

Coordinating Government and Community Support for Community Language Teaching in Australia: Overview with Special Attention to New South Wales

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An overview of formal government language-in-education planning for community languages (CLs) that has been undertaken in Australia and New South Wales is provided, moving from the more informal programmes provided in the 1980s to school-oriented programmes and training at the turn of the century. These programmes depend on community support; for many of the teachers from the communities, methodological training is needed to complement their language and cultural skills. At the same time, Commonwealth (Federal) and State support for CL programmes has improved their quality and provides students with opportunities to study CLs at the senior secondary matriculation level. The paper concludes with specific recommendations for greater recognition of CL schools and for greater attention to CL teacher preparation.

Keywords: language policy, community languages, Australia, bilingual education, LOTEs (Languages Other Than English), New South Wales

Introduction

Community language (CL) programmes supplement the range of language offerings available through the secondary education system. Many CL students in Australia are able to use appropriate CL classes to prepare themselves for high school matriculation (Grade 12). For a number of languages, including languages like Modern Greek and Chinese, the majority of those sitting for these exams do their studies through CL programmes. A national scheme (the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level) allows students to be examined in languages of low demand – from Arabic (414) or Turkish (292) where there are several hundred candidates to Swedish (18) or Sinhala (2) where numbers are small. In 1994, 26 languages and 1798 students were catered for by this programme (Sarre, 1995).

In this paper, a number of the formal governmental structures that have been set up to fund and support CLs (heritage languages in the North American context) in Australia are outlined, and the related language-in-education planning that has been done in Australia and New South Wales (NSW) to foster these programmes is examined. When governments support CLs, there may be a tendency for communities to assume that educational

bodies have taken responsibility for CL maintenance, despite the fact that family and community support is vital for proficiency development and language survival (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). Thus, paradoxically, support can lead to language loss. In NSW, CL programmes rely on community groups to form schools for language maintenance, employing individuals (who may be paid little or nothing for their efforts) from the community to do the teaching. In these circumstances, language teacher development, teachers' understanding of language teaching methodology, and the ability of teachers to plug schools back into the community and family are critical to the development of programmes that can sustain CLs. For some communities at least, government funding and support are critical to the development and survival of their schools. Support structures also set basic standards that CL programmes must meet.

Background to Community Languages

The context for CL programmes that have been developed and funded in Australia goes back to World War II. The Japanese attacks on northern Australia and in the Australian territories of Papua and New Guinea brought home to the Australian government that the country could no longer afford to remain a small agricultural backwater linked to Britain. After the war, a large-scale immigration programme was put in place to provide labour to build up Australia's industrial base and to develop large-scale infrastructure like the Snowy Mountains hydroelectric and irrigation projects. Permanent settlement and assimilation was encouraged under these schemes – although recently workers with certain desired skills have been given temporary work visas – and migrants were taught English through the Adult Migrant Education Program (see Sturgess, 1996) from their arrival in Australia. As Ozolins (1991: 16) points out, it was generally presumed 'that the migrant would soon find his niche in Australia, and adopt English ... even when large numbers of NESB [non-English speaking background] migrants in the 1950's were clearly maintaining their culture and languages'. Over the last five decades, the types of immigrants have changed to include a greater number of immigrants from the Middle East and Asia. In the 1970s, these changes in the nature of the Australian population eventually led the government to the realisation – after pressure from lobby groups – that Australia was multicultural and, in the 1980s and 1990s, to the development of new language policies (Herriman, 1996; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Ozolins, 1993).

As Kaplan and Baldauf (2003: 148–149) have indicated, to understand the policies and practices that developed to meet the immigrants' language needs at the Commonwealth (Federal) and State levels, it is necessary to get some sense of the immigrant communities resident in Australia. Clyne (1997) and Clyne and Kipp (1997), writing about the languages and policy in the immigrant community, have analysed data related to the 1986, 1991 and 1996 census where the question was asked, 'Does the person speak a language other than English [LOTE] at home?' While responses to this question probably underestimate the total number of speakers of LOTES in the

community, as the home may not be the locus of language use for some speakers, the responses are useful in helping to predict intergenerational transmission. The 1996 census identified 240 LOTEs spoken at home, including 48 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) languages; that is, an overall 14.6% of Australian residents used a LOTE at home. In 1991, the comparable percentage was 14.8%, while in 1986 it was 13.6%. Particularly in recent years, immigrants to Australia have settled in urban areas rather than in rural ones – the capital city population in all States except Queensland is larger than the population in the rest of the State. In 1991 in Melbourne 25.4% and in Sydney 26.4% of the people spoke a LOTE at home. While Melbourne has had until recently the highest number of LOTE speakers, newer immigrant groups have settled in Sydney and this is reflected in the higher home use of LOTEs there for 1996.

The diversity of immigrants' home countries has meant that Australia does not have a single large LOTE – as the USA does with Spanish – but a number of smaller LOTEs with significant numbers of speakers. Table 1 provides an indication of the spread of the 10 largest languages and their overall numbers in 1986–1996. A decline over the 10-year period in numbers of speakers using the older established (European) languages (i.e. Italian, Greek, German and Dutch) at home is evident, while Arabic and Asian languages (Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Tagalog) have increased – Tagalog entering the 10 largest languages for the first time. Clyne and Kipp (1997) predict that if these trends continue, Arabic, Cantonese and Vietnamese will displace Italian and Greek as the most commonly used CLs and Mandarin and Spanish will displace German over the next several census periods.

Table 1 The 10 largest CLs in Australia in 1986 and 1996 (based on Clyne & Kipp, 1997: 455)

1986		1996	
Italian	415,765	Italian	375,752
Greek	277,472	Greek	269,770
Yugoslav languages ¹	140,575	Cantonese	202,270
Chinese	139,100	Arabic	177,599
Arabic	119,187	Vietnamese	146,265
German	111,276	German	98,808
Spanish	73,961	Mandarin	91,911
Polish ²	68,638	Spanish	91,254
Vietnamese	65,856	Macedonian	71,347
Dutch ³	62,181	Tagalog	70,444

¹Croatian in 1996 = 69,152, ²Polish in 1996 = 69,769, ³Dutch in 1996 = 40,766.

If we compare the most common CLs (Table 1) with those most widely studied in schools to Grade 12 (Table 2) during the same period, we note that the languages of larger immigrant groups (i.e. Italian, Greek, Chinese (Mandarin), Arabic, Vietnamese, German and Spanish) are taught to a significant extent in secondary schools, but that other languages with large enrolments (like Japanese, French, Indonesian and Korean) are not significant CLs (in terms of numbers).

Community Language Media

The vitality of CL use in Australia is mirrored in the multilingual media that have developed (Clyne, 2001). Australia has a high consumption of magazines for its size and where there is demand – in the major cities – newspapers and other non-English language materials, including videos, are readily available. In 1996, there were 117 newspapers (24 were in Chinese, 13 were in Vietnamese and 10 were in Greek) representing 32 CLs, a marginal increase of five papers over the 1986 figure. However, Clyne and Kipp (1999) found that these newspapers had little appeal to the second generation or to those under 35.

Radio and television programming is available in a wide variety of languages. The government-funded Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) provides a range of non-English language programmes with subtitles and broadcasts satellite news in 15 languages. In total, Clyne (2001: 377) reports that in 1998 there are 75 radio stations broadcasting in a total of 97 languages for 1393 hours a week. Some languages like Arabic and Greek were on air for more than 100 hours a week, while others had an hour or less of air time. While Clyne and Kipp (1999) report that Arabic, Chinese and Spanish young people show little interest in these radio programmes, they do provide realia for language learning purposes, should CL programmes choose to use them. Clyne (2001: 377) further argues that

the presence of community languages in the public domain gives a legitimacy to intergenerational transmission and parent–child interaction in a community language in the presence of non-speakers of the language. Such consistent community language use without apology or criticism represent[s] one of the major changes in Australia in the past two decades. . . .

