2003 and 2006, specifically due to a lack of qualified staff.

This loss is not evenly distributed, falling disproportionately in rural and remote areas where between 2005 and 2006, 12 per cent of surveyed schools were unable to continue language programs, while only 4 per cent of their urban counterparts did so.

The most recent review of teacher education for languages is by Kleinhenz, Wilkinson, Gearon, Fernandez and Ingvarson (2007). This study documents the complex picture of teacher education provision across Australia, stressing the contextual variation in provision and demand of language teachers. It finds both shortages and oversupply in geographic areas and across jurisdictions and sectors, which confirms the decades long shortage.

According to Kleinhenz et al., the principal explanation for the persisting shortfall in teacher numbers, despite all surface variation, is that disincentives to become a language teacher greatly outweigh the incentives. While personal motivations, some structural incentives and specific purpose funding do encourage many to enrol in teacher education programs, the positive effects of these attractors and motivators are outweighed by systemic disincentives related to poor career prospects and perceptions about the marginal status of languages.

Figure 1: Loss of subjects due to a lack of qualified teachers, 2003–06
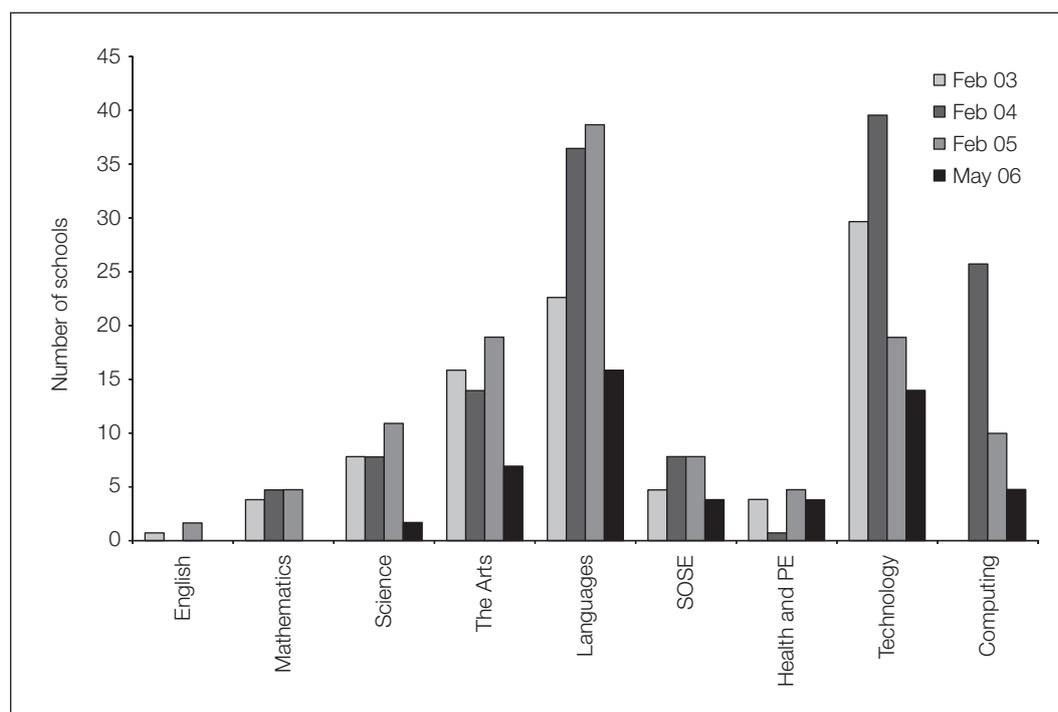
Source: ASPA, 2008.

The authors cite a range of specific reasons and disincentives, but these are expressed in aggregate as: 'the perceived low status of teaching in general and languages teaching in particular', directing those with language skills to look towards higher status professions such as law and diplomacy (Kleinhenz et al., 2007, p. 3).

Like many previous examinations of the problem of teacher preparation for languages, Kleinhenz et al. also identify correctible shortcomings within teacher education courses at Australian universities. One of these is that language and methodology subjects are rarely offered concurrently, with the consequent risk that language proficiency skills gained by students are either weakened by the time they take their methods training, or are not directly applied in teaching methodology classes. This can sometimes produce a dissipation of initial enthusiasm. The absence of methodologies adapted to the specific needs of individual languages greatly exacerbates this.

Considerable improvements to teacher education and supply would result from greater cohesion and reinforcement of languages at university where relations between Arts Faculties, where language teaching mostly resides, and Education Faculties, where language teachers are trained, are crucial. Across both faculties, and within them, casualisation of lecturers compounds existing serious disjunctures between teaching practice and research, and between language skills and teaching methodology.

Language study in primary schools: Problems and prospects

Teacher supply in primary schools

The general problems of teacher preparation and supply represent a specific complication with regard to primary schools. Primary languages teaching is typically more fragmented than its secondary counterpart, exhibiting a high rate of part-time teacher employment. Many teachers have limited contact time, large classes and teach across more than one school. For example, only 40 per cent of language teachers are employed full-time in just the one school in the

Victorian Government system (DEECD, 2007). Only about half of the language teachers are in a routine stable teaching situation. It is not surprising that primary languages teachers experience considerable problems of professional de-motivation, isolation (Carr, 2002) and difficulties in integrating language study fully into curricula (Sharpe, 2001). A powerful testimony to this is reported by a primary principal:

> *Our LOTE teacher works in 4 schools over 4 days seeing around 150 students in each school – that is quite a workload. She combines language learning with cultural study; however, the LOTE program exists in a vacuum, with little supporting teaching as part of the normal classroom program …*

<div align="right">(cited in ACSSO & APA, 2007, p. 442)</div>

Unique to primary languages education is the choice between the specialist/classroom generalist division of the curriculum. During the multicultural era of languages education in the 1970s, there was much innovation in this area, including special programs recruiting immigrant bilinguals into generalist teacher training so they could register as classroom teachers and offer the curriculum in two languages. Scotland has also relied on generalist primary teachers, supported by visiting secondary language teachers and supplementary training. The advantages seem clear: classroom teachers use appropriate pedagogy and their developed relationship with students to integrate language teaching within existing class and school arrangements. About 90 per cent of Scottish students in Years 5 and 6 were taught languages under such arrangements during 2005/6, though in a far smaller number of languages than is typically found in Australia (Sharpe, 2001; Department of Education and Skills, UK, 2007).

Australian primary qualified languages teachers are drawn from many backgrounds. In 2007, 43 per cent of language teachers in Victorian government schools (DEECD, 2007) were fully qualified primary teachers; others were secondary teachers, bilingual generalist teachers or visiting teachers. Little information of the kind to match with student data exists about teacher qualifications (see Table 5).

Table 5: Primary school enrolments, Australia by language, 2006

	Pre-Year 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total	Total II
Italian	22,521	25,618	26,852	32,652	30,843	34,942	35,446	208,874	218,301
Japanese	12,867	14,772	15,819	21,920	24,612	35,410	45,890	171,290	176,245
Indonesian	9,942	11,877	14,712	19,537	18,036	24,622	26,273	124,999	131,700
French	5,277	5,900	6,397	9,356	10,030	13,744	17,455	68,159	69,918
German	4,248	4,878	5,352	6,434	7,640	11,346	16,261	56,159	57,604
Chinese (Mandarin)	4,767	4,968	4,873	5,850	6,819	9,130	11,572	47,979	48,405
Arabic	2,732	2,743	2,408	2,572	2,470	2,396	2,049	17,370	19,445
Greek	1,927	1,972	1,843	2,066	1,945	2,042	1,999	13,794	13,794
Spanish	1,607	1,597	1,741	1,822	1,647	2,076	2,159	12,649	12,649
Vietnamese	1,428	1,480	1,280	1,292	1,303	1,198	1,156	9,137	9,137
Other	3,760	3,706	4,178	4,418	3,850	4,212	4,286	28,410	29,102
Total	71,076	79,511	85,455	107,919	109,195	141,118	164,546	758,820	786,300

Note: Data drawn from 22 of 24 education jurisdictions (excluding NSW Catholic schools and Tasmanian independent schools) shows the range of primary languages. Some student data were not available by year level but as grouped information (e.g. as a total for each language at the primary level rather than by year level). This data has been included in the Total II column.

