

Overeducation and Overskilling in Australia: Second-Generation Greek-Australians and Italian-Australians*

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We utilise HILDA data over the period 2001–2005 to evaluate the performance of second-generation Greek-Australians and Italian-Australians in the labour market. We focus on the effect of overeducation, undereducation, languages-other-than-English (LOTE), and ethnicity on weekly earnings of full-time workers. The evidence is as follows: (a) most Greek-Australians are over-represented amongst the overeducated; (b) overeducation and overskilling can be attributed to a lack of new skills on the job, parental occupational status, non-English-speaking overseas born, and unobserved characteristics of second-generation females; (c) LOTE does not seem to make a contribution to earning of individual workers; and (d) the use of LOTE amongst the two second-generation groups has declined, though second-generation women in part-time employment are an exception.

1. Introduction

Labour market integration of new immigrants in the new country of residence has been a key measure of success of immigration policy in OECD countries (Coppel et al., 2001; House of Representatives, 2006). Recently, the economics literature has paid more attention to the second-generation of immigrants (i.e., persons who have at least one parent born in another country). The question is whether second-generations

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overcome the earnings disadvantage associated with their parents¹ and whether their socio-economic position converges to that of the third-generation of immigrants (i.e., persons with both parents born in the country of settlement).

It has now emerged that the second-generation often achieves higher levels of education than the first-generation in North America (Borjas, 1994). However, USA and Canadian evidence in Aydemir and Sweetman (2007) casts doubt about the prospects of a catch-up with respect to the third-generation. Furthermore, it appears that some groups of second-generation migrants may be more vulnerable to the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. Borjas (2006), for example, is very pessimistic about the position of the second-generation of Latinos in the USA while Hammarstedt and Palme (2006) show that pockets of second-generation immigrants in Sweden have not been able to improve their status. Blackaby et al. (2005) are also pessimistic of the potential of British-born non-white ethnic minorities to escape the disadvantage faced by their parents. OECD (2007) raises similar concerns with respect to second-generation immigrants in Denmark and Germany. In the latter country, women of the second-generation seem particularly disadvantaged.

Amongst OECD countries, Australia rates favourably as a success story, according to OECD (2007).² Second-generation Australians have improved their socio-economic status when compared to their overseas-born parents (Khoo et al., 2002) but it is not clear whether the rewards gained through education match those of older-generation Australians.

Over the last decade, the economics profession has made significant progress in the evaluation of the impact of education in the labour market. Advances in economic theory and empirical measurement have allowed economists to make a direct link between education and wages. This link is then exploited to provide an estimate of the dollar value of one extra year of education.³ Since Duncan and Hoffman (1981), however, economists have paid attention to two important facts. First, different jobs or occupations require different levels of education. Second, there is the phenomenon of job-skill mismatch whereby some people hold fewer qualifications than are required for a particular job while others may have acquired skills and knowledge that are in excess of what is necessary for the job. The former is known as “undereducation” and the latter as “overeducation” or “overqualification”. First-generation migrants tend to

¹ Immigrants from non-English-speaking countries earn less than native-born workers with similar observable characteristics in the USA (Friedberg, 2000) and in Australia (Voon and Miller, 2005).

² OECD (2007) defines the “second-generation” as those with both parents foreign-born. This is a more restrictive concept than the one applied in previous studies (e.g., Le and Miller, 2002) and here where we define the “second-generation” as those persons born in Australia with *at least one* parent born overseas.

³ Note, however, standard estimates of returns to education using labour earnings is likely to underestimate the benefits of education. A more comprehensive assessment of the value of education would also include non-monetary benefits such as mental health and enjoyment (Ehrenberg and Smith, 2006).

be over-represented amongst the overeducated in Australia and Denmark (OECD, 2007; Green et al., 2007; Messinis and Olekalns, 2007; Nielsen, 2007). In terms of earnings, the international evidence overwhelmingly shows that overqualified workers receive markedly lower returns (i.e., wages per year of education) for additional years of education than workers who have attained the same level of education but work in a job that requires that extra education. Conversely, the undereducated are found to earn substantially higher yearly returns than workers with the same but just-the-right qualifications for the job.⁴ Thus, this new literature suggests that more education *per se* does not guarantee a better job or better pay. In fact, a person who has completed secondary education may be better paid than someone with tertiary education if the former is undereducated and the latter is overeducated.

Previous studies have also highlighted the role of language as an important determinant of labour market performance. The main emphasis here has been on “language capital” in the country of destination; i.e., official language proficiency is seen to be useful for employment and the application of general and technical knowledge (OECD, 2007; Borjas, 1994). The importance of language in Borjas (1994) has been confirmed by Berman et al. (2000) and Chriswick and Miller (2007). This result also stands in non-English-speaking countries such as France (Meng and Meurs, 2006) or Israel (Berman et al., 2000). Voon and Miller (2005) also find an earnings gap between native-born Australians and overseas-born immigrants from a non-English-speaking background (NESOB).

However, when proficiency in the national language of the new place of residence is combined with a second language, second-generation immigrants may be able to outperform their native co-workers. This may be due to a foreign language effect that enables people to: (a) exploit trade advantages (Melitz, 2002); (b) access new ideas that are important for business innovation or technological catch-up (Javorcik et al., 2006; Niebuhr, 2006; Mokyr, 1999); (c) access tacit knowledge or “social capital” (Giorgas, 2000); or (d) build complementary skills and human capital (Galasi, 2003; Chriswick and Miller, 2002).

However, a less optimistic view of the role of “ethnic capital” emerges in the literature of “ethnic enclaves”.⁵ Here, research points to employment and poverty traps that await new migrants who rely on “ethnic employment” due to low language skills or a “taste for isolation” or even “oppositional identities” (Shippler, 2005; Blackaby et al., 2005; Borjas, 1999). Warman (2007) and Hayfron (2002) argue and show that women suffer most from ethnic enclaves. Australian evidence by Cobb-Clark and Connolly (2001) also indicates that immigrant women may work in jobs with few promotion or training prospects. They attribute this to what they call the “family-investment” model of decision making. According to this model, immigrant wives

⁴ For more details, see Miller (2007), and Messinis and Olekalns (2007).

⁵ See Warman (2007) for a review.

sacrifice their educational development in order to support their husbands' investment in education and skills. An alternative interpretation of the disadvantage facing immigrant women relies on cultural factors or ideology that restricts women to housework and discourages labour market participation and skill development.⁶

This paper utilises the empirical methodology proposed by Hartog (2000) and applied by Voon and Miller (2005) in Australia. This allows us to estimate the dollar value of education for men and women as well as that of second-generation Greek-Australians, Italian-Australians and Indigenous Australians. Further, we examine whether the use of another language other than English (LOTE) impacts on earnings of Australian workers. The paper is organised as follows. Section two outlines the empirical methodology adopted in this study. Section three presents the empirical results. Finally, section four concludes.

2. Methodology

In our methodology, we follow Voon and Miller (2005). They partition actual years of education, S_A , into required years of education, S_R (i.e., the average of years of actual education by occupation), years of overeducation, S_O , being equal to $(S_A - S_R)$ if $S_A > S_R$ and zero otherwise, and years of undereducation, S_U , being equal to $(S_R - S_A)$ if $S_A < S_R$ and zero otherwise. In particular, Voon and Miller (2005) estimate the following model:

$$\ln W_i = \alpha S_{R,i} + \beta S_{U,i} + \gamma S_{O,i} + \sum_{j=1}^n \theta_j E^j + X_i \phi + \eta_i \quad (1)$$

where $\ln W_i$ is the log of average weekly earnings for worker i , $S_{R,i}$, $S_{O,i}$, $S_{U,i}$ stand for required education, overeducation and undereducation respectively, the fourth term is a polynomial of experience, E_j , n is usually set equal to two, X_i is a vector of other explanatory variables, α , β , γ , θ , ϕ are parameters and η_i is a random error term.

Australian and international evidence shows that $\alpha > 0$, $\beta < 0$, $\gamma > 0$, $-\beta < \alpha$ and $\gamma < \alpha$. In other words, a worker with the same level of education as the average worker in the same occupation should receive a positive return per year of education (i.e., $\alpha > 0$). An undereducated worker with one year less education than what is required for the job is likely to receive a higher return than a worker in the same job who has exactly the right level of education. Thus, the undereducated escape from α less income per year of education deficit (i.e., $\beta < 0$ and the absolute value of β is lower than α). Hence, we say that the undereducated receive a wage *premium* when compared to those workers who have the same level of education but they work in a job that requires exactly that level of education (i.e., the wage premium would be equal to the difference between α

⁶ Examples are Folbre and Nelson (2000), Callan and Gallois (1982) and McDonald (2000).

and the absolute value of β). This premium has been attributed to work-related skills of undereducated workers which compensate for the lack of formal education.

In contrast, the worker who has undertaken sixteen years of education and works in a job that typically requires qualifications that can be obtained with fifteen years of education is considered to be overeducated. This worker will receive a return of α for her fifteen years of education and only a return equal to γ for her sixteenth year which is much lower than α . Thus, the more one studies in excess of what is required on the job, the higher the wage penalty. Put differently, the more overeducated one is the lower the return received for extra education. Research, so far, has struggled to explain this phenomenon and has suggested a number of causes: (a) employers are slow to introduce new technology that can match the overqualified persons' superior skills; (b) overeducated workers may lack skills or experience that are important at the workplace; and (c) they may choose to work in jobs that do not demand high skills or effort due to family reasons or lifestyle.⁷

We adopt the Voon and Miller (2005) approach of restricting analysis to full-time workers. We follow Voon and Miller (2005) to consider the natural log of weekly earnings in the main job as the explained variable and to include the following explanatory variables: S_R , S_U , S_O , experience, E , and experience squared, E^2 , and three indicator variables that take the value of one when a certain condition is met and equal zero if otherwise. The first indicator takes the value of one if the person is married or in a de facto relationship, MAR , the second takes the value of one if the person works in the public sector, GOV , and the third takes the value of one if the person was born overseas in a non-English-speaking country, $NESOB$.⁸

In addition to the above, we consider the following extra explanatory variables as part of the X_i vector in (1). These are: (a) a variable that takes the value of one if the person has identified herself as being an Indigenous Australian (we call this person "Indigenous-Australian" $INDIG$); (b) an indicator variable that takes the value of one if the person speaks a language other than English (we call this variable $LOTE$);⁹ (c) a variable that takes the value of one if the person was born in Australia and at least one of her parents was born in Italy (we call this person "second-generation Italian-Australian", $2G_IA$);¹⁰ and (d) an indicator variable that takes the value of one if the person was born in Australia and at least one of her parents was born in Greece or Cyprus (we call this person "second-generation Greek-Australian", $2G_GA$).¹¹

Next, we summarise our data. We employ the new Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey which is a household-based panel conducted

⁷ For more detail, see Messinis and Olekalns (2007) and Cobb-Clark and Connolly (2001).

⁸ Voon and Miller (2005) also consider English-speaking overseas born. In earlier estimations, we included this variable but it proved to be statistically insignificant.

⁹ Note that indicator or "dummy" variables take the value of zero if the condition specified does not apply.

¹⁰ The $2G_IA$ group excludes those with at least one parent born in Greece or Greek-Cyprus.

¹¹ Persons of Turkish-Cypriot descent were excluded by using extra information on religion.

since 2001. We use Release 5.1 that combines waves 1–5 (i.e., first 5 years). HILDA is an exhaustive source of information of around twelve thousand individuals per year. Each year, the survey introduces new persons and households while some previous participants cease to participate due to a variety of “attrition” factors. It is an Australia-wide survey with a large longitudinal component (i.e., it follows the same persons every year). Overall, the vast majority of participants remain in the survey for some time. For example, 70.2% of respondents in wave 1 also took part in wave 5. Although analysis may fail to capture national trends over time, we limit our analysis to the balanced panel (i.e., those individuals that are present in all five waves) in order to focus on the labour market dynamics of fixed individuals with respect to ethnicity and linguistic diversity. HILDA provides rich information that makes it possible to analyse individual performance in the labour market.

3. Results

Table 1 summarises the profile of four groups: (1) second-generation Australians of Greek background, 2G_GA; (2) second-generation Italian-Australians, 2G_IA; (3) persons born in Australia with both parents born in Australia (i.e., third-generation Australians), 3G; and (4) Indigenous people, INDIG. We focus on several labour market indicators. We find that Greek-Australian women have experienced a very high rate of unemployment of 11.6%. Indigenous Australians are over-represented amongst the unemployed and experience relatively low labour market participation rates. HILDA also makes it possible to assess the profile of other members of the same household. Table 1 also presents a summary of spouse’s working hours. It shows that 2G_GA and 2G_IA women have spouses with substantial working loads. On the other hand, Indigenous workers live in households where there is little second income. More interesting, however, is the fact that 35.4% of Greek-Australian women spend more than 20 hours weekly on housework while only 29.8% of the third-generation women do that.¹²

The latter finding may be due to a choice Greek-Australian women make to spend less time in employment and concentrate on household chores and family matters. Alternatively, Greek-Australian women may be under-represented in the labour force as a result of low incentives to employment, lack of job-related skills or housework overload. Table 1 also reveals that Greek-Australian men have the highest rate of participation in paid employment, their spouses have relatively fewer hours in paid employment, and the men contribute very little to household chores, though Italian-Australian males do even less housework. Note also that twice as many third-generation and Indigenous Australian males contribute to housework as do second-generation Greek and Italian males.

¹² All statistics are weighted using the re-scaled “cross-section weights (enumerated person sample weight)”; this is “xHHWTES” in HILDA where x=a, b,...,e and a, b,...,e are waves 1, 2, ...,5 respectively.