Libraries also service the various communities by holding materials in CLs, and a number of university libraries have both significant reading materials and research collections in LOTEs. Collectively, this material both provides information for those literate in LOTEs, and offers teaching and research materials for specific languages.

The Development of Community Languages Programmes

The existence of language-aware immigrant communities in the 1970s and 1980s eventually had a political impact (Lo Bianco, 1990; Ozolins, 1993). CLs were one of the first language areas to receive earmarked Commonwealth

Table 2 Year 12 languages enrolments: DEETYA National Totals

<i>Language</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
NALSAS languages							
Japanese	2541	3115	3809	4320	5451	5032	5381
Chinese	2027	2041	1944	2198	2952	2469	2361
Indonesian ¹	1253	1186	1103	1207	1546	1568	1869
Korean	0	0	0	0	247	185	248
Sub-total	5821	6342	6856	7725	10,196	9254	9859
Priority languages							
French	5071	4822	4361	4264	4560	4311	4201
German	2956	2801	2680	2561	2768	2657	2674
Italian	2429	2369	2195	2125	2312	2227	2100
Modern Greek	865	824	1731	1656	1929	1433	1356
Vietnamese	655	776	835	1230	1346	1174	1038
Spanish	545	583	636	725	968	728	767
Arabic	225	280	394	528	754	524	589
Russian	89	95	106	137	173	131	166
Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Thai	0	0	0	0	12	10	1
Sub-total	12,835	12,550	12,938	13,226	14,822	13,198	12,897
Other languages							
Other Asian ²	25	30	54	61	79	56	88
Other non-Asian	1455	1492	1499	1586	1842	1706	1826
Year 12 languages	20,036	20,414	21,347	22,598	26,939	24,214	24,670
Year 12 enrolments	169,471	183,257	192,511	186,936	179,863	172,357	170,729
Proportion Asian	3.84	3.90	4.02	4.81	6.46	6.09	6.43
Proportion non-Asian	7.98	7.24	7.05	7.00	8.53	7.96	8.02
Proportion language	11.82	11.14	11.09	12.09	14.97	14.05	14.45

¹Includes Malaysian.²Other Asian languages include Bengali, Hindi, Khmer and Sinhala.Source: Baldauf *et al.* (1998: 29).

Table 3 Summary of CL activity and state participation in 1997 with 1991 data in brackets

<i>State</i>	<i>No. of languages taught after hours (a)</i>	<i>No. of students in after-hours CL schools (b)</i>	<i>No. of students in day school (insertion classes) (b)</i>	<i>State contribution (c)</i>
NSW	44 languages [33 languages in 91]	32,659 (1999 teachers 425 schools) [60,414 total in 1991 ¹]	20,000 (2 h per week) (parents contribution) (+ 8000 in Catholic Systems)	Top up CLE funds by c. 40%; No charge for after-hours use of school premises (valued at \$320,000)
VIC	47 languages (191 schools) [36 languages in 91]	28,000 [90,513 in 91]	12,000 plus (35 schools Italian and one Indonesian) {82,175 studying Italian*}	54.5% (plus parents' contribution)
QLD	Some funds used for nonpriority languages out of hours [18 languages in 1991]	Not provided [17,249 students supported in 1991]	Not provided; most CLE funds pays for teachers in insertion classes {18,211 studying Italian*}	Provides funds for PD and admin of Ethnic Schools Association
SA	47 languages [28 languages in 91]	8527 [8622 in 1991]	333 (Italian) {7134 studying Italian*}	'Provide additional money'
WA	26 languages [15 languages in 1991]	Not provided (15% of funds) [9484 in 1991]	Not provided; 'large numbers of insertion classes' (Italian, Modern Greek) {28,817 studying Italian*}	Intention to take responsibility for all insertion classes
TAS	16 languages [5 languages in 1991]	513 (17 schools) [348 in 1991]	No insertion classes	\$60 per student
NT	8 languages [4 languages in 1991]	Not provided [382 students in 1991]	Not provided; Italian and some Spanish, Vietnamese (primary and secondary programmes)	Matching grant