<div align="right">Source: RUMACCC, 2007, pp. 6–9.</div>

According to Liddicoat et al. (2007) one of the most significant and enduring achievements of the 1987 National Policy on Language has been the widespread introduction of primary language programs. Table 5 reveals something of the distribution and character of this achievement. Across Australia in 2006, 48 per cent of students (786,300 enrolments) were studying a language between the Preparatory Year/Year 1 to Year 6, with the greater numbers at the upper primary level. Over time, there has been a shift of emphasis towards Asian foreign languages, overwhelmingly Japanese. Indonesian enrolments have fluctuated, with initial improvements resulting from funding support, followed by erosion due to termination of funding and loss of public image during the early 2000s. While Chinese has recently become the most in-demand language it suffers from the highest attrition rates (Orton, 2008). Enrolments in community languages such as Arabic, Greek and Vietnamese remain stable.

By contrast, Figure 2 shows the gentle curve of expanded offerings, suggesting strongly that two theories of primary language teaching dominate: belief in the value of an 'early start' persuades only about a third of schools to teach languages, while an apparent school of thought based on 'establish English literacy first' increases the effort to well over half of schools by the final years of primary schooling.

Figure 2: Percentage of students studying languages by primary year level, Australia, 2006
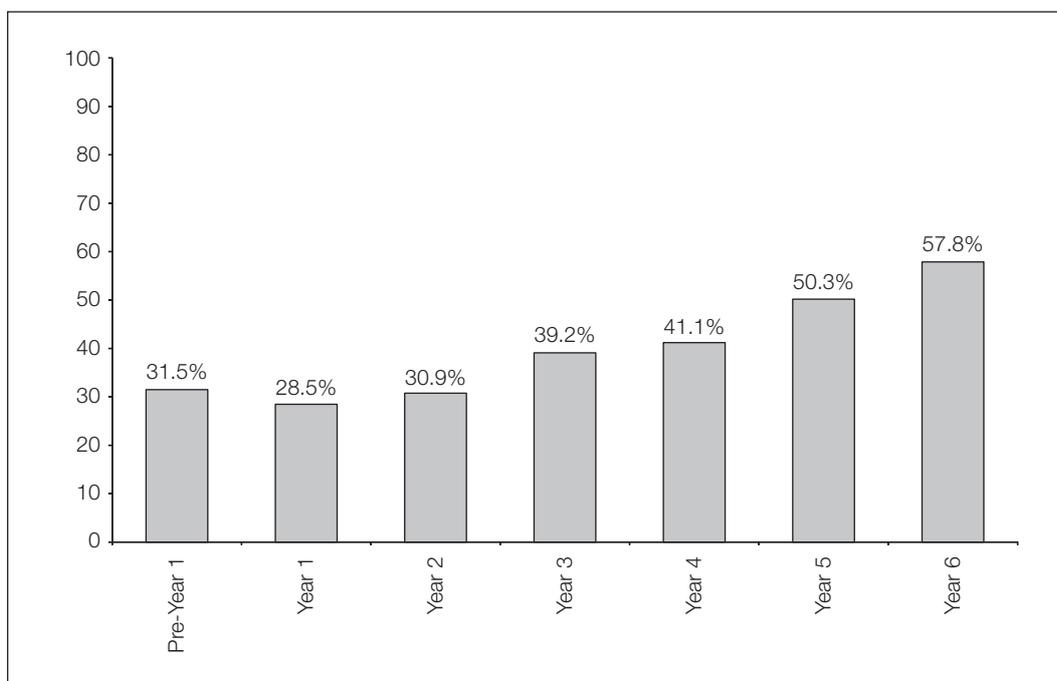
Note: Data from 22 of the 24 education providers across states and territories (excluding Catholic schools in NSW and independent schools in Tasmania).

Source: RUMACCC, 2007, p. 3.

Sociology of language enrolments

The broad sociology of these figures is that some languages attract enrolments and are offered principally in areas where this will be the case to a defined and pre-existing community of speakers; while other languages, which have historically been understood as 'community languages', have been modified over time into attracting wider enrolments. During the mid-1990s the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia (later Language Australia) conducted a series of 15 in-depth profile studies, initially of the nine Key Languages of the National Policy on Languages, and later of an additional six emergent languages.

These profile studies tracked the specific patterns of study/teaching and community presence of the individual languages and showed radically different sociologies attached to them. Nothing comparable has been done since and so the scanty data presently available can only

be interpreted in terms of concepts generated by the NLLIA Profiles Series. Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish appear to 'behave' in patterns very similar to those identified in the profile sociologies, with radically different images and presences.

For example, Chinese and Spanish entered public education to service community demand but are now rapidly breaking away to be taught more as foreign languages. Such has long been true of Italian, which in primary schools operates as a kind of apprenticeship language, able to draw on teachers and community resources, but its numbers decline precipitously in secondary education. Chinese shares some of this pattern but the proportion of its 'native speakers' have necessitated specialist examination streams (Orton, 2008) and in New South Wales this is also true of Korean and Japanese. The benefit of language specific information is that it alerts us to the fact that although we commonly speak of 'languages education' ultimately languages are individual subjects, with particular profiles, histories, resources, purposes, images and other specificities which distinguish them from each other.

Since the work of the Asian Studies Council in 1986, promotion of Asian language teaching has emphasised commercial opportunities and employment prospects for learners, but few people agree that Indonesian has benefited from these legitimations. Specific issues of restricted travel to Indonesia for schools and previously mentioned problems of public perception have affected Indonesian since the early 2000s, arguably far and away Australia's most critical strategic language. This holds back its growth in Australian education, despite the fact that its use of the Roman alphabetic orthography makes it a better candidate for widespread primary level teaching than other major Asian languages.

While specific commentary on primary languages education have been often addressed (Clyne, 1986; Lo Bianco, 1987; Clyne, Fernandez, Chen, & Summo-O'Connell, 1997; Nicholas, Moore, Clyne, & Pauwels, 1993; Liddicoat et al., 2007; DE&T, 2002), what is needed most critically is a widely shared vision of the overall purpose for the teaching of languages to primary aged children. Such a vision would need to be explicated to the relationship between primary languages and the specified purposes of niche language teaching at secondary, post-schooling and vocational levels.

The structural questions of program content, teacher supply, the nature of the primary curriculum and transition and articulation with post-primary schooling are important, but ultimately can only be resolved with more effort from policy makers, teachers, parents and researchers on the fundamental purposes of primary languages: what it is reasonable to expect them to produce, the quality of the experience that is offered to children and the support that schools and teachers are entitled to receive.

Primary programs

What is taught in primary programs, that is the content and the overall design of primary programs, are intimately connected as they are to the preparation and skills of the teachers. At present a primary school languages program can be one of many things, ranging from the full immersion of students being taught a language explicitly, which is wholly unknown to them, to full maintenance and development of literate mastery of a first language, well known to the learner.

There are also Indigenous language programs whose main aims relate to extra-linguistic social and cultural aims and use language revitalisation, renewal and language reclamation to achieve wider social and cultural change.

In between these kinds of focused program models we also have language awareness programs which themselves range from very superficial introductions to knowledge about language all the way to well-conceived programs of intercultural knowledge derived from language specific information. There are also several well conceived and serious bilingual and immersion programs in a range of Asian and European languages, some run by community organisations, or bi-national arrangements in which foreign governments have a crucial, and in the case of Telopea Park School in Barton in the ACT, a determining role in curriculum design, pedagogical approach and assessment regimes.

Clearly with such variation in program design there is variation in the amount of time learners encounter the language, its use as an instructional medium (language as medium) compared to focusing on the language as the aim of teaching (language as object). While Victoria recommends 150 minutes per week as the minimum requirement for language programs study, only 3 per cent of primary programs achieve this, predominantly in bilingual schools. In fact, the time spent on programs ranges from 10 minutes to 11 hours per week and averages 63 minutes (DEECD, 2007).

Most primary programs in Australia cluster around 35 to 60 minutes per week (Liddicoat et al., 2007) with the effect that seven years of primary schooling would yield only 200 hours of tuition. Levels of competency are rather limited as a result of the dispersal of time as much as the low number of hours devoted to teaching in the language.

Materials

Most curriculum and support materials for primary language programs are not language specific and they assume minimum amounts of learner time on task, when in reality teaching is often interrupted or spasmodic. Increasingly, such as in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards promulgated in 2006, language proficiency outcomes are accompanied by desired levels of intercultural knowledge and language awareness, and increasingly are modified to acknowledge that non-Roman alphabetic languages require special approaches since students may not be able to use the written channel of communication to gain language input. This has led to a further differentiation in some programs which results in delayed introduction until the upper primary years when children's English literacy is established.

The crowded curriculum?

During 2007 the Australia Primary Principals Association released a Charter (APPA, 2007) to defend primary school curricula against what they saw as continual demands and unrealistic expectations. The term generally used to express this is 'the crowded curriculum' and significantly the Charter evicts languages to the periphery of primary curricula. Allied with the principals' position has been a mostly separate question related to achievement standards in English literacy, the so-called 'literacy crisis' of the mid-1990s (Freebody, 1998). The high priority accorded to public reporting of literacy results in the new National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessments directly influences how non-assessed components of the curriculum are perceived.

A dispassionate view of the evidence would conclude that of all the learning demands made on schools the one which should be under least pressure of ejection to the sidelines because of pressure on curriculum time is languages. Not only do languages have an in-built mechanism to overcome crowdedness (integrating content into the language teaching), literacy teaching is an essential component of second language teaching.

Rather than depleting the time spent on literacy acquisition, learning a second language reinforces literacy acquisition and objectifies English literacy by providing a contrast with other literacies. Integrating subject content with second language teaching is a well established, empirically researched methodology with potentially substantial benefits for learners' English literacy development. As indicated in Section 3, many studies demonstrate that language learning can enhance several components of effective reading, such as meta-linguistic awareness, reading readiness and general cognitive developments.

In her recent review of this literature Fernandez (2008, p. 8) observes:

> *… far from detracting from the development of literacy, learning a second language actually enhances and enriches children's language experience, and offers them unique insights and opportunities for the development of cognitive skills which are unavailable to the monolingual learner.*

The design of the curriculum, and specifically whether languages are an integral component of the 'core', is crucial to how this question is perceived in different societies. A 2007 study among OECD member states found that 92 per cent of instruction time for 9–11-year-olds is devoted to 'core curriculum' including second languages. By contrast, only 41 per cent of instruction time for 9 to 11-year-olds in Australia is devoted to a core curriculum which includes second language learning; the remaining 59 per cent is devoted to 'compulsory flexible curriculum' (OECD, 2007). Despite numerous rhetorical affirmations to the contrary, languages have not really been admitted into the core enterprise of schooling and become subject to the claims of crowding out the core.

Transition and articulation

On radio talk-back, in letters to the editor and in parent–teacher meetings one of the signs of policy stress for languages planning in Australia is the claim that children who study language X in primary school are unable to continue that language at secondary school. Even when students do have the chance to persist with the language commenced during their primary years, it is a common experience that secondary teaching all too often 'starts all over again'. This problem of transition compounds the problem of articulation, and while far from universal, they are common enough problems to bring a great deal of languages education planning in Australia into disrepute.

While not unique to languages, the failure of systems to provide for continued study and continuous opportunities for study damages children's motivation, parent's interest and the general community's tolerance. In individual cases change in language studied can be beneficial, but for the most part lack of continuity and lack of continuation preclude students from achieving advanced linguistic competency and send all the wrong messages about the value of language learning. Transition and articulation are also problems in other parts of the world, and their resolution is a stable entry in all language reviews. Problems of transition and articulation can only be resolved by systemic effort which senior administrators and curriculum designers must embrace, and reflects the absence of the 'joined-up' thinking referred to in Section 1 (Cunningham, 1986, 1994; Kleinsasser, 2001; Sharpe, 2001; Steigler-Peters, Moran, Piccioli, & Chesterton, 2003; Tolbert, 2003).

Additionally we lack research tracking the performance of students with primary language experience into secondary school language learning when transition and continuity do occur. One small study by Hill, Davies, Oldfield and Watson (1997) set out to question 'the early start' 'approach' and examined outcomes at the end of Year 7. They compared students who had studied French at primary school and were placed in an advanced stream in Year 7 with those who had no prior experience of language learning who were placed in a beginners stream. At the end of Year 7, the researchers noted a significant difference in ability between the two groups on measures of writing, listening and pronunciation, but no difference in reading and speaking. When the groups were later combined at the end of Year 8 the skill differences dissipated. While not widely generalisable, these findings do confirm what commonsense would suggest: that primary learning contributed as we would expect, providing added skills, which secondary schooling should reward, but in this case did not.

Language study in secondary schools: Student enrolments

Traditionally the domain of languages education, the secondary school, really operates as two distinct sub-domains: the compulsory years and the post-compulsory years. Up to Year 10 a radically different picture of languages prevails from the post-choice, or optionalised context of the 'examination years'. Most Australian students experience language study in Year 7, according to the RUMACCC report (2007, p. 4) 79.3 per cent of Year 7 students in 2006. However, the aggregated total of second language students for the full secondary cycle reduces to 35

per cent in 2006, a total of 758,703 enrolments. The rapid attrition after Year 10 is a critical nexus between one vision of languages as a mass, compulsory and broadly conceived benefit for learners, and an alternative vision of languages as a vocational or higher study activity especially among the famously language-shy male adolescents (Carr & Pauwels, 2006).

If the primary cycle demonstrated in Figure 2 is an upward climb, the secondary is a long slide from a high base. As Figure 3 shows, the 79.3 per cent of students at Year 7 becomes 10.3 per cent by Year 12.

Figure 3: Percentage of student population studying languages by secondary year level, Australia, 2006
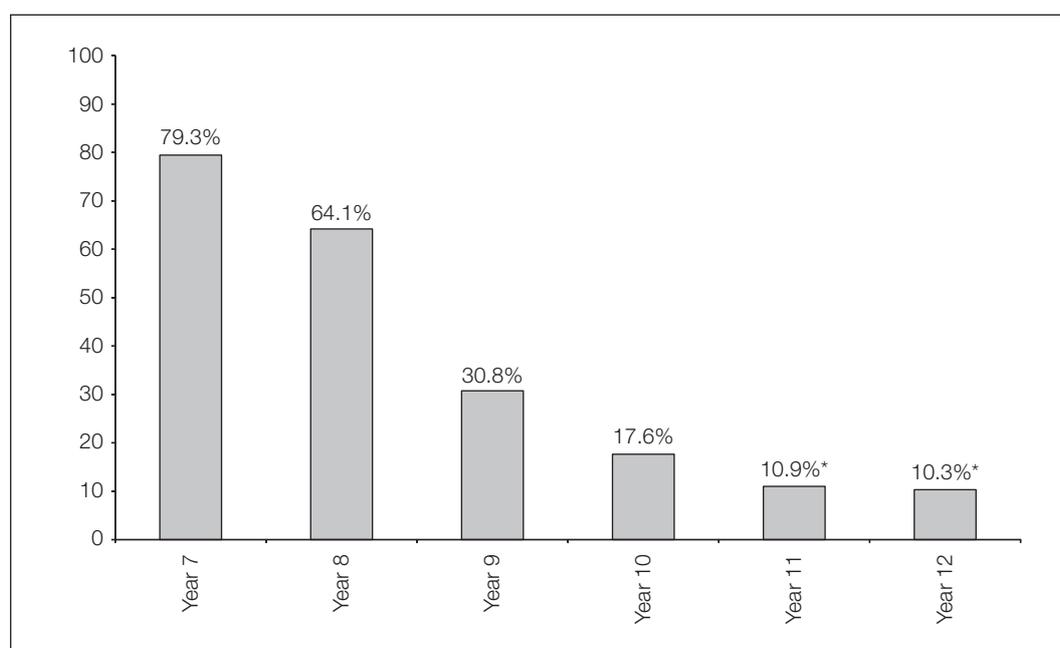
* Once we take into consideration students who complete a language course before Year 12, who study a language through the International Baccalaureate or students who complete non-Board-approved language courses, the percentage of students who study a language at the senior secondary level is around 14.5 per cent.

Source: RUMACCC, 2007, p. 4.

The data in Figure 3, especially the Year 12 enrolment percentages, are the classic debating points in the journalistic reporting of the languages scene in Australia. Two points are typically made. The first is that this small percentage of the total Year 12 cohort is dramatically lower than the 44 per cent of matriculants who were enrolled in languages in 1968. The second asks what proportion of this 10.3% (or 14.5% if we take the multiple pathways into consideration) per cent national figure (or its state equivalent) is made up of Asian languages in general or a specific Asian language. A third, less commonly heard interpretation, is more compelling. Why is it that 89.7 per cent (or 85.5%) of students decide that languages are not for them? This question bears asking partly because the almost exclusive reason given for languages promotion by government is related to labour market and economic issues in general, a view apparently doubted by almost 90% per cent of young Australians (and the schools they attend, and/or their parents). This already disturbing discussion leaves aside two questions which should be at least signalled here. The first is that of attrition in other subjects, such as the comparative attrition rates between languages and selected other subjects. The second question to note is why, despite attracting incentive bonus marks on university entrance scores, languages still suffer from apparently huge reduction of interest at what is sometimes called 'the business end of schooling'.

The total of 39.2 per cent of students (RUMACCC, 2007, p. 1) averaged over the entire secondary cycle is disturbingly low; however, the decline to 10.3 % in mainstream schooling at the pressured point where students' focus is on gaining suitable scores for tertiary access or other career/study destinations, indicates that perceptions impact directly on persistence. A key

perception, according to the review by Liddicoat et al. (2007) is that many students perceive their realistic prospects in their language Year 12 examinations will impact negatively on their overall scores, a perception not attenuated by various incentive schemes such as bonus points for language study. Recent investigation of the specific case of Chinese focuses attention directly on this perception (Orton, 2008). And there is the added complication of the impact of numbers of overseas-educated international fee-paying students. A further complication arises from some schools refusing to continue languages through to Year 12, itself an artefact of the same broad perception. Disrupted pathways or complicated pathways become a hurdle too great (Slaughter, 2008) at a time of considerable pressure and anxiety for many students.

The broad sweep of decline revealed in Figure 3 is elaborated in Table 6 which supplies information collected from 22 of the 24 education jurisdictions, the exceptions being NSW Catholic school and Tasmanian independent schools.

Table 6: Secondary school enrolments by language, Australia, 2006

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total	Total II
Japanese	63,272	47,997	19,177	11,430	5,627	4,667	152,170	156,698
French	45,085	42,475	19,469	11,543	6,353	4,607	129,532	137,317
Italian	35,449	29,522	17,176	8,172	3,895	2,740	96,954	103,722
Indonesian	32,301	24,444	11,264	5,281	2,189	1,618	77,097	78,239
German	25,292	21,788	10,291	5,574	2,750	2,147	67,842	69,316
Chinese (Mandarin)	12,456	8,120	4,146	2,790	2,649	2,689	32,850	32,953
Spanish	3,004	2,113	611	325	714	612	7,379	7,869
Latin	1,717	1,172	853	649	349	296	5,036	6,004
Arabic	1,332	1,273	886	839	480	211	5,021	5,097
Greek	1,425	1,323	899	611	319	213	4,790	4,790
Other	3,771	2,780	1,994	1,314	833	820	11,512	156,698
Total	225,104	183,007	86,766	48,528	26,158	20,620	590,183	758,703

Note: Some data supplied by jurisdictions was according to non-year groupings and appears discretely, in the Total II column.

Source: RUMACCC, 2007, pp. 6–9.

Table 6 demonstrates that individual languages show considerable variation in vitality. French has only 60 fewer Year 12 candidates than Japanese, despite starting with 18,187 fewer Year 7 enrolments. This 'holding power' of some languages is an interesting and potentially important question that could be more closely researched, since its occurrence appears to vary across systems and schools. But all languages are enrolment shedders, the difference is merely in the degree and rapidity of the attrition they suffer. Anecdotal evidence, professional proximity and local data help elucidate other trends here, which can be generalised as follows. Language study is higher in urban areas than in rural areas and the rate of attrition is higher in rural areas. The critical juncture for attrition, in all cases, for all languages and in all areas, is at the compulsory/post-compulsory threshold. There are more female than male candidates at all levels: among Year 12 students Australia-wide in 2005, 63 per cent were female and 37 per cent were male (Liddicoat et al., 2007). In Victoria the disparity was even sharper: 69 per cent female to 31 per cent male (DE&T, 2006). It is likely that there is a relationship between persistence and perception, individual languages, types of learning, personal and familial aspirations.

Regional differences accentuate these other patterns, so that 43 per cent of Year 12 students study an Asian language in New South Wales, while the figure for the Australian Capital Territory

is a clear majority of 62 per cent of the Year 12 languages cohort. In 2003, the figure was 83 per cent of the Year 12 languages cohort in the Northern Territory, with a strong presence of Indonesian (Slaughter, 2009). Fewer than 6 per cent of Queensland Year 12 students complete a language subject, by far the lowest proportion nationally.

Background learners

Perhaps the most contested and debated issue in post-compulsory language education, with its highly competitive and high-stakes features is the question of what to do about 'background'. Some learners study languages with which they have some familiarity, varying from full, literate and educated competence to rudimentary non-literate listening comprehension, while other learners are complete novices. This issue has two broad moral-political dimensions in addition to its administrative, pedagogical and policy aspects. A hostile position regarding such learners is to imagine that they are seeking and are not entitled to receive advantage over other learners. The opposite view is that such students are taking all their other subjects in and through English, for which disadvantage they are rarely compensated, and that education should encourage and reward excellence, rather than punish knowledge. In the United States of America such learners are called 'heritage' speakers of 'heritage languages', while in Australia it is more common to speak of them as 'background' speakers, sometimes of community languages and other times of 'foreign' languages.

Table 7 sets out the approach taken in the different states and territories, using different labels to describe the sociolinguistic reality of background or heritage learners. These labels are critical in determining eligibility criteria for different courses and examinations for languages. Only some languages are streamed, and the streaming itself varies in extent and 'rigidity'.

Table 7: Eligibility criteria for background/first speaker examinations

State/ Territory	Differences in examination levels
ACT and Qld	There is no separate curriculum and examination system for background speakers.
NSW	Separate courses and examinations exist for non-background and background speakers for Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Indonesian and Korean. Students who have had more than one year of education where the LOTE was the medium of instruction OR students who speak or write the language 'in a sustained manner with a person or persons who have a background in using the language' (Board of Studies, NSW, 2005, p. 85) must take the background speaker courses.
NT, SA and Tas.	Separate courses and examinations exist for non-background and background speakers for Chinese (Mandarin), Korean, Russian and Vietnamese in NT and SA and for Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian and Japanese in Tasmania. In these states, students who have had more than one year of education where the LOTE was the medium of instruction must take the background speakers course.
Vic.	Separate courses and examinations exist for non-background and background speakers for Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Japanese and Korean. Students who have had more than seven years of education where the LOTE was the medium of instruction must take the first language program for Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Japanese and Korean. Students of Chinese (Mandarin) only, with more than one year but less than seven years of education where the LOTE was the medium of instruction OR students with more than three years residency in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau must take the Chinese as a Second Language Advanced Examination.
WA	Separate courses and examinations exist for non-background and background speakers for Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese and Indonesian. Students whose experiences rate higher than 20 points on the WA Background candidate identification form must generally take the background speakers course. The form allots points based on a learner's linguistic, residential and educational experiences both in Australia and overseas during their first 10 years.

Source: Slaughter, 2008, p. 199.

The New South Wales Board of Studies is leading a national project to develop 'heritage' syllabuses in four Asian languages specifically for Australian-born background speakers. This new development is interesting and potentially significant in the longer term. Curiously, and despite a long history of focus on this issue in Australia, current views of background/new learner roles in language study embrace the distinction between community and foreign language as reflected by the United States of America 'heritage languages movement' (Peyton et al., 2001; Brinton et al., 2008). In Victoria, only speakers of Chinese (Mandarin) from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau are streamed into a background speakers examination (Liu & Lo Bianco, 2007; Elder & Slaughter, 2008; Orton, 2008). The heritage project extends this approach to Japanese, Korean and Indonesian in an effort to cater for the learning needs of a growing cohort of Australian-born students who are unable to access background speakers courses.

These moves reflect the extremely diverse language origins and competencies of the learner cohorts in Australian languages, and the complex task of providing fair, appropriate and comparable assessment to learners whose range of proficiencies and backgrounds is made increasingly diverse with schools' recruitment of fee-paying international students. However, it is important to recognise that all learners have legitimate interests and rights, with distinctive needs and potential, rather than being seen as problems interfering with the efficient operations of the administration of examinations. Essentially three groups, each differentiated and complex in cultural and linguistic terms, are involved: English-speaking Australian learners who are beginning students of the languages concerned; Australian-raised immigrant background learners with variable levels of proficiency in the target language; and international students with formal study experience and home proficiency in the target language. Syllabuses need to provide for and accommodate challenge and new learning to proficient background speakers, without discouraging complete beginners. Accomplishing this challenging task of educational fairness to all concerned requires research and experimentation on a greater scale than has been attempted to date. It is critical to avoid both the unwitting penalisation of the background knowledge of some learners and penalisation of no-knowledge or the raw beginner status of others.

Slaughter (2008) rightly stresses creative and learner-appropriate forms of assessment to extend and challenge all students, while fairly assessing learning. The increasingly international nature of education ensures that student cohorts enrolled in language study will continue to diversify. The imminent creation of a national curriculum for Australia offers an opportunity for the development of syllabuses and examination regimes appropriate to this new context. A key challenge for language education in Australia in the future is to respond creatively to the increasingly diverse linguistic and socio-cultural competencies of learners. Among the promising developments are the forging of relationships between complementary providers. This promises to generate opportunities for authentic and culturally appropriate forms of communication in schools, to foster mentoring, peer-support and age-specific links between peers who are new learners with students with advanced skills. Similarly, links with tertiary institutions offer the promise of incorporating tertiary accredited courses at the senior secondary level, to address the needs of students with developed, pre-existing knowledge of the target language.

It will be critically important for systems of education to devise learning plans for groups of learners and even for individuals, which act as a record of learning, allowing them to build components of study and have these recorded for recognition in other settings and sectors. At present there is considerable public interest and support for the study of Chinese (Mandarin) and yet, as Orton (2008) shows, this language suffers from the highest attrition rate of all. A wholesale reconceptualisation of what constitutes a program of study of languages, and the role of schools and assessment/accreditation authorities in this, is required to ensure that both traditional languages and languages such as Chinese whose learner cohort includes the greatest range and diversity of levels of proficiency, can gain appropriate encouragement and support.

Complementary providers

An area of considerable success and innovation in Australian languages education policy has been the provision of systematic support for languages outside the formal provision of schools and integration of the learning students undertake in these systems with mainstream education. This was a key objective of the 1987 National Policy on Languages, enacting little known but highly innovative developments of the mid-1980s. Over the past few decades there have been many innovations linking complementary providers with regular schools. Minimally there is the shared use of space, usually in the form of complementary providers leasing the premises of the day school for its after hours or weekend programs. However, there are many examples of more substantial collaboration in which the teachers in both systems share information about the progress and needs of individual students, collaborate in syllabus and materials development, engage in shared activities, including professional development, and in which the day school might acknowledge the study that their students do of a language through a complementary provider within the regular school report. More systematic collaboration has also been attempted, such as through some initiatives under the 1987 National Policy on Languages linking grass roots community activity with the academic programs of schools on a shared annual planning basis for children's overall learning.

Government-run specialist schools

Four government-run specialist language schools offer out-of-school hours, face-to-face and distance mode teaching to thousands of students through the Saturday School of Community Languages in New South Wales (SSCL), the Darwin Language Centre in the Northern Territory, the School of Languages in South Australia and the Victorian School of Languages (VSL). The VSL which dates from 1936 is by far the largest of these institutions, offering 46 languages to nearly 15,000 students between Years 1 and 12 in 27 metropolitan and 12 regional and rural locations. Fifty-two languages are taught through these schools.

Table 8: Languages available through government-run language schools, 2008

Darwin Language Centre, NT: 8 languages, enrolments not available

Languages available: Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish

Saturday School of Community Languages (SCL), NSW: 26 languages, total of more than 4500 students

Languages available: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Dutch, Filipino/Tagalog, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Maltese, Persian (Farsi and Dari), Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese

School of Languages, SA: 24 languages, total of 528 enrolments

Languages available: *Adnyamathanha*, *Arabana*, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Dinka, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, *Kaurna*, Khmer, Korean, Persian (Farsi and Dari), *Pitjantjatjara*, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, Swahili and Vietnamese

Victorian School of Languages (SL), VIC: 46 languages, total of 14,432 enrolments

Languages available: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Auslan, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Dinka, Dutch, Filipino/Tagalog, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Khmer, Korean, Latin, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Maltese, Persian (Dari and Farsi), Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhala, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Syriac, Tamil, Tigrinya, Turkish and Vietnamese

Note: Languages in italics are Indigenous.

The data on student enrolments in specific languages supplied by each language centre (see Table 8) indicate impressive participation and provision. The year levels at which they apply, as well as the modes (on-site and distance) are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Enrolments by year level, complementary providers
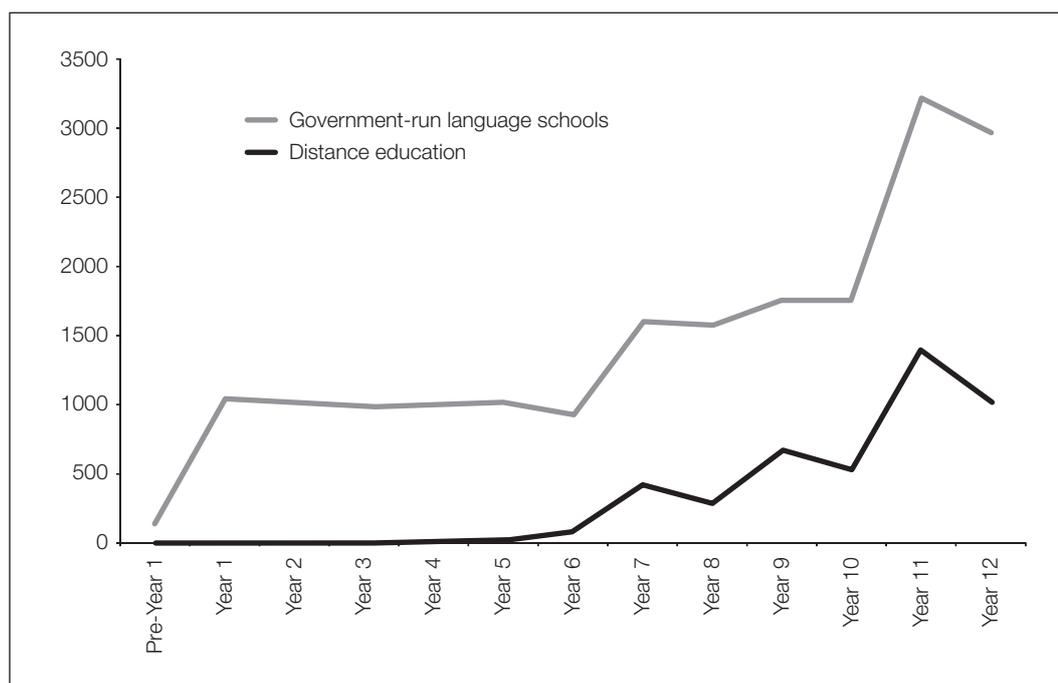
Source: RUMACCC, 2007 (distance education figures, 2006, excluding Tasmania and WA; other figures 2007).

Ethnic schools

Much older than the government-run language schools are 'ethnic schools' or part-time schools of language and culture. Some of these were the object of the hostility of governments in the early part of the 20th century which forcibly closed many schools teaching languages such as German, and so their history in Australian education is extensive and also important in social as well as language education terms. Community Languages Australia (CLA, 2009) the supra-sectoral organisation charged with the co-ordination, representation and support for the sector of community schools of language and culture, traces the operation of its schools back to 1857, in the form of non-profit, part-time institutions. CLA, benefiting from small public subsidies and other support, offered classes in 72 languages in its Australia-wide community language schools in 2006, with student enrolments of 109,526.

Table 9: Languages studied at community language schools, 2006

Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Assyrian, Auslan, Bangla and Bengali, Bari, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Danish, Dari, Dinka and Madi, Fijian, Filipino, Finnish, French, German, Greek (Modern), Gujerati, Harari, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer and Cambodian, *Kija*, Korean, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malay, Maltese, Mandaean, Maori, Mon, Nepalese, Nuer, Oromo, Persian and Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhala and Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Tatar, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Turkish, Uighur, Ukrainian and Vietnamese

Note: Languages in italics are Indigenous.

Source: Unpublished data supplied by Community Languages Australia, 2008

The variety in modes of operating across these schools is immense, according to factors associated with the size of the community concerned, its time of arrival in Australia and its level of integration, the scale of its resources including access to community specialists in language teaching and relations with the 'home country' and its cultural agencies. They offer programs that vary accordingly, with some being closely tied to intra-community characteristics (religious observance, national allegiances or otherwise, connections with local mainstream education, etc.). Some are large and register through formal state processes to provide accredited tuition, while others are much smaller and informal. Inevitably the variation in quality of teaching is great.

One of the tasks of Community Languages Australia has been to bring about a 'quality assurance framework' (Community Languages Australia & EREBUS Consulting Partners, 2008), to support pedagogical improvements across this highly disparate sector. In co-operation with several universities, various community school associations have participated in teacher training sessions; in 2006, 59 per cent of teachers across the sector held Australian or overseas qualifications. The table below lists the top ten languages in this sector.

Table 10: Student enrolments in the top ten languages in state and territory community language schools, 2006

	ACT	NSW	Qld	SA	Tas.	Vic.
1	Chinese 378	Chinese 8,868	Chinese 2,464	Vietnamese 2,021	Greek 99	Chinese 11,274
2	Greek 200	Arabic 5,583	Vietnamese 1,223	Greek 1,543	Chinese 50	Vietnamese 7,339
3	Arabic 140	Vietnamese 4,196	Greek 478	Chinese 1,052	Polish 33	Greek 6,523
4	Vietnamese 103	Greek 2,590	Korean 160	French 601	Korean 26	Arabic 2,773
5	Tamil 101	Korean 1,727	Spanish 69	Arabic 582	Italian 23	Italian 797
6	Sinhala 90	Italian 766	Filipino 78	Dari 293	Farsi 19	Somali 700
7	Polish 65	Tamil 757	German 66	Italian 271	Croatian 13	Sinhala 613
8	Spanish 65	Japanese 568	Polish 66	Russian 257	Filipino 9	Russian 489
9	Tongan 62	Turkish 556	French 50	Cantonese 164	–	Turkish 459
10	Korean 59	Hindi 318	Bosnian 53	Polish 155	–	Hebrew 433
Other	382	4,060	1,385	1,587	0	3,245
Total	1,645	29,989	6,071	8,526	272	34,645

Note: This table does not include any data from NT and WA.

Source: Community Languages Australia, unpublished data, 2008; Education Queensland, unpublished data, 2008.

Distance education provision

While not strictly a 'complementary provider', distance education shares its key features of increasing the number of languages and the sites available for learning, diversifying the modes of teaching and learning. It therefore plays an integral part in the overall language education effort. All states and territories, with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory, offer languages via distance mode to students whose school does not offer a language or a language sequence a student wishes to study. Time is allocated within a student's school timetable to pursue language study in the distance mode, with varying and occasionally only token fees charged.

Tertiary sector

The repercussions of language education at the post-schooling sector of universities and TAFEs on schooling requires some comment. Since 1968 when the secure and longstanding arrangement of matriculation requirements for access to certain university programs was discontinued, the shape of tertiary languages education has changed dramatically. A majority of

language students are now are enrolled in *ab initio* programs (Nettelbeck, Byron, Clyne, Hajek, Lo Bianco & McLaren, 2007). Aligned with this change in the student cohort and their language learning experience is the decreasing number of languages on offer to them. This decline has been steep: from 66 in 1997 to 31 in 2007. In total 31 languages were taught in Australian universities in 2007, a major deterioration in numbers and range. Some languages, Chinese, French, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin and Spanish are taught in universities in all states; 12 are taught in only one jurisdiction.

A second study by the Australian Academy of the Humanities on tertiary languages (Nettelbeck, Byron, Clyne, Hajek, Levy, Lo Bianco, McLaren & Wigglesworth, 2007) showed that enrolments have stagnated, so that fewer than 10 per cent of enrolled university students study languages. However, this figure conceals high attrition, such that less than a quarter of beginning students complete three full years of study, and a third discontinue after the first year. Extrapolating from these figures it seems that fewer than 5 per cent of students exit university with at least a minor study in a language other than English. The picture is complicated by the significant increases in Arabic, French, German, Korean, Russian and Spanish; and by the decrease in Chinese (Mandarin), Indonesian, Italian and Japanese between 2005 and 2007. Overall enrolments in European languages grew by 12 per cent (80 per cent of these were in Spanish) while Asian language numbers declined by 9 per cent.

In complementary research on modes of collaboration and delivery sharing across institutions, Lo Bianco and Gvozdenko (2006) identified a number of recurring issues at the management and administrative levels, and in the teaching of languages, that can inhibit the success of language programs. Some of these are the lack of a central policy for languages study at university and governmental level, inadequate staff development and teacher training preparation, casualisation of employment (see White & Baldauf, 2006, pp. 16–17), reduction in staff hours, increases in staff to student ratios, heavy student workloads and too much emphasis on the teaching of translation and grammar.

Many universities have introduced innovative approaches to course structure; online learning software and video-linked classes are now common (see Lo Bianco & Gvozdenko, 2006) alongside collaborative cross-institutional delivery and hosting schemes. However, some of these schemes are failing under budget pressures, with single-institution financial imperatives overriding the collaborative rationale (Hajek, Slaughter, & Stevens, 2008; White & Baldauf, 2006).

Concluding comments

This section has extended the contextual ideas set out in Section 1, the policy history described in Section 2 and the specifics of teaching and learning and justifications for language study set out in Section 3. It has provided a detailed picture of the state of play of languages and the overall pattern of provision and related information, regarding language education planning and implementation in Australia today. The next section puts forward some general proposals for future development and action to strengthen languages in Australian education.

5

Ways forward

In this final section of the review paper several ways forward are proposed. The suggestions build upon and acknowledge the research and arguments put in preceding sections in which were described and analysed the social and educational context, the policy history and specifics of teaching and learning, the justifications, debates and problems that characterise language education planning in Australia today.

What do students say?

In intensive research on the views and experiences of learners of languages between 2005 and 2007 in primary and secondary western metropolitan schools in Melbourne (Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2008), involving 'typical' schools, students and teachers, some salutary lessons have been gained. Students participated in focus groups, interviews and Q-sorting (an empirical research approach to exploring in close detail the subjective views of a population). These second language students were found to be interested and committed to their language learning and keenly aware of what constitutes an academically serious program. Student commitment to the languages they were taught, Italian and Japanese, varied according to their perceived sense of progress and their (invariably highly developed) opinion about the level of school seriousness regarding the subject.

A major theme in the research was to focus on students wavering in their intentions with languages, comparing these students with those more committed to continue, across the junior secondary years and at Year 10. Many committed students complained that they were distracted from learning because of the waverers, and insisted that classes should be streamed, removing the uninterested and the disruptive 'out of here'. These students deserve a response, and some modification of programs to cater to different groups of learners, their differing motivations and backgrounds is warranted. However, their radical streaming alternative would probably return language teaching to the elite and highly selective pattern of the 1960s, an undesirable outcome. Many waverers could recognise value in learning languages but complained that the teaching was not geared to their level of need or interest.

Both the committed and the wavering students had a clear sense of the hierarchy among school subjects, and were critical of what appeared to be scant, or superficial commitment to languages from 'the system'. Commenting on the findings, one teacher participant in a school professional development exercise agreed with the students, remarking 'yeah … a lot of what goes on is policy pretence'.

These school-based findings influence what is proposed below, essentially a strategy of quality improvement.

What stakeholders and policy makers say

The above findings, coming from students, constitute a strong demand for more 'seriousness in policy and implementation in second language provision'. Their call is reiterated by a growing chorus of top-down voices too. On 10 June 2009, a report calling on the federal government to make an investment of $11.3 billion (GU, 2009) in Asian languages provoked considerable media debate about Australia's language policy effort and priorities. This financial commitment is far in excess of any previous funding allocation to languages and results from calculations made by the Asia Institute of Griffith University in Queensland of the funding required to make half the Australian population fluent in an Asian language over the next 30 years (*The Australian*, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Taylor, 2009; Tomazin, 2009).

Like the British Academy cited in Section 1, the Australian Learned Academies (i.e. the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences and the Council of the Humanities and Social Sciences), as well as universities, have also been demanding change. In a discussion paper *Languages in Crisis: A Rescue Plan for Australia* (Go8, 2007a) issued by the Group of Eight, the top research universities strongly criticised the perilous state of university languages education, focusing particularly on declining enrolments and reductions in the total number of taught of languages, and calling for an urgent comprehensive national policy for languages to redress these problems. A summit meeting of major stakeholders and interest groups held at the National Press Club in Canberra issued a communiqué (Go8, 2007b) jointly on behalf of the Group of Eight and the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Endorsing the 'rescue plan', the summit was decisive in raising the alarm nationally and reflects a growing consensus that the slide in language education has become intolerable.

The Group of Eight has encouraged a series of incentives to promote languages and reward students who study them. The Go8 LOTE Incentive Scheme (Go8, 2007c) aims to establish direct incentives, an increased and universal bonus for tertiary entrance for students who graduate from Year 12 with a language. Extending such schemes from those few individual universities and education jurisdictions that currently offer incentives towards an increased and comprehensive system of incentives by 2012 is the key goal.

Continuing this focus on languages, with special attention to the tertiary level, was a colloquium entitled *Beyond the Crisis: Revitalising Languages in Australian Universities*, held between 16 and 18 February 2009, and organised by the Australian Academy of the Humanities. The main outcome of the colloquium was the establishment of a national network of tertiary language educators to represent the interests of languages in national research, teaching and funding discussions. The collective effect of these developments is encouraging and adds both new voices and a tone of urgency to calls for a better funded national language policy.

The top-down pressure for change from key stakeholders and the perceptive awareness of students that not all is well in the national language enterprise, are promising developments provoking extensive media discussion and encouraging reactions from government with the prospect of improved policy development in the near future.

Planning a changed approach to second language provision

Many of the present calls for action as discussed in Section 2 and elsewhere, continue the past patterns of linking languages policy closely to economic and political events. While it is inevitable that governments and employers, and many students and their families, will stress the need for language study to offer practical benefits, past experience shows that drawing too close a link of this kind raises the risk that initiatives will be associated with particular governments and

ministers, key figures and key problems of particular times. Such linkages are risky because governments often claim too much for their initiatives and few Ministers show enthusiasm to continue what their predecessors start. It is also risky, as shown in Section 1, because of the strong dominance of English in commercial endeavours the world over.

What is required is a comprehensive rationale for languages, and in particular efforts to develop a humanistic and intellectual legitimation for all education, which would inevitably contain a permanent and central role for languages. Care needs to be taken to devise new understandings of why languages are important for all learners that make cultural, intellectual and generally humanistic reasons central, with the practical application of language proficiency an accrued benefit. This kind of reasoning should be distinguished from more elitist notions of language study that prevailed in the past which were restricted only to the more talented or more privileged.

What is proposed in this final section of the review paper is only the broad outline of a strategy of reinvigorating languages education. Its central aim is to replace competitive debate about which groups of languages should be favoured and to replace arguments about economic and political need with an educational rationale for major improvements in quality teaching and learning. A critical component of the strategy, perhaps the most important, is teacher education, so that the ordinary preparation of teachers produces specialists able to design and implement high-quality programs.

A key message of the review paper has been that language policy should be informed by more realistic aims, and that a priority focus should be teacher preparation. Only with a continuing supply of high-quality teachers, and articulated delivery at school and district levels, will it be possible to secure continuation for many students in formal language study in their selected languages.

The bulk of the proposals made below aim at improving the quality of offerings, encouraging student persistence and building a culture of expecting high levels of achievement.

Four components of a broad strategy

A policy plan to redress the problems besetting second language education is not being put forward; rather the necessary lines of development are proposed, informed by the reflections in the review paper. Conceived in broadest terms, a national strategy for the cultivation of bilingual skill should actively tie together, in a principled and mutually supportive manner, the already existing private and the public efforts directed towards maintaining and increasing Australia's spread and depth of language skills. Linking the practical use of language in home and community environments (focusing on fluency) to the formal and instructed aspects of language in learning environments (focusing on accuracy) requires a strategic approach to language education planning. The community is a largely untapped reservoir of language skill, and the classroom is an environment of explicit teaching. This review proposes a strategy with four components.

1: Cultivating existing language competencies

The first component of the policy strategy is for public investment to cultivate the *existing language competencies* of the population.

It has been a starting principle of this review that we ought to make active efforts to conceive the bilingualism of the wider population as a kind of donation made to the wider society, and that Australian language planning should treat the extensive community language capabilities of the population as a reservoir of latent bilingualism. Public institutions alone will never be able to generate the numbers, range and experiences in languages that are already inherent in the wider population. This cultivation of existing language potential should therefore be the first principle of coherent and comprehensive language education planning for Australia.

The means for achieving this aim is to forge productive links between community providers of languages and schools. Specifically, formal school education reports and curriculum can recognise and support the language learning students do in community and ethnic schools. Day schools can make use of the clubs, societies, media and part-time schools available within immigrant communities for local immersion experiences.

Other ways of forging closer connections between the private community-based efforts for languages and formal instruction in schools can be developed, but such links are best made at a local level and in response to local needs. Nevertheless, education officials can assist by researching and providing models of effective collaboration, through joint professional development for day and part-time community and ethnic schools, through joint curriculum development planning. Governments should consider providing subsidies to facilitate collaborative curriculum development, shared activities, joint use of physical facilities and research into ways to align and calibrate the learning done on weekends and after-hours with the day school activities.

2: Learning how to learn languages

The second component of the strategy is for a universal apprenticeship in learning how to learn languages, to be located in the pre-school, infants and upper primary school years.

The goal of the 'early start' is to make the most of what young learners are naturally disposed to do with languages, especially their greater openness to new sounds, to experimentation, role-play, and other activities which early language learning requires but which older learners are often less willing to do. This should be treated as an 'apprenticeship' in how to learn languages, how to come to know what languages involve and to gain control of language learning strategies and approaches. By cultivating a rich potential to learn languages among all students, whether they are new beginners or already speakers of other languages, students will be more likely to successfully transfer such skills to different languages, if they choose or are required to switch languages. Instilling language awareness, encouraging practical usage and learning how to learn languages, will likely result in increased student awareness and knowledge of English and its literacy. This is the outcome which research indicates routinely accompanies such learning.

Education officials, particularly in those states where early childhood services are co-located with ministries of education, should explore ways to encourage the inclusion of second language activities in the early childhood area, and to encourage increased numbers of bilingual personnel to undertake training and seek employment as tutors and teachers in the sector. All states should aim to ensure that the pre-school years and the earliest years of schooling provide rich experiences of language encounter so that by the upper years of primary school a sense of bilingual awareness is widespread among all students. A priority of national language policy should be to support innovations in this early stage of education that support emergent bi-literacy, that is the links between initial English literacy and other language literacy and bilingual oral development.

3: Articulated learning and teaching of languages

The third component concerns secondary school in its compulsory and post-compulsory phases, and in tertiary education, and aims to articulate and build on each level, reducing attrition and training more language teachers. This is the component of language policy that gets the headlines, but without these being explicit aims and in the absence of the other policy components, no progress can be expected.

The main strategic goals of language policy through the years of compulsory to post-compulsory schooling should be articulation of offerings (continuation of learning) and reduction of attrition. The upper secondary and university level should, ideally, offer articulated continuation from this early study, linked closely to disciplines, including of language itself. Success in initial language study at primary levels of schooling will serve to strengthen the selection of languages at secondary school years and base teaching on a solid grounding of acquired language knowledge,

knowing how to learn languages. Reducing attrition rates at the threshold between compulsory and post-compulsory schooling, when languages typically become electives, involves responding to motivated learners with challenging courses, and to wavering students with modified programs targeted to their needs.

The critical need for higher schooling is to redress the attrition rates which currently afflict second language enrolments. The relevant strategies will be general ones, responding to the calls made by students for more serious and communication-based language curricula and language specific, targeting the particular needs of individual languages. At the higher education level there should be a nationally co-ordinated approach to reform language teacher education both to increase the numbers of candidates attracted to training as language teachers (existing bilinguals and graduates of language degrees) and to reform language teacher education methods by supporting teachers to deliver content-based programs such as partial immersion. For language students at university the aim should be to establish secure mastery over the discipline of language, reflection on its traditions and uses, and serious critical engagement with a range of genres, both contemporary and historical, from authentic settings.

4: Language training for commercial purposes

The fourth component of the strategy refers to the delivery of language training to meet the short-term needs of the economy.

This involves meeting the specific purpose needs of external relations, trade, diplomacy and recreational pursuits, in response to commissioned requests from parents, government and the private sector. The providers are the flexibly organised and rapid response agencies of the public and private sectors, commercial and recreational schools, whose ability to match delivery to need should be the key factor in their selection. It is here that a match between temporary, urgent and unpredictable needs would be negotiated to ensure that language training, in addition to its essentially educative mission, also meets pragmatic requirements for supporting national trade, security and diplomatic engagements.

This component is separated from the within-education provisions in points 1–3 above because it involves beyond-school vocational education and training, responsive to the commercial needs of business and industry. To achieve these outcomes, a mix of programs needs to be developed, and they can be delivered in a range of locations. For learners with advanced language skills, beginner commercial language university programs could be designed. For more vocationally and career-oriented school students, a mix of programs at upper secondary should also include options directed towards a practical commercial language use, through TAFE and private or commercial language schools. These courses would also be available to other, non-school learners.

Private providers are best able to meet these needs, either on commission from government and employers, or through direct recruitment in the marketplace. As such, this component of the strategy extends the scope of the present review, but it needs to be kept in mind so that schools are not asked to replace or reproduce the specialised provision linked to trade, external diplomatic relations, and so on properly taken forward by post-school providers.

For the leap to quality, some hard decisions

The four components of this broad approach range well beyond formal education, which has been the main focus of the present review. In addressing the needs of second languages, the principle must be to build quality at all levels, especially in the design of programs and the rigour and seriousness of teaching and to maintain a consistent effort rather than to subject language planning to continual chopping and changing of priority.

These principles respond to the main conclusions that can be drawn from Sections 1–4. Quality programs will need to be readily identified and have clear criteria, of the amount of

time devoted to language teaching, continuation of study, teacher qualifications and support materials and opportunities for immersion as well as formal acquisition.

Explicit policy efforts must be made to secure student motivation. It is engendered by the quality of the learning experience, and by rewards for success. The aim should be to make languages a compulsory, unproblematic and celebrated part of the education of all Australian children. Achieving an entitlement to quality language courses is the outcome it is hoped will flow from taking the hard decisions about to be outlined.

Hard decision 1

A critical aim must be to progressively discontinue programs which do not meet minimum criteria, such as those offering less than 1 hour per week, or programs in which teachers are required to teach very large numbers of students in different schools for brief periods of time. Serious language learning is unlikely to be achieved in such circumstances.

As part of the implementation process of phasing out non-substantial courses, it is important for education systems to consistently implement an agreed nomenclature for the full range of program types. One result of this would be an improved public capacity to know how to recognise what constitutes different levels of commitment to language learning.

Hard decision 2

The key focus for any improvement in language learning must be on the teachers. There is currently a shortage and the skill set of many may not be sufficient or suitable for the new types of language courses being proposed. Significant increases in the number of bilingual and immersion programs, and greater effort at coordination across education sectors will require more and more specifically trained teachers. Some research suggests a need for a differential preparation, according to the languages to be taught. If there is to be more substantial and extensive second language teaching in schools, there is a need for significant national investment in the preparation of language teachers.

Hard decision 3

Debates about which categories of languages ought to be favoured should be set aside and a consensus negotiated that Australian education will focus on a core group of seven Asian, European and world languages in Tier 1 and six others in Tier 2.

Tier 1 should be the group which education ministries commit to offering as an 'entitlement of continuation' to learners for the duration of their schooling: Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. For each of these languages there should be a hub high school designated in each region so that students wishing to continue with the study of a chosen language may do so, even if this necessitates experimenting with delivery options. An entitlement of continuation represents an obligation that ministries of education will offer ongoing opportunities for any student to study one or more of these languages for the duration of their cycle of schooling within designated education regions or networks, through regular schools, with on-staff qualified teachers, and for which opportunities for post-school continuation at tertiary institutions in each designated region or network is available. Not all Tier 1 languages can be fully supported immediately, but progressively over the first implementation phase, as indicated below.

Tier 2 languages – Arabic, Greek, Hindi, Korean, Russian and Vietnamese – are to be offered extensive support as well; however, this may be provided via the specialised schools of languages, and in other ways, and no entitlement of continuation would be expected for the engagement of system-wide available teaching staff. However, in order to ensure good quality teaching and the prospects of tertiary articulation, each of these languages should be available in at least one tertiary institution in every state.

Tier 1 languages should be guaranteed to all learners in negotiated entitlements that seek to ensure that in the course of a student's attendance at compulsory schooling, education systems guarantee 150 hours of language instruction (or language immersion) for all students in each year, for a minimum of eight years.

Negotiated complementary implementation policy will need to be adopted in terms of the length of teaching time found necessary to achieve good learning outcomes in both tiers and in a variety of learning locations.

Implementation of this strategy

Prior to embarking on the implementation of these decisions, an examination of the teacher force supply, present qualifications, institutional staffing and potential in teacher education programs in all states and territories, is required. This will build on research undertaken in recent years and should be compiled to form a strategic map of capacity shortfalls, vis-à-vis the proposed changes.

Complementary providers and system-based specialist language schools should make every effort to support language demands beyond those offered by formal education institutions to enrich, extend and supplement the system-wide provision of the two tiers of language as needed in specific geographic areas.

Staging of implementation

A staged implementation of these proposals will require a focus on institutional capacity-building over a three-, five- and seven-year implementation sequence. Time is allowed for planning for Stages 2 and 3 to commence well before their implementation begins. Moving slowly will assist in achieving the goals.

- **Stage 1** should be given three years, and would include a tertiary capacity review, school program design, articulated system planning ensuring staffing deployments to guarantee continuity, and major teacher education recruitments.
- **Stage 2** should be adopted following Stage 1 with full implementation planned over two years and would include full implementation of staffing zone arrangements for teachers to guarantee student language continuation, training of new graduates, bilingual and immersion programs in all Tier 1 languages.
- **Stage 3** should be adopted following Stages 1 and 2, with full implementation planned over a further two years and would include extending the teacher education initiative to Tier 2, institute bilingual immersion programs in Tier 2 languages.

Conclusion

The review paper has discussed second languages in Australia in the context of its links to society and education. It has provided evidence that the current distribution of language competence throughout Australian society is fragile and confined to some groups whose maintenance of languages requires support. It was observed that there is a particular problem for English-speaking societies with regard to languages, and that for this reason Australia must redouble its efforts to upgrade, extend and improve its language education efforts during compulsory schooling.

The history of policy in language education and the specifics of its teaching and learning show that Australia has a variegated, ambitious and in many ways excellent language education effort. However, this is held back by a proliferation of programs of questionable value, and limited duration and effect. Students are conscious of this and it becomes a major obligation of education providers to ensure that substantial improvements are brought about.

The review paper, though having a primary focus on schools and schooling, has proposed an overarching project of national language planning in which the distinction is made between what is appropriate to schools and what niche or specialised providers should offer. It has reserved schooling for language education motivated by educational, cultural and intellectual aims, rather than narrow links to the labour market.

This plan would provide stability in language policy settings and allow progress to be made in establishing a range of high-quality, articulated programs in an initial group of seven languages which at present offer the greatest prospect for learners to achieve some creditable skill or proficiency gains. These should not be the total number of languages supported by the system, so systematic collaboration between providers is needed to ensure that individual needs, and community diversity are recognised and supported, while still ensuring that learners can be guaranteed an entitlement of continuation in key languages of Australian geographic, demographic and historic interest.

This review paper has proposed a broad approach to resolving continuing problems of second language education in Australian schooling. Deep and rapid globalisation over recent years has added some pragmatic or utilitarian justifications for language study, since the lives, careers and opportunities of all young Australians will intersect more closely with individuals and societies that are forged in, and function through, languages other than English. But this is not the main reason for teaching languages.

All students should experience well-designed and supported language programs, taught by well-trained and supported language teachers, in schools that actively support language teaching linked to universities that are fully committed to widespread and successful language study. It is worth reiterating why this ambition is important. The principal reason is to do with the deepest purposes of education itself, to instil knowledge, to deepen understanding, to stimulate reflection and to foster skills. Languages are intimately linked to the essentially humanistic, cultural and intellectual reasons for making education compulsory. Bilingualism can foster more reflective and imaginative dispositions in citizens, and the principles of democratic discourse, participation and opportunity which Australia proclaims also find resonance with language study since the great bulk of humanity lives in societies and continues traditions forged outside of English. Every effort to redress the persisting underperformance in language education is amply justified.

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