

## INTRODUCTION

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The present collection responds to the need for an updated volume to replace *Australia talks*. That book presented a sample of studies on the language situation in Australia, encompassing Australian English, migrant languages, and Aboriginal languages. *Australia, meeting place of languages*, however, concentrates on language contact in Australia. There are a number of reasons for this. A book of contemporary readings being prepared by David Blair and Peter Collins will cover Australian English, while three introductions on Aboriginal languages (Dixon 1980, Blake 1981, Yallop 1982) have appeared in recent years. Another collection is planned by Bruce Rigsby and Suzanne Romaine. *Language in Australia* will survey the sociolinguistic situation of English and other languages used in Australia, as well as provide short structural descriptions of (at least) Kriol and Torres Strait Creole. *Australia, meeting place of languages* is a first attempt at starting a dialogue between scholars working on a range of issues concerning contact between English and other migrant languages and those studying similar questions relating to contact between English and Aboriginal languages. It is therefore intended to be a representative collection rather than a coherent or comprehensive treatment. The effects of contact between non-English languages, or between varieties of English in Australia, are outside the scope of this volume. They too are fields that warrant comparative study (e.g. Aboriginal language contact, Italian-Spanish, German-Yiddish or inter-Slavic 'semi-communication', German and other non-English lingue franche, American, Scottish and Irish English in Australia).

In this introduction, I shall first briefly discuss demographic aspects of the language situation in Australia. This will be followed by a summary of the effects of English on other languages in Australia and on their use, based mainly on previous studies. Australian language contact will then be put into its global context by reference to the recent international literature on the theoretical implications of language contact and the linguistic indices on language attrition or death. Then follow some comparisons between the language situation of, and research on, Aboriginal and migrant languages. Finally I shall outline the organisation of the volume, introducing each chapter.

### 1. ON THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA

According to the 1976 Census – the only one so far to elicit data on the use of specific languages – 12.3% of the Australian population over the age of five reported *regularly* using a language other than English. The percentage of CLOTE

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(community language other than English) users is particularly high in the Northern Territory (27.4%), where Aboriginal languages are widely spoken, and in Victoria (16.7%), with Melbourne recording 20.7%, but especially low in Queensland (5.9%) and Tasmania (4.9%) which had been affected less by postwar immigration than the other states. Only 4.2% of the Australian-born regularly use a CLOTE. The Northern Territory figure for 25.3% (mainly Aborigines) contrasts with 5.5% in Victoria and South Australia, and 1.4% in Tasmania. The most widely used CLOTEs in Australia in 1976 were Italian (445,000), Greek (262,000), German (170,000) and Serbo-Croatian/Croatian/Serbian (142,000) (estimates based on Census, Clyne 1982:12). Other languages with over 50,000 regular users are Dutch, French, Polish, Spanish and, taking into account recent migration, Chinese.

Of the 150 Aboriginal languages still spoken, about 100 are estimated by Dixon (1980:18) to be 'on the path towards extinction', some remembered by 'only a handful of old people' and others with such small numbers of speakers — 'a few dozen or less — that these languages seem bound gradually to drop out of use over the next few generations'. The remaining 50 are spoken by a few hundred or, in a few cases, a few thousand. These include Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri, and Aranda. Genocide, the ruthless pressure on Aborigines to 'assimilate', and detribalisation have caused a rapid language shift and the death of about 50 Aboriginal languages since the European colonisation of Australia. At the same time there has occurred the development of Aboriginal varieties of Australian English (see Kaldor and Malcolm, this volume) and of pidgins for inter-tribal communication some of which have been creolised. Forms of Kriol, the English-based Aboriginal creole, are now spoken over an extensive part of Northern Australia, where it is partly replacing, and in some places has replaced Aboriginal languages (see Harris and Sandefur, this volume). Aboriginal English, which can be seen as part of a continuum, and which shares some linguistic features with Kriol, is employed by monolingual fringe Aborigines but also for certain functions by speakers of Aboriginal languages and Kriol (see Harris and Sandefur, Kaldor and Malcolm, this volume). One of the features of Aboriginal communities is their multilingualism, even with the expansion of English and Kriol as *lingue franche* and the death or functional reduction of some Aboriginal languages. The 1976 Census, which found that 1.4% of the population of the Northern Territory, mainly Aborigines, used more than two languages regularly, falsified the picture because (due to computer space limitations) the statisticians processed 'Aboriginal languages' as one language.

