

Language Policy

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Kayoko Enomoto · Hui Ling Xu *Editors*

# Intersections in Language Planning and Policy

Establishing Connections in Languages  
and Cultures

 Springer

# Language Policy

Volume 23

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

The series will publish empirical studies of general language policy or of language education policy, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy-making—who is involved, what is done, how it develops, why it is attempted. We will publish research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of implementation. We will be interested in accounts of policy development by governments and governmental agencies, by large international companies, foundations, and organizations, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies. We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of the developing European policy of starting language teaching earlier, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet. Other possible topics include the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy, the role of economic factors, policy as a reflection of social change.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

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# Series Editor Foreword

## Language Policy Book Series: Our Aims and Approach

Recent decades have witnessed a rapid expansion of interest in language policy studies as transcultural connections deepen and expand all across the globe. Whether it is to facilitate more democratic forms of participation, or to respond to demands for increased educational opportunity from marginalised communities, or to better understand the technologisation of communication, language policy and planning has come to the fore as a practice and a field of study. In all parts of the world, the push for language policy is a reflection of such rapid and deep globalisation, undertaken by governments to facilitate or diversify trade, to design and deliver multilingual public services, to teach less-commonly taught languages and to revitalise endangered languages. There is also interest in forms of language policy to bolster new and more inclusive kinds of language based and literate citizenship.

Real world language developments have pushed scholars to generate new theory on language policy and to explore new empirical accounts of language policy processes. At the heart of these endeavours is the search for the resolution of communication problems between ethnic groups, nations, individuals, authorities and citizens, educators and learners. Key research concerns have been the rapid spread of global languages, especially English and more recently Chinese, and the economic, social and identity repercussions that follow, linked to concerns about the accelerating threat to the vitality of small languages across the world. Other topics that have attracted research attention have been persisting communication inequalities, the changing language situation in different parts of the world, and how language and literacy abilities affect social opportunity, employment and identity.

In the very recent past, language diversity itself has been a popular field of study, to explore particular ways to classify and understand multilingualism, the fate of particular groups of languages or individual languages, and questions of literacy, script and orthography. In this complex landscape of language change, efforts of

national and sub-national groups to reverse or slow language shift have dominated concerns of policy makers as well as scholars. While there is a discernible trend towards greater openness to multilingualism and increasing concern for language rights, we can also note the continued determination of nation-states to assert a singular identity through language, sometimes through repressive measures.

For all these reasons, systematic, careful and critical study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning is a topic of growing global significance.

In response to this dynamic environment of change and complexity, this series publishes empirical research of general language policy in diverse domains, such as education, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy making which explore the key actors, their modes of conceiving their activity, and the perspective of scholars reflecting on the processes and outcomes of policy.

Our series aims to understand how language policy develops, why it is attempted, and how it is critiqued, defended and elaborated or changed. We are interested in publishing research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of its implementation.

We are interested in accounts of policy undertaken by governments but also by non-governmental bodies; by international corporations, foundations, and the like; as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies.

We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g., the local effects of transnational policy influence, such as the United Nations, the European Union or regional bodies in Africa, Asia and the Americas. We encourage proposals dealing with practical questions of when to commence language teaching, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve set levels of competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet, issues of program design and innovation.

Other possible topics include non-education domains such as legal and health interpreting, community- and family-based language planning, language policy from bottom-up advocacy, and language change that arises from traditional forms of power alongside influence and modelling of alternatives to established forms of communication.

Contemporary language policy studies can examine the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy formulation, the role of economic factors in success or failure of language plans, and studies of policy as a reflection of social change.

We do not wish to limit or define the limits of what language policy research can encompass, and our primary interest is to solicit serious book length examinations, whether the format is for a single authored or multi-authored volume or a coherent edited work with multiple contributors.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and

comparative educationalists. We welcome your submissions or an enquiry from you about ideas for work in our series that opens new directions for the field of language policy.