Table 1. *Second and older generations of Australians: HILDA, 2001–2005*

	(1) 2G Greek-Australians (2G_GA)		(2) 2G Italian-Australians (2G_IA)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Unemployment (%)	11.6	3.9	3.0	3.5
Work Participation (%)	58.8	89.4	71.7	80.7
Part-time Work (%)	22.3	5.4	36.8	5.4
Working Hours: Own	31.6	43.0	28.0	45.8
Working Hours: Spouse	18.1	5.8	21.2	11.4
20+hrs Housework (%)	35.4	1.6	25.8	0.8
Weekly Wage (\$)	725	802	547	964
No. of Observations	159	155	370	477
	(3) Older Generations (3G)		(4) Indigenous Australians (INDIG)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Unemployment (%)	3.9	3.9	5.9	5.8
Work Participation (%)	59.8	74.3	27.9	30.5
Part-time Work (%)	23.6	9.1	9.6	3.6
Working Hours: Own	31.1	43.0	32.3	41.7
Working Hours: Spouse	15.6	10.3	6.3	4.3
20+hrs Housework (%)	29.8	3.9	29.2	4.2
Weekly Wage (\$)	582	940	666	992
No. of Observations	14481	12664	5896	6241

Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding. Required education is the *weighted* mean of actual education by occupational class using the HILDA cross-section weights. All estimates are weighted averages of the whole period. Only currently employed persons are included in the wages and working-hours estimates. Hours and wage rates are weekly rates.

Source: HILDA Waves 1–5, Melbourne Institute, Unit Record File

Table 2 concentrates more on education and social characteristics by labour market status. Here, Greek-Australian women have higher levels of educational attainment than Italian-Australians or third-generation Australians, consistent with the evidence in Khoo et al. (2002).¹³ However, this becomes problematic when combined with the high incidence of overeducation amongst Greek-Australians. In particular, 35.9% of employed women in this group are overeducated while only 13% of 3G females and 15.8% of Italian-Australian women are overeducated. More surprising, Greek-Australian women who are not in employment are also overeducated. Moreover, Greek-Australian employed males with standard levels of actual education are over-represented in the overeducated; 20.4% are mismatched. None of these three findings

¹³ “Greek-Australians” or “Italian-Australians” refer hereafter to second-generation immigrants.

apply to second-generation Italian-Australians. Employed Greek-Australian female workers, on the other hand, are under-represented amongst the undereducated.

In the literature of overeducation, there is some debate as to whether the above are accurate measures of overeducation and job-skill mismatch. An alternative measure proposed by Mavromaras et al. (2007) emphasises the gap between skills acquired by the worker and skills required on the job. HILDA provides data on the degree of use of acquired skills at work that the above study has used to study the incidence of overskilling. They derive the HILDA measure of overskilling from self-recorded responses scored on a seven point scale to the statement “I use many of my skills and abilities in my current job”. A response of 1 translates into “strongly disagree” and 7 to “strongly agree”. We follow their approach to focus on those workers who select 1, 2 or 3, whom they classify as “severely overskilled”. The above authors argue that this variable represents a more direct measure of mismatch. However, like the measure of “overeducation”, their measure of mismatch is also imperfect since it relies on subjective self-assessment of “skills and abilities” and assumes that that assessment is comparable across occupations and individuals.

In this study, we adopt a hybrid approach and define “overskilling” as an indicator variable that takes the value of one if workers are “severely overskilled”, as defined by Mavromaras *et al* (2007) or they are “severely overeducated” (i.e., one and a half standard deviations above the mean level of educational attainment within their occupational group). The estimated incidences of our measure of overskilling are summarised in Table 2, row 4. According to this hybrid measure, 17.8% of third-generation females and 16.5% of third-generation males are over-skilled. Second-generation Greek-Australians in employment are again over-represented amongst the overskilled. However, now even employed second-generation Italian-Australian women and Indigenous workers are severely overskilled.

Table 2. Education, LOTE and generations of Australians: HILDA, 2001–2005

	(1) 2G Greek-Australians (2G_GA)				(2) 2G Italian-Australians (2G_IA)			
	Employed		Not employed		Employed		Not employed	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Education (years)	15.1	13.0	11.9	11.1	12.7	12.8	11.5	10.5
Undereducated (%)	0.9	12.5	19.4	0.0	17.8	17.6	21.2	35.6
Overeducated (%)	35.9	20.4	27.3	0.0	15.8	9.8	15.5	5.8
Overskilled (%)	29.9	25.9	18.4	0.0	22.0	14.0	11.3	0.0
LOTE Incidence (%)	53.6	59.9	46.1	61.7	25.2	27.5	31.1	25.1
Change in LOTE (%)	19.5	-9.0	-19.5	-13.4	-1.7	-3.4	-12.0	-3.8
Smoking Rate (%)	9.9	16.2	21.5	67.3	9.1	20.4	7.4	24.2
Social Participation (%)	31.6	30.9	21.2	15.7	29.5	32.7	37.7	25.4
No. of Observations	83	133	76	22	257	371	113	106

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	(3) Older Generations (3G)				(4) Indigenous Australians (INDIG)			
	Employed		Not employed		Employed		Not employed	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Education (years)	12.8	12.9	10.8	11.1	13.5	13.5	11.6	11.9
Undereducated (%)	21.1	13.4	31.8	31.4	13.8	12.4	10.5	6.5
Overeducated (%)	13.0	13.1	11.9	13.0	19.5	22.6	5.3	5.1
Overskilled (%)	17.8	16.5	7.1	7.7	23.6	20.2	3.5	2.8
LOTE Incidence (%)	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.6	2.6	5.1	1.5	0.7
Change in LOTE (%)	-0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	-0.4	1.5	0.3	-0.1
Smoking Rate (%)	17.0	19.6	14.0	17.7	13.1	17.2	5.3	4.3
Social Participation (%)	39.4	45.5	43.2	49.0	31.9	33.1	31.3	34.0
No. of Observations	8325	9046	6156	3618	1547	1794	4350	4447

Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding. Required education is the *weighted* mean of actual education by occupational class using the HILDA cross-section weights. All estimates are weighted averages of the whole period. Undereducation and overeducation are defined as those whose actual years of education are lower and greater than the required level by one standard deviation respectively. The overskilled consist of workers who have either a level of education that exceeds the required by 1.5 standard deviations or have reported one of the three strongest levels of disagreement to the HILDA question: “My job often requires me to learn new skills”.

Source: HILDA Waves 1–5, Melbourne Institute, Unit Record File.

Table 2 includes a summary on the incidence of LOTE. About half of the sample of persons of Greek background report using LOTE at home, particularly Greek-Australian men. The corresponding figure for 2G Italian-Australians is about half of that observed amongst 2G Greek-Australians. When, however, we look at changes in LOTE use from 2001 to 2005, we find that the proportion of employed Greek-Australians using LOTE declined by 9%, 19.5% and 13.4% for employed men, women not in employment and men not in employment respectively. Employed women stand out with an improvement of almost 19.5% increase. Although much lower, there are also substantial rates of language loss observed amongst Italian-Australians.

We proceed with two selective indicators of health status and social life. First is the rate of tobacco consumption. This indicator suggests that Greek-Australians who are not in employment are the heaviest users of tobacco. In this group, the fact that 61.7% of men are smokers is quite alarming. We also consider an indicator of “social participation”, defined as the share of persons who are active members of “sporting/hobby/community based association”. The results show that Greek-Australians and Italian-Australians report similar levels of “social isolation” and the two groups of immigrants contrast sharply with the third-generation of Australians with respect to “social participation”. Both groups exhibit much lower rates of active involvement in social clubs or community organisations. Indigenous people exhibit similar rates of social isolation.

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Table 3 sharpens the focus on working individuals classified by gender and employment status. The results here clarify those in Table 2 in several ways. First, the high incidence of overeducation amongst 2G Greek-Australians is now more closely associated with women in full-time employment and part-time workers, especially males. Second, the problem of overskilling generally relates to part-time workers but it is still prevalent amongst full-time Greek-Australian and Italian-Australian women. Third, Table 3 makes it unambiguous that the decline in LOTE is especially more serious amongst full-time Greek-Australians while a surge in LOTE is observed amongst part-time Greek-Australian females; a similar pattern is discernible amongst part-time Italian-Australians. Fourth, full-time Greek-Australians are still the ones with a heavy working load both at home and at work while it is Greek-Australian males in part-time employment that share the least in household chores.

The above results suggest that Greek-Australian women are affected most by the wage penalty associated with overeducation. However, Italian-Australian females in full-time employment also have experienced a wage penalty. The empirical results on overeducation and overskilling are important and contrast with the view that education is always advantageous as far as labour earnings are concerned. Perhaps, parental aspirations for high education achievements may have been a motivating factor behind this strong emphasis on formal education by the second-generation of Greek-Australians (Holeva, 2004).

Table 3. *Second and older generation working Australians: HILDA, 2001–2005*

	(1) 2G Greek-Australians (2G_GA)				(2) 2G Italian-Australians (2G_IA)			
	Full-time		Part-time		Full-time		Part-time	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Hourly Wage (\$)	25.2	20.9	15.9	19.4	20.4	25.0	19.7	24.5
Education (years)	13.5	12.6	14.0	15.0	12.4	12.3	12.2	12.0
Undereducated (%)	12.0	11.3	2.2	0.0	17.6	20.8	20.9	36.7
Overeducated (%)	32.9	14.7	28.0	66.0	17.7	8.8	12.2	4.0
Overskilled (%)	23.4	18.6	28.0	87.9	19.3	10.8	17.7	12.5
LOTE Incidence (%)	47.3	62.4	59.4	21.9	30.9	27.1	20.2	25.4
Change in LOTE (%)	-10.3	-10.1	39.3	0.0	-12.2	-3.1	7.9	-10.3
Working Hours: Own	41.5	44.7	18.3	17.5	39.9	48.1	17.4	16.0
Working Hours: Spouse	10.4	6.1	37.0	0.0	19.3	11.3	23.5	13.5
20+hrs Housework (%)	33.5	1.7	42.2	0.0	25.6	0.9	26.1	0.0
No. of Observations	123	146	35	8	234	451	136	26
	(3) Older Generations (3G)				(4) Indigenous Australians (INDIG)			
	Full-time		Part-time		Full-time		Part-time	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Hourly Wage (\$)	19.4	25.7	23.2	27.5	21.3	27.0	22.9	24.8

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Education (years)	11.9	12.4	12.3	12.0	12.0	12.3	12.9	13.4
Undereducated (%)	26.2	18.8	23.9	15.5	11.0	8.0	14.3	12.4
Overeducated (%)	13.0	13.2	10.8	11.5	8.1	9.5	17.3	27.3
Overskilled (%)	10.1	12.7	23.5	26.3	6.7	7.2	28.3	25.1
LOTE Incidence (%)	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.9	1.7	1.9	2.4	4.7
Change in LOTE (%)	-0.04	0.25	-0.04	0.06	0.10	0.32	-0.19	0.18
Working Hours: Own	41.6	47.2	15.9	14.6	41.1	45.4	17.0	15.5
Working Hours: Spouse	12.0	10.8	25.6	5.6	4.5	4.2	22.3	6.5
20+hrs Housework (%)	29.3	4.0	31.3	2.8	29.4	4.2	28.2	3.9
No. of Observations	11065	11511	3416	1153	5330	6019	567	222

Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding. Required education is the *weighted* mean of actual education by occupational class using the HILDA cross-section weights. Estimates are weighted averages of the whole period. The change in LOTE is calculated between the years 2005 and 2001. Undereducation, overeducation and overskilling are defined in the note to Table 2 above.

Source: HILDA Waves 1–5, Melbourne Institute, Unit Record File.

Alternatively, the high incidence of overeducation amongst Greek-Australians may be due to a skills deficit driven by a lack of interest or knowledge of applied sciences and technology often associated with developing countries (Tsoukalas, 1976).

We proceed to estimate the Voon and Miller (2005) model. We take the log of weekly labour earnings to be our explained variable in order to examine the effect of undereducation, overeducation, experience (i.e., years of employment in the current job), gender, first-generation NESOB, second-generation Greek-Australians and Italian-Australians, Indigenous identity and the use of LOTE on labour income for males and females in full-time employment.

We estimate the above model by employing panel data estimation techniques that control for random effects. The estimation results appear in Table 4. We find that those workers that are correctly matched to their jobs (i.e., those with just-the-right level of education, that is the level required for the job — also known as “required education”) earn 9.4% (men) and 10.2% (women) per year of education. Also as in previous studies, we find that one year of undereducation only attracts a 5.7% and 4.1% decline in wages respectively. That is, undereducated men and women earn a premium of 3.7% (=9.4% – 5.7%) and 6.1% (=10.2% – 4.1%) for that extra year of education deficit. In contrast, the overeducated earn only 6.5% (men) and 6.4% (women) for an extra year of education; this is the wage penalty explained earlier.

Work experience adds 2.6% (men) and 2% (women) to earning. Married workers also earn about 11% (men) and 3.2% (women) more than other full-time workers. Also, working in the public sector yields 6.6% more earnings for women. Further, Indigenous men and women in full-time employment earn a premium of 5.6% and 3.7% respectively. This seems surprising and further work is required to examine whether the low rates of labour market participation bias these results due to a selection problem.

Also surprising is the absence of any wage premium for LOTE in full-time employment, although this is consistent with the decline in the LOTE incidence observed in Table 3. This result could be due to the increasing role of the English language as the international *lingua franca* and language of commerce where English-speaking nations assess the learning of foreign languages to be of little benefit if non-English-speaking nations converge to English (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000). It may also be the result of a shift in perceptions of the value of learning a LOTE. This seems consistent with Papademetre and Routoulas (2001) who find that Greek-Australians have been re-assessing the value of Greek language and finding it to be not advantageous. Further, it could also relate to a shift in LOTE preferences by Australians towards Asian languages as the Australian economy is re-aligning itself closer to Asian economies, a view that is in line with the moderate increase of LOTE observed among the third-generation of Australians (Table 2).

Table 4. Returns to Education, LOTE and Second-Generation Migrants:
Full-time Workers, HILDA 2001–2005

	Men	Women
Constant	5.095 (0.056)**	4.852 (0.054)**
Required Education (S_F)	0.094 (0.004)**	0.102 (0.004)**
Undereducation (S_U)	-0.057 (0.005)**	-0.041 (0.005)**
Overeducation (S_O)	0.065 (0.005)**	0.064 (0.005)**
Experience (E)	0.026 (0.002)**	0.020 (0.002)**
EXP squared/100 (E^2)	-0.044 (0.005)**	-0.033 (0.007)**
Married (MAR)	0.111 (0.012)**	0.032 (0.011)**
Public Sector (GOV)	0.003 (0.013)	0.066 (0.012)**
Indigenous (INDIG)	0.056 (0.010)**	0.037 (0.014)**
NES Overseas Born	-0.108 (0.034)**	-0.013 (0.030)
Language other than English (LOTE)	-0.027 (0.029)	-0.012 (0.028)
2G Italian-Aus (2G_IA)	0.053 (0.061)	0.094 (0.057)
2G Greek-Aus (2G_GA)	0.009 (0.079)	-0.066 (0.099)
Observations	12156	6667
R ² Overall	0.23	0.33
Wald (χ^2)	1055 [0.000]	1204 [0.000]

Note: * and ** indicate statistical significance at 10% and 5% levels respectively. Standard-errors in parentheses and p-values (level of significance) in square brackets. The married group includes de facto relationships while LOTE includes Indigenous languages. The natural log of weekly earnings in the main job is the explained variable. Couples in a marriage or in a de facto relationship are both included in the “married” group.

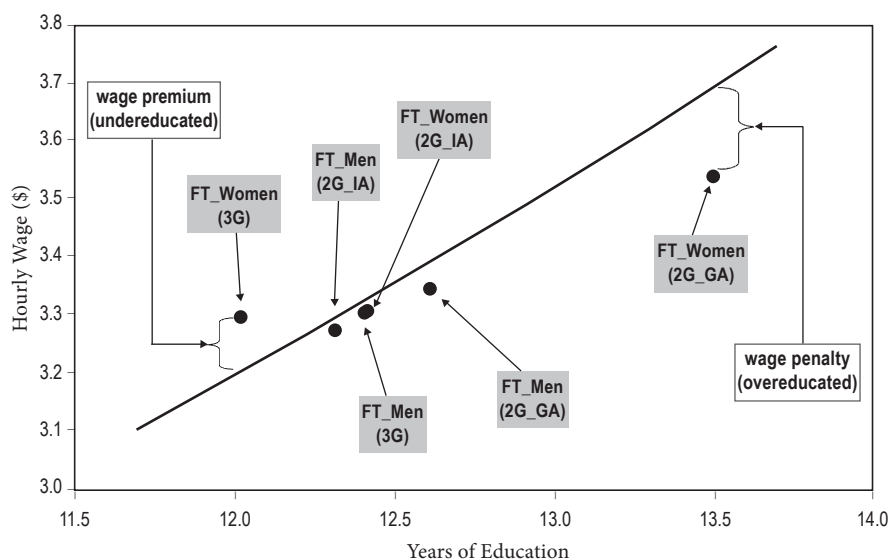
Source: HILDA Waves 1–5, Melbourne Institute, Unit Record File.

We acknowledge that the apparent absence of a LOTE effect in full-time employment does not necessarily imply that workers do not benefit from linguistic diversity. We

note here the possibility of spillover effects. As explained by Breton (1998) and Chorney (1998), the benefits of bilingual education are often conferred on other persons who do not invest in languages. This is consistent with new evidence by Peri (2007).

Following Miller (2007), Figure 1 illustrates the wage effect of undereducation and overeducation for Greek-Australians, Italian-Australians, and the third-generation of Australians, on the basis of the average educational profile of these groups. The chart summarises the hourly wage effect of undereducation and overeducation by using the coefficient estimates in Table 4.

Figure 1: *Under- and Overeducation: 2nd and 3rd generation Immigrants in Australia*



Label Definition:

FT: Full-time workers

2G_GA: 2nd Generation Greek-Australians

2G_IA: 2nd Generation Italian-Australians

3G: 3rd Generation Australians

Clearly, Figure 1 shows that full-time Greek-Australians, men and women, are on the overeducation zone (i.e., below the bold line which indicates the return to “required education”; that is the return for those who are neither undereducated, nor overeducated). As a result, we observe that full-time Greek-Australian workers, and especially women, FT_Women (2G_GA), earn much less than others with the same level of education, even though they have invested much more in formal qualifications. Italian-Australian full-time workers, on the other hand, seem to have avoided the overeducation trap.

Finally, we seek to explore some of the possible determinants of overeducation and overskilling. Again, we apply panel data estimation but now we simply employ a Probit model with random effects. We have undertaken an exhaustive search using many variables and focused on (a) housework hours; (b) child care and the number of children below 14 years old; (c) interactions of marriage and housework or child

care; (d) spouse salary and working hours; and (e) history of unemployment or being outside the labour force in the past. None of these variables appeared to be statistically significant predictors of overeducation or overskilling.

However, we identified six key variables that significantly impact on the probability of being observed to be overeducated or overskilled. These are the following: (1) an indicator variable taking the value of one if the worker reports her job to provide very limited opportunities for new skills (denoted as “NO New Skills in Job”); (2) one’s father’s ANU4 occupational status scale; (3) mother’s ANU4 occupational status scale; (4) non-English-speaking overseas born status, NESOB; (5) 2G Italian-Australian status; and (6) 2G Greek-Australian status.¹⁴ The estimation results appear in Table 5. In the first panel, we examine overeducation. Here, parental occupation is a very important predictor of overeducation: the higher one’s parent is on the ANU4 occupational status scale, the greater the chances that the person will be an overeducated full-time worker. Note that father’s occupational status is much more important for males while both parents’ occupational status is important for females. Further, being a NESOB worker increases the probability of being overeducated. Confirming our suspicion above, second-generation females of Greek background are also more likely to be overeducated.

Table 5. Overeducation and Overskilling: Full-time Workers, HILDA 2001–2005: Panel Probit Estimation

	(1) Overeducation (DSO)		(2) Overskilling (DOS)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Constant	-8.093 (0.232)**	-6.641 (0.288)**	-2.801 (0.137)**	-2.948 (0.192)**
NO New Skills in Job	0.042 (0.125)	-0.036 (0.149)	1.179 (0.069)**	1.215 (0.099)**
Father’s Occupation	0.034 (0.004)**	0.020 (0.004)**	0.007 (0.002)**	0.007 (0.003)**
Mother’s Occupation	0.016 (0.004)**	0.022 (0.005)**	0.006 (0.002)**	0.004 (0.003)
Birthplace: NESOB	1.990 (0.296)**	1.298 (0.408)**	0.463 (0.183)**	0.804 (0.228)**
2G Italian-Aus	0.101 (0.530)	0.464 (0.872)	0.151 (0.312)	1.353 (0.477)**
2G Greek-Aus	1.063 (0.931)	5.960 (1.231)**	0.803 (0.137)*	1.719 (0.719)**
Observations	9086	4963	9086	4963
Rho (ρ)	0.969 (0.002)	0.956 (0.003)	0.743 (0.016)	0.751 (0.021)
LR of $h_0: \rho=0$	3787 [0.000]	1900 [0.000]	1620 [0.000]	789 [0.000]

Note: * and ** indicate statistical significance at 10% and 5% levels respectively. Standard-errors in parentheses and p-values (level of significance) in square brackets. The explained variables in (1) and (2) are indicator variables. In (1), DSO takes the value of one if $S_A > S_R$ by one standard deviation and zero if otherwise. In (2), DOS is equal to one if $S_A > S_R$ by 1.5 standard deviations or if the worker recorded one of the three strongest levels of disagreement to the HILDA question: “My job often requires me to learn new skills”.

Source: HILDA Waves 1–5, Melbourne Institute, Unit Record File.

¹⁴ This is variable “xJOMNS” in HILDA that records responses to the statement “My job often requires

Panel (2) of Table 5 models the probability of being overskilled. Here, the lack of provision for new skills on the job is a significant predictor of that probability. The more a worker assesses her current employer to be a poor provider of new skills, the higher the probability that the worker will be overskilled. The rest of the results again confirm those in panel (1) of Table 5. The only difference is that second-generation Italian-Australian full-time women are also susceptible to overskilling.

4. Conclusion

This paper utilised HILDA longitudinal data to revisit the debate on overeducation, overskilling and labour market performance by two groups of second-generation Australians. Furthermore, it has sought to examine the value of languages other than English (LOTE). The question of immigrant settlement and the role linguistic diversity plays in the labour market are of strategic importance in public policy for Australia and developed OECD economies confronted with major waves of immigration. Previous research has praised the Australian experience as a highly successful experiment and noted that many of the disadvantages faced by first-generation immigrants of diverse linguistic and cultural background have been overcome by the second-generation. The evidence of strong education performance by second-generation immigrants suggests success in Australia's immigration policy. International research, however, cautions on the likely failures of immigration policy.

This paper more closely examines the incidence of overeducation and overskilling amongst second-generation Greek-Australian and Italian-Australian full-time workers. It uses an established framework of analysis that identifies the role and wage effects of mismatch between skills acquired and skills required on the job. It further extends the literature to uncover some of the underlying factors giving rise to overeducation and overskilling.

The empirical evidence here suggests that second-generation full-time Australian workers of Greek-Australian background are overrepresented amongst the overeducated and the overskilled. The econometric evidence has identified women of both Greek and Italian background to be susceptible to overeducation or overskilling. The use of a language other than English, on the other hand, does not yield any monetary benefits to individuals. Finally, the incidence of overeducation and overskilling is highly associated with parental occupation status and the lack of employer provision for new job skills.

me to learn new skills". Responses are scored on a seven point scale ranging from 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree". For consistency with our measure of overskilling, we define "NO New Skills in Job" as equal to one if workers select 1, 2 or 3 and zero if otherwise.

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