The number of non-Aboriginal CLOTEs (i.e. '(im)migrant languages') currently used in Australia has been estimated between 75 and 100, depending on what is classed as a language.<sup>1</sup> Such languages have been part of the Australian scene since early in the history of white settlement in Australia — in 19th century cities and on the goldfields, where there was a fairly rapid language shift — as well as in rural enclaves, such as the German-speaking area of South Australia, Western Victoria, and south-east Queensland. Here language maintenance persisted for three to five generations.

The mass immigration program launched in 1947 brought about a marked change in Australia's population composition, eating habits, and attitudes to non-Britishers and CLOTEs. The widespread acceptance of multiculturalism and, by implication, multilingualism, has been associated with a new national identity within Australia. This has led to policies supportive of multilingualism in fields such as education, radio, TV, libraries, and interpreting and translating (see Ozolins, this volume).

It is too early to assess exactly what the new attitudes and policies have contributed to the maintenance of CLOTES, especially among the second generation. This has been far less marked in some languages (e.g. Greek) than others (e.g. Dutch). It has also varied between states, with South Australia recording higher language maintenance rates across languages than Queensland and Western Australia (see Clyne 1982: chapter 2 for details).

A number of linguistic phenomena have accompanied the reduction in functions of L1 (= speaker's first language). They have previously been discussed in studies of migrant languages here and overseas and are described in this volume also for Aboriginal languages. They include lexical, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic transference<sup>2</sup> from English into L1, the integration of lexical transfers (loanwords) into the phonological, grammatical, semantic and graphemic systems of L1, and code-switching from L1 into English. (In the second and later generations of migrant language speakers, phonological and prosodic transference may also occur.) Code-switching is often prompted by sociolinguistic factors, such as interlocutor, domain, topic, venue, interaction type or role relationship, or by trigger-words such as proper nouns, lexical transfers, compromise words and bilingual homophones which are at the intersection of the two language systems. (Descriptions of specific migrant languages in Australia may be found, e.g. in Bettoni 1981 *Italian*, Clyne 1967 *German*, 1977b *Dutch*, Doucet 1984 *Serbo-Croatian*, Kaminskis 1972 *Spanish*, Kouzmin 1972 *Russian*, Tamis 1984 *Greek*; general summary in Clyne 1982: chapter 4).

The complexity of code-switching in the Aboriginal context is depicted in this volume by McConvell. In his paper on code-switching between different Gurindji dialects and Kriol, he focuses on group relations, with code-switching usually promoting either convergence towards or divergence from the other speaker or group (cf. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977). In another paper, McConvell (forthcoming) develops his own diachronic models of the social meaning of code-switching, building on Gumperz (e.g. 1970) and Scotton and Ury (1977).

The nature and extent of English influence on other languages in Australia depends on their functions, as well as the networks in which they are employed. Despite valiant attempts to declare an 'Australitalian' the Italian language of Australia (Andreoni 1980, Leoni 1981), there is little uniformity in any CLOTE today. Variation occurs between individuals, families and groups according to their experiences and everyday communication needs through English and the other language (see the references in the previous paragraph for migrant languages, Bavin and Shopen (this volume) for Warlpiri, and Schmidt (this volume) for Dyirbal.). Hence, homogeneous 19th century German rural enclaves developed relatively homogeneous German varieties, compared to present-day migrant families in urban areas. Nevertheless there are common tendencies within each language, especially in the rules for integrating English transfers, and in syntactic (and even morphological) transference which can facilitate cross-linguistic comparisons that take account of the vitality of the language as well as their structural properties (e.g. Clyne, this volume).

While many factors can operate in favour of either language maintenance or language shift, depending on the combination of factors, as has been shown by Kloss's (1966) study of the American situation, three appear to be of decisive importance in the Australian context (Clyne 1982: chapter 3). They are the role of the language value in the system of a particular culture (Smolicz and Secombe, this volume), the degree of cultural similarity to Anglo-Australians, and the extent of exogamy (Pauwels, this volume). In Aboriginal cultures, however, the core values of kinship, land, and language are closely interwoven. (Rigsby and Sutton 1981, Rigsby 1980.)

The vast majority of speakers of other languages regularly use English as well. This applies least in the Northern Territory where 4.9% of persons in the 1976 Census were reported as not using English regularly, as compared to 2.3% in Victoria and 0.2% in Tasmania. The need for English in isolated areas of the Northern Territory is undoubtedly more limited than in the major industrial centres of the country.

On the basis of a language survey conducted on  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 1% of the Australian population in May 1983, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that 86.75% of non-native speakers of English employ the language at home and 90.15% use it socially. Table 1 indicates that English use in the home varies between 97.01% among Dutch native speakers and 55.91% among Vietnamese speakers, with German, Maltese, Italian and Greek speakers all recording high use of English at home (ABS 1983).

Dutch	97.01%	German	96.07%
Maltese	93.98%	Italian	84.57%
Greek	84.46%	Spanish	76.63%
Chinese	75.03%	Vietnamese	55.91%

This shows the extent of bilingualism, even in the domain often regarded as the last in which CLOTE will persist (see, for instance, Bettoni 1981, Clyne 1967, Kipp 1980). When two languages are used in the home, interlocutor (especially his/her age) and topic can determine the choice of a language. Children tend to speak English with each other. If parents speak English at home, it is generally to the children rather than among themselves (Clyne 1982:57-59).

## 2. AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE CONTACT RESEARCH IN A GLOBAL LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

In recent years, there has been renewed international interest in the theoretical implications of transference and especially code-switching. Issues such as possible constraints on the position of the switch have been debated largely against the background of current linguistic theories (e.g. Joshi 1974, Gumperz 1976, Wentz and McClure 1977, Pfaff 1979, Poplack 1978, Sankoff and Poplack 1980, Klavans 1983, Woolford 1983, Di Sciullo, Muysken and Singh 1984). To help us understand such phenomena, as well as the nature of grammatical and phonological simplification and change, extensive data from a large number of languages of different types in contact with one language are required, to check the universality of findings. Corporuses of this nature are available in Australia, considering the wide variety of languages in contact with English. They are not yet introduced in this volume, which covers more general issues. The potential of language contact research within the one country was recognised in the U.S. by Haugen as early as 1950 (Haugen 1950).

Recent work on language death by Dorian (1977, 1978, 1981, 1983) and others and the development of a 'language attrition' paradigm subsuming language contact, language acquisition, aphasia and geriatric language studies (De Bot and Weltens 1985, Gonzo and Saltarelli 1983, Seliger 1984) have also focused new attention on universals. The language attrition paradigm has been applied by Bettoni in her family case study (this volume) by comparing the Italian of two generations. However, her study bases its theoretical framework on Givón's

(1979) distinction between pragmatic and syntactic modes. She is able to demonstrate a tendency towards the former through such properties as morphological simplification, slow, hesitant speech, inconsistency, and loose co-ordination (rather than tight subordination). As Dorian (1981:151) reminds us, dying languages show the same sorts of change as 'healthy' ones. Among patterns of simplification she describes (Dorian 1983) are: reduction in the number of allophones for grammatical morphemes (e.g. plurals, gerunds), reduction in competing structures, and a replacement of synthetic by analytical structures. Supporting evidence for at least some of these changes may be found in the articles by Bavin and Shopen, Bettoni, Clyne and Schmidt in this volume. McConvell (this volume) finds pervasive code-switching side by side with language shift, but is cautious about causal relationships. The Americans Gonzo and Saltarelli (1983:12), even point to *formal* similarities between pidgins, interlanguage systems, and migrant languages - lexical transference, reduction of redundant code distinctions (e.g. gender, number), a reduction in sentence embeddings, levelling of paradigmatic and morphological systems, and a decline in tense and aspect markers.

Australian language contact situations might well provide data on the spread of phonological change. It would be interesting to check, in different contexts, results based on data from two generations of five families from former German enclaves (Clyne 1972:83-85). The younger generation had, in most cases, absorbed general phonological tendencies prevalent in the area, which became either categorical or variable rules. The changes to categorical rules occurred predominantly in the more stable and homogeneous settlements and the changes to variable rules in the larger and less homogeneous German enclave.

### 3. COMPARISON BETWEEN 'ABORIGINAL' AND 'MIGRANT' LANGUAGE SITUATIONS

Contributions to this volume reveal many similarities between 'Aboriginal' and 'migrant' language contact with English in Australia, both at the linguistic and sociolinguistic levels. But they also point to intriguing differences, some but not all of which are the natural consequence of the different history and position of the groups speaking the languages. The similarities include:

(i) Lexical, semantic and syntactic transference, integration of transfers, and code-switching (Bavin and Shopen, Bettoni, Clyne, McConvell, Schmidt, and see also earlier references on page 3, above). In particular, there is a generalisation of SVO (Bavin and Shopen, Clyne), which Whitney (1881) had identified as a feature of 'mixed languages'. More recently, Milroy (1983:23) has shown that in English itself, SVO is a consequence of language contact.

(ii) The rapidity of the language shift process (Schmidt, Clyne).

(iii) Morphological simplification, increasing with age (Bavin and Shopen, Bettoni).

(iv) The use of Aboriginal English or a phonologically marked foreigner talk based on a migrant variety of English to non-native speakers of English in general. This appears to have an identity as well as a communication function (Schmidt, cf. Clyne 1982, but see also (v) below). It is not clear if avoidance of correction in L1 is a motive in migrant families as it is in the Dyirbal community.

(v) Old people act as catalysts for language maintenance while young people promote language shift. (It would be interesting to ascertain the extent of L1 reversion and L2 attrition in the two groups, cf. Clyne 1977a).

From a methodological point of view, linguists investigating Aboriginal and migrant language contact situations are faced with the problem of not having available to them adequate records of the precontact language. This applies both to Aboriginal languages and to the non-standard varieties of migrant languages spoken prior to emigration.

The importance of exogamy in the shift to English in migrant communities, discussed by Pauwels in this volume, may be partly counteracted by the success of bilingual language acquisition, according to the principle one parent, one language. For an Australian example, see Saunders (1982). Harris and Sandefur (this volume) indicate that this has been the norm in some Aboriginal communities (where neither of the parents' languages was English).

Just as comparisons of languages in contact can throw light on linguistic universals, they can also extend our knowledge of the relation between language and society. In this respect, the following differences between Aboriginal and migrant languages are of importance:

(i) Migrant languages (especially in the first generation), unlike Aboriginal languages, are subject to grammatical norms outside Australia.

(ii) Migrant languages are generally learned in the home, and often not retained by the children as they get older, or their use is at least temporarily discontinued. Aboriginal languages are not learned until later (Harris and Sandefur, cf. also Shnukal).

(iii) There is no phonological integration of English lexical items in young Dyrbal speakers (Schmidt). This cannot be said for second and later generation speakers of migrant languages (Bettoni 1981, Clyne 1967).

(iv) Second generation speakers of migrant languages will almost universally speak English to each other, regardless of what they speak to their parents or grandparents (Smolicz and Secombe, this volume; Bettoni 1981, Clyne 1967, Harvey 1974, Klarberg 1976, Smolicz and Harris 1976). The situation on Mer, a Torres Strait eastern island, is comparable, in relation to code-switching between the traditional language and creole (Shnukal, this volume). While Schmidt (this volume) points out that young Dyrbal speakers use the language mainly to older people, she also gives evidence of an Aboriginal language being employed as an in-group language among young 'semispeakers' with blatant disregard for adult norms. This probably accounts for the differences in (iii), for Bettoni (1981: 96) attributes phonological integration in the younger generation partly to 'their wish to conform to the norm established by the older generation of migrants'.

(v) Aboriginal English continues to fulfil a function, in contrast to the temporary interlanguage nature of most 'Migrant Englishes'. South Australian and Western Victorian rural dialects of Australian English based on a German substratum (Clyne 1970a:130-133) are probably a dying exception, but the English of later generation Australians with a strong Jewish or Chinese identification talking to each other could warrant investigation. Horvath (1985) shows that Italian and Greek migrants further develop broad Australian vowels but that their teenager children move away from this change. Aboriginal English reflects forced assimilation and, at the same time, the white Australians' unwillingness to accept Aborigines as equals.

(vi) Three Kriol-using regions have been identified by Harris and Sandefur (this volume) - those where it is a dominant language, those on the edge of a traditional Aboriginal language-speaking area, and those where the traditional

Aboriginal language is still dominant but Kriol is making inroads. However, there are no 'migrant creoles'.

The situation mentioned under (ii) may gradually develop for migrant languages as language survival programs (in and out of school) are devised for the third (and later) generations.

An adequate comparison between the situation of Aboriginal and migrant languages would be possible only within a comparative study of the functions of the languages in all the geographical contexts in which they are used. With the launching of satellite communication, the future of even the more isolated Aboriginal languages is likely to become even more precarious. A crucial difference in language maintenance and shift is that shift from Aboriginal languages necessarily represents language death whereas there continue to be overseas communities using the migrant languages in some form.

Research to date on Aboriginal languages has been concerned with the demanding and exciting task of analysing hitherto undescribed languages. Often it was a 'race against the clock', for many languages were in an advanced stage of disappearing, with a small number of old speakers. Scholars of Aboriginal languages have contributed significantly through their description to the literature of universals and typologies. In that context, the result of the language contact situation (as well as the geriatric nature of the informants) were very much a secondary consideration. The contact nature of contemporary Aboriginal languages has only recently been acknowledged. Just as in traditional studies of dialects, there were assumptions of homogeneity rather than an interest in variation. On the other hand, it was the theoretical framework developed as a result of immigrant language studies in America and elsewhere by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1953, 1956) that marked the beginning of American sociolinguistics and paved the way for variation research in a monolingual context.

In Australia, (socio)linguistic studies of migrant and Aboriginal languages have been regarded as separate areas. Scholars engaged in them are not always aware of one another's work and sometimes regard the two areas as belonging in 'different compartments'.<sup>3</sup> The emerging Aboriginal language - English contact literature partly uses different terminology to immigrant language studies (borrowing, lexical borrowing, loanword - beside syntactic interference (Bavin and Shopen), lexical substitution beside transference (Schmidt), assimilation rather than integration (Bavin and Shopen, Schmidt)).

Because of the threat of extinction to Aboriginal languages, scholars of Aboriginal languages have been influenced more by Dorian's work on language death than by the (somewhat older) migrant contact literature, which has taken over its paradigms mainly from Haugen, Weinreich, and Fishman.

Since linguists studying migrant languages who have been concerned with transference and code-switching have been working in this area for longer, such topics are now less prominent in their publications, and the reader is referred for comparison to the studies cited on page 3. It is clear that the effects of contact with English on *most* Aboriginal and migrant languages has not yet been studied. While the investigation of lexical transference in more languages may not produce new discoveries, integration of lexical transfers, constraints on code-switching, grammatical simplification and syntactic change do appear to vary according to typological and sociolinguistic factors. It is therefore hoped that this collection may generate a lively discussion, leading to a systematic treatment of language contacts across languages in Australia and their theoretical implications.

The three papers based on temporary residents from Asia are all interactive studies, and their approaches have much to offer research on longer-term language contact in Australia. Neustupný, for instance, challenges the more narrowly linguistic product analyses and casts doubt on many assumptions in previous language contact research (see also Pride 1984). He establishes the concept 'norm of contact situation' against which deviations in contact situations are measured. Such notions differ from those of native situations. This concept is basic to what he terms the 'new paradigm' in language contact studies. He discusses issues in the study of norms and applies research techniques of universal applicability. Apart from contributing to linguistic theory and methodology, Australian linguists have been already successful in initiating widespread interest in language policy and have been participating in a significant way in its planning and implementation, as Ozolins demonstrates in his paper.

#### 4. THE ORGANISATION OF THIS COLLECTION

The first eight papers are on languages other than English, the next three on interaction in a wider sense between Australians and temporary residents. Then follow four articles on English and English-based creoles in Australia, with the closing chapter dealing with the National Language Policy issue.

We begin with the crucial variables in the maintenance of non-Aboriginal CLOTES — core values (Smolicz and Secombe) and intermarriage patterns (Pauwels). Smolicz and Secombe use memoirs and personal statements to help interpret questionnaire responses indicating that language is the central core value in the cultures of three groups of young ethnic Australians — Greek, Latvian, and Polish. Pauwels compares language maintenance in two Dutch samples (Dutch-Dutch and mixed marriages). Klarberg deals with the function of classical Hebrew, Ivrit (Israeli Hebrew) and Yiddish in various sections of Melbourne's Jewish community. He argues that any deliberate mixing or enhancement of these is unlikely to increase language maintenance. This brings us to sociolinguistic studies of language change or language attrition — under the influence of language contact — on Italian in Sydney (Bettoni), Warlpiri (Bavin and Shopen), Gurindji (McConvell). Bettoni's is a family case study of parents and four children, while Bavin and Shopen study the Warlpiri of children and young people. Part of their paper is a comparison between the speech (in story telling) of two Warlpiri children, a schoolgirl with no lexical transference and considerable transference of grammatical and discourse structures, and a 'non-schoolie' with a little lexical transference and little other English influence. McConvell challenges the importance of domain in Aboriginal language choice. He describes and explains code-switching among the Gurindji in relation to the local language situation, social formations and ideologies. The structure and functions of Dyirbal in its last generation of speakers are described by Schmidt, whose research benefits from the study of the social networks of two groups. Then follows a comparison by Clyne between tendencies in German and Dutch, showing how even closely related languages react in different ways, and at a different pace, to the influence of the same contact language.

The three papers on the language of temporary residents from Asia all relate to communication strategies rather than to language change. Neustupný's discussion of interaction in English between Japanese and English native speakers in Australia is a contribution to the theory and methodology of language contact research. Bradley and Bradley deal with communication breakdown



and focus on the *form* of responses in miscomprehension in the English of Malaysian, Thai and Indonesian students. The relation between communication breakdown, speaking ability and national background is discussed, as are the characteristics of miscomprehended questions. Rado shows that both good and poor speakers of English among Asian students master pragmatic aspects of language, such as ellipsis. Thus the emphasis on the pragmatic level noted in the maintenance of migrant and Aboriginal languages (e.g. Bettoni, Bavin and Shopen) is also present in early second language acquisition.

Johnston's paper on 'Migrant English', employing recent paradigms in second language acquisition, focuses on natural acquisition sequences and development stages in adult migrants whose L1 is very different — Spanish and Turkish. Consequences for 'migrant English' teaching are outlined. Kaldor and Malcolm discuss the structure, variation, and function of Aboriginal English as spoken by children in Western Australia, drawing some implications for language policy in schools. Harris and Sandefur put Kriol in the context of multilingualism (albeit a receding one) in the 'Top End'. Mühlhäusler's paper is the result of archival research and salvage work among the descendants of indentured Kanaka labourers in Queensland to trace the Pidgin previously spoken in their communities. This example of cross-cultural communication is of particular interest because of its role in the development of other Pacific pidgins. The Creole discussed by Shnukal is spoken on the eastern Torres Strait islands off the Australian coast by people who share with Aborigines the status of indigenous peoples of Australia. On two islands, it has replaced the traditional languages and stands in a diglossic relationship with English; on a third, it is in unsystematic composition with the traditional language and English. Like the Kanaka pidgin before it, this symbol of islander ethnicity is undergoing decreolisation and language shift.

On each of the topics we proceed from the more general papers to the particular and comparative ones, from the more sociological papers to the more linguistic ones — but we end on a political note. Ozolins gives the historical and socio-political context of the discussion around, and inquiry into the National Language Policy prior to the recommendations of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts. At a later stage it will be possible to reflect on how effective the National Language Policy that is to be implemented in the near future will be to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal CLOTEs and their speakers.

## NOTES

1. Among 'debated categories' are national varieties and national dialects — e.g. Swiss German, Lebanese, Croatian/Serbian/Serbo-Croatian, Cantonese/Hakka/Hokkien/Mandarin.
2. Transference of speech act and discourse routines.
3. For a comparison of policies on bilingual education see Kaldor (1976).