Table 3 (Continued)

State	No. of languages taught after hours (a)	No. of students in after-hours CL schools (b)	No. of students in day school (insertion classes) (b)	State contribution (c)
ACT	20 languages [14 languages in 1991]	1200 (20% non-CL background in 27 schools) [2534 in 1991]	4700 students (Italian) 14 primary, 4 High School, 4 Colleges (CIAC data)	\$500 'start up grant' \$30,000 (33% match)

¹The 1991 figures (in brackets in column 2) cover *both* after-hours and insertion classes (columns 2 and 3). The 1997 data has been disaggregated to separate after-hours and insertion classes and must be totalled to get figures comparable to those for 1991. For example, in 1991 in NSW there were 60,414 students while in 1997 there were 60,659 (i.e. 32,659 + 20,000 + 8,000).

*Italian Embassy figures for all (after-hours/insertion) students studying Italian {...}.

Source: Baldauf *et al.* (1998: 30).

funding. The Commonwealth-run Ethnic Schools Program (ESP) commenced in 1981 to supplement community efforts to teach the more than 60 LOTE spoken within Australian society. The primary objective of the ESP was to maintain the relevant languages and cultures of students from non-English speaking background while the secondary aim was to increase awareness and understanding of all students of the different CLs and cultures. Most activity that occurred under the ESP still occurs through ethnic schools (Baldauf *et al.*, 1998).

The growth of language teaching activity in the early 1980s both within regular schools – through insertion classes – and in after-hours programmes, suggests that the Ethnic Schools Program was generally well received. By 1986, this early success led to a budget cap being put on Commonwealth funding because of concerns about the rapid growth in student numbers – particularly in Italian insertion classes in Victoria – which would have attracted potentially large 'per capita' funding commitments. Reviews of the programmes also expressed concerns about their perceived educational weaknesses: the lack of a formal curriculum, inappropriate teaching material, inadequate formal teacher qualifications and a lack of accredited courses (Baldauf *et al.*, 1998). However, reviewers acknowledged that there was a genuine demand for community-based language teaching and learning both in the day school and after hours. To address these problems, the 1991 *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* recommended that the ESP programme be more closely aligned with mainstream language programmes.

In 1992, the Community Languages Element (CLE) (which replaced the ESP and now was to be administered at the state level by the State Departments and the Catholic Education Office) was implemented through a Commonwealth block grant, and funding was increased by a third to cover administration expenses.¹ However, since 1992, Commonwealth funding has only increased by a supplementation amount (additional funding to

keep pace with inflation) and this has meant that it has been difficult for the education systems to respond to the growth in demand, to support programmes in Independent schools (Private), which were not party to the original funding arrangements, or to cater for the needs of new languages (e.g. Khmer) without reducing funding to the languages already supported. Furthermore, Aboriginal languages, which are considered to be CLs under the legislation, generally have not received funding under this programme. As education is a State responsibility, States have implemented their own CL programmes and provide varying amounts of support and funding (see Table 3). The States with the largest CL programmes are Victoria (for an example programme, see Janik, 1996), NSW and South Australia.

Review of the Community Languages Element

In 1997, a major review of Commonwealth support for CL programmes was undertaken (Baldauf *et al.*, 1998: 25; see the summary by State in Table 3), and it concluded that:

- *Community language learning is real and growing.* There is enrolment growth and an increasing focus in CL schools on teacher and programme quality with classes being made available to second language and non-background speakers.
- *Access to community language funding is a continuing concern.* Strong concern was expressed that the work of CL programmes went largely unrecognised and therefore might disappear in any new policy, and that certain sectors (e.g. Aboriginal and Independent) were largely unrepresented.
- *Foreign governments support language teaching.* Foreign government funding and/or expertise to languages programmes (the Italian government provided funding of about \$18 million over a three year period in the mid 1990s) contributes substantially to CL and mainstream school-based language learning.
- *Communities provide a lot of support for teaching their languages and cultures.* Community contributions to language teaching – sometimes financial, but often in voluntary effort – are significant both in cultural and educational terms. Increasingly, as programmes become more similar to mainstream practices, the quality of many CL programmes is hard to differentiate from that provided by mainstream schools.
- *Devolution of the Community Languages Element to the States and Territories in 1992 has been a success* (see Table 3) in that there has been: (a) a marked increase (in some cases 100%) in the number of languages participating in the programme, (b) an increase in the estimate of overall student numbers to more than 200,000 students, and (c) a marked increase in the resources allocated to the programme. In 1991, there was no systematic on-going State or Territory funding of CLE type programmes.

While the review indicates that CL programmes are increasingly meeting the objectives set for them, it can be said that languages, and CLs in particular, have not been of great interest to the current Commonwealth government. This is evidenced by the fact that the review material (Baldauf *et al.*, 1998) summarised in the previous paragraphs was until mid-2001 the latest (and only) document related to policy on the government's education website – it has since been removed. Furthermore, in 2001, 'Languages' were moved from having their own section in the bureaucracy to being part of a 'Languages and Civics' section, and the CLE was combined with the Priority Languages school programme – blurring the CL focus (<http://www.detya.gov.au/schools/structure/qsb.htm>, October 2002). With no increase in funding (other than supplementation) between 1997 and 2001 (see note 1) being provided, it has been difficult for education authorities to develop new initiatives.

Community Languages in New South Wales

In NSW, the Ethnic Schools Board (ESB) and the Community Languages Section of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) are responsible for CL programmes. The NSW ESB supports the maintenance, development and acquisition of the community LOTEs for students of all cultural backgrounds, and it promotes CL schools as being an integral part of languages education in NSW. It monitors the allocation of grants administered by the NSW DET through the NSW Community Languages Program to incorporated associations that operate schools outside mainstream school hours for students between ages of 2 and 18 years. Since its establishment in 1992, the Board has been instrumental in developing an equitable grants programme, providing professional development opportunities for CLs school teachers to upgrade their skills and knowledge in language teaching methodology, providing support for curriculum design and creating initiatives to establish links with mainstream education providers (Baldauf *et al.*, 1997).

In 1998, 451 schools were funded as approved provider schools and seven as 'provisional provider schools' with content-based instruction in 44 languages for a total of 36,562 students. In 2000, 423 separate schools through 209 organisations were funded as approved provider schools providing instruction in 44 languages for a total of more than 35,000 students. The top five languages – Chinese (which has about 10,000 speakers), Greek, Italian, Vietnamese and Arabic – accounted for about two thirds of these students.

Studies have shown that teachers are the most important element in an educational programme.² If programmes are to be successful, then teacher quality needs to be considered. Schools must use teachers who have done – as a minimum – one of the approved 50-hour professional development training courses. In 1998, 450 teachers completed one of these certificate courses. DET provides about 75% funding for these courses – teachers and/or schools pay the rest. There are more than 2200 teachers working in CL schools and about a 10% turnover each year, creating a demand for ongoing training. All current

teachers have undergone training, and some teachers have taken more than one of the basic training courses. Teachers vary from young students still at university, who may have learned their CL in a CL situation to mature adults with qualifications ranging from no formal schooling to PhDs in other areas. While they bring excellent language and cultural skills, only a few are trained as teachers, and fewer as language teachers. The English language skills of teachers vary from native to very limited. For students in the latter category, training programmes need to work in language-based groups, or be offered primarily in the language (e.g. Arabic) of the community.

Between 1992 and 2001, the University of Sydney Language Centre was one of the providers offering certificate programme training to hundreds of teachers in communicative methodology and providing them with a basic theoretical background and hands-on skills.³ In 1999, an on-line component was added and, in 2000, a fully on-line component was trialled. This was in response to DET's request for programmes that would meet teachers' needs with respect to using computers, and would also meet the needs of isolated teachers. As a matter of equity, because all teachers are required to be trained, access is needed to DET's services for those in more remote locations or those who are not able to come in for face-to-face programmes.

Teachers completing a certificate who have appropriate tertiary qualifications have been able to do further studies based on their CL certificate work. This provides a pathway for teachers into higher education, but course fees restrict student participation. While certificate programmes raise the status of teachers, they still are not registerable as 'qualified' language teachers in government schools.

A major problem in NSW is that CL programmes do not fall under the definition of schools. If CL programmes are to meet their full potential, there is a need to break the nexus between accreditation and registration (certification) – both of which are needed for High School graduation. The current situation means that CL schools cannot automatically provide language training that fits into the educational system, and trained CL teachers can't teach in government school programmes, disadvantaging teachers and making it harder to offer CL programmes in mainstream schools. Thus, there still are policy, curriculum and evaluation issues to be resolved.

Implications for NSW of Community Languages Programmes

While much has been achieved by CL programmes in NSW, there are still two major problems that remain to be resolved. First, if CL schools were defined as schools (the NSW government is considering this; in Victoria and South Australia they are called supplementary providers), then they could take on a bigger role in the provision of languages of lesser demand, and there would be better liaison with government schools advantaging teachers, students and curriculum. It would also link schools into government school information networks. In some government schools, language teaching might be out-sourced to CL schools. Currently, work done in CL programmes isn't recognised toward NSW graduation requirements so CL students must do additional academic work.

However, changing the status of CL programmes would raise a number of issues including:

- Industrial issues, the teachers' union is concerned that this will take jobs away from language teachers in the system (mainly French and German). But the system doesn't cater for the community needs and is instead focused on self-perpetuation (i.e. schools with French and German programmes hire replacement French and German teachers).
- The need to set and monitor standards and assessment for CL schools.
- Covert assimilationist worries that language and cultural maintenance will lead to individuals not becoming 'Australians'.
- The need to break down the barriers across communities to work more productively together.

Second, the matter of teacher preparation needs to be resolved. Currently, primary school teachers must be able to teach in all eight key curriculum areas. Most CL teachers don't want to do this, and some would have problems meeting the requirements to teach English. Furthermore, the current registration (certification) method through retraining is complicated and expensive – many teachers have neither the time nor money to participate. Secondary school teachers must have two areas of study, and the same problems arise. There is no formal provision for specialist language teachers. This excludes teachers from getting 'normal' work in public schools, although the requirement doesn't apply in private schools. Such a registration system ghettoises CLs and their teachers, and lowers teacher's self-esteem, suggesting they are not real teachers – regardless of their skills or qualifications.

The lack of a solution to these issues leads to a failure to recognise the work of CL schools and teachers in the wider community. There is a need to better understand the background, training needs (beyond the initial minimum) and aspirations of CL teachers. Anecdotal feedback from particular teachers attending courses has provided some information, but a systematic study, such as those undertaken previously for school programmes (e.g. Nicholas *et al.*, 1992), is needed to more clearly define CL programme needs.

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Notes

1. Commonwealth (Federal) funding for the CLs Element in 1997 amounted to A\$11.2 million. The government sector received a total of A\$6.3m as a contribution towards CL classes held during regular school hours within government schools as well as all after-hours classes held in each State. The remaining A\$4.9m was allocated to the Catholic Education Commissions (except the Northern Territory) towards the provision of CL classes held during regular school hours within nongovernment schools. Shares of these funds are based on the 1986 budgeted allocation for the Ethnic Schools Programme, and this 'historical' legacy has meant that the Catholic schools in Victoria – which started many of the early programmes – received nearly 30% of all CLE funding.

2. As many CL programmes are highly teacher dependent (i.e. there is a lack of other resources), the centrality of teacher quality found for student outcomes in other teaching contexts would presumably apply (e.g. in Australian contexts – schools (Lingard & Mills, 2003), higher education (Ramsden, 2003), or in the USA (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Newman, F. & Associates, 1996)).
3. Programmes at the University of Sydney are no longer offered as part of an internal rationalisation of teaching. Classroom-based programmes are still offered by other universities.

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