University of Melbourne  
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Arizona State University  
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# Acknowledgements

*Intersections* as a concept and a mode for reflecting on the state of Language studies in universities, both in Australia and more widely, happened through two distinct phases: firstly, it had its origins in the theme chosen for an international colloquium in 2017 organized at the University of Adelaide by the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU); secondly, the quality and range of the contributions presented on this occasion encouraged the colloquium committee to develop a publication on the *Intersections* theme by launching a call for contributions both to colloquium presenters and to other eminent researchers in the field. Once contributions were received, they were submitted to an independent blind peer review process, involving two and sometimes three evaluations, after which the duly revised contributions were submitted to, and vetted by, the editorial panel. Following this process a book proposal was prepared, assessed by an expert panel, and finally accepted for publication in this current collection.

As a result of this process, the Editors have a host of supporters and reviewers to whom they wish to express their heartfelt thanks.

## ***Intersections, the Colloquium***

### ***The Organizing Committee***

The colloquium itself would not have been possible without the support of a number of institutions and individuals who generously granted financial assistance and donated their time and energies to the cause of languages and cultures education and research and to making *Intersections* a reality. Our grateful thanks are due to the organizing committee for the colloquium, most expertly led by Sarah Reed and made up of colleagues spanning the languages sector in South Australia, namely Rob Amery, Eric Bouvet, Kayoko Enomoto, Gerry Groot, Stefan Hajduk, Peter Poiana, Andrew Scrimgeour, Lia Tedesco and Ghil'ad Zuckermann. This group

provided living proof of the value of inter-institutional collaboration in the service of languages education and research as well as demonstrating the strength of the longstanding ties between colleagues within the local sector.

### ***The Sponsors***

The generosity of our sponsors enabled us to invite a number of international and national speakers whose contribution to the study of specific languages, including indigenous languages, and whose thoughts on different specializations within the broad category that is Language studies inspired in us all a greater capacity to perceive and reflect upon the commonalities within the field in which we practise. Since these sponsored interventions in the colloquium have given rise to many of the outstanding contributions to this present volume, we are doubly grateful to our sponsors for making this possible.

We specifically wish to thank:

- The Government of South Australia, through the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD)
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- Flinders University, through the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
- The Research Centre for Languages and Cultures of the University of South Australia
- The ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language
- The South Australian School of Languages
- The Australian Academy of the Humanities
- The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

### ***Intersections, the Volume***

#### ***Peer Review Panel***

The Editors of *Intersections* would like to express their gratitude to the colleagues who assisted them with the implementation of the extensive double-blind peer review process which led to the selection and refinement of chapters for this collective work.

Given the large number of papers submitted for evaluation across a wide range of languages and research specializations, the review panel required contributions from scholars whose own expertise involved both deep disciplinary knowledge and strong connections with the multidisciplinary space that is the field of languages and cultures. Without the good grace and generosity displayed by our colleagues, a

volume of this nature, investigating research problems across such a broad field of inquiry and teasing out commonalities of practice and aspiration from disciplinary enclaves, would not have been feasible. All of the chapters of *Intersections* have benefited from the advice and counsel dispensed judiciously and unstintingly by the independent panel of reviewers, whose contribution is hereby most gratefully acknowledged.

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## ***Publication***

Before proceeding to the phase of presenting a book proposal for evaluation, the Editors sought the advice of their distinguished colleague Joseph Lo Bianco on how best to approach this question, especially in the light of the volume's ambition to capture a representative sample of the research practised within the broad field that is languages and cultures. The sage and practical advice so generously given, and for which we remain deeply indebted, was responsible, we believe, for the smooth passage we later made through the book proposal process itself. This was made all the more instructive thanks to the most helpful advice offered by all concerned: the reviewers of our draft as well as by our collection directors, Joseph Lo Bianco and Terrence Wiley, and our project manager, Helen van der Stelt.

Of course, special thanks to our authors, without whose analyses and reflections, born of a deep commitment to their role as language scholars, the intersections and connecting points between our collective incursions into languages policy and planning could not have emerged.

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# Part I

## Introduction

The discipline that is better known as “Modern Languages”, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, commonly bears the title of “Languages and Cultures” in Australian universities. It is a title enshrined in the name of many departments, schools and units, as well as in the name of the professional association that represents languages academics across the country.<sup>1</sup> Whilst language scholars in the Anglophone sphere regularly employ this nomenclature to define the language-culture nexus within their teaching space and to cover the range of their research specialisms, it is nonetheless important to highlight the second sense in which the term is used here: “Languages and Cultures” is also generally applied throughout this volume to the institutional structure in which Australian language scholars are generally grouped and which they recognize as their discipline.<sup>2</sup> On the question of disciplinary identity, the situation is, of course, complex, for to be a scholar within this space means to embrace the reality of a discipline defined by its interdisciplinarity, a discipline composed of a cluster of cognate fields rather than an homogenous field in itself.<sup>3</sup> This has, to a certain extent, always been so, nor is it a professional experience that is peculiar to the Australian scene. But a title does correspond to a territorial claim, and hence empowers the titleholders to defend and maintain their territorial integrity. This collection of essays reflects the will of

---

<sup>1</sup>The Language and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU).

<sup>2</sup>This was not always the case. The discipline now generally accepted to be “Languages and Cultures”, was once largely represented by the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association (AULLA)—at a time when individual Languages Departments were Departments of Language and Literature, and languages were mainly European. As language coverage and research specialisms within the tertiary sector diversified, the need for a broader and more inclusive form of collective identity emerged. That said, there are references to “Modern Languages” within this volume, but they generally apply to UK or US systems or to past structures within the Australian tertiary sector.

<sup>3</sup>Many researchers within the “Languages and Cultures” discipline conduct forms of research that overlap with those practised within other disciplines, ranging from Linguistics and Applied Linguistics to Literature, Translation Studies, Film Studies or History—the list is far from exhaustive.

language scholars to do just that. Ranging over the languages planning and policy issues that affect their operations and laying claim to a broad and diverse field of inquiry, the authors seek collectively to define what it means to be a teacher-researcher in languages and cultures today.

In their multiple sallies into the field, the authors also demonstrate that the need to maintain and build connections between their different hubs and outposts is paramount. Their work speaks largely to an Australian context where some of the connections that scholars perceive as intrinsic to their operations, whether in teaching or research, have become fragile, whether by accident or by design. It is true that, while individual languages have been targeted for closure in recent times, there have been few institutional attempts to sever the languages and cultures connection, to separate the acquisition of language skills from the deep initiation into another culture. However, two tendencies within the Australian tertiary system give cause for concern, the first related to teaching, the second related to research. The tendency to streamline curricula according to a one-size-fits-all model has had the effect of separating courses into language courses (compulsory) and culture courses (mostly optional), and of limiting the number of culture courses available to students, and hence their overall cultural competency. The second tendency, to maintain a distinction between research into language and research into culture has had the effect of rendering the discipline of “Languages and Cultures” invisible within the highly competitive research funding system. Both tendencies when combined have the unintended effect, by distending connections between languages and cultures, of segmenting key aspects of disciplinary identity. That is, if we assume that the titleholders are prepared to relinquish their claim to that connectivity and to that identity.

In the first part of this volume, we present the context in which the community of language scholars operates, and outline the energetic and creative responses it has generated to strengthen and reformulate the ties that bind it.

# Intersections: A Paradigm for Languages and Cultures?



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**Abstract** “Intersections” constitutes the thematic thread to the essays in this volume, whose aim is to depict the multi-faceted yet cohesive nature of Australian scholarship and practice in Language Studies. Running discreetly through all chapters, featuring prominently in some, this thread connects them all to a lived reality: the field of languages and cultures, as it is practised and reflected upon in Australian universities today, is essentially an interdisciplinary and interconnecting space, one in which linguistic and disciplinary diversities meet and gather forces. Although language scholars are well equipped to navigate that space, the issue that currently confronts them is that their universities do not necessarily recognize or reward what is a positive contribution to their institutional mission. In this volume, they collectively make a compelling case for their inclusion.

**Keywords** Intersections · Language studies · Australian universities · Interdisciplinarity · Interculturality · Collaboration · Community-of-practice · Connectedness · Community engagement

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## 1 Intersections

Although this book is devoted to exploring issues around languages planning, policy and practice that apply within the tertiary system worldwide, the central focus here is upon the Australian situation—albeit with some strong points of comparison to practices elsewhere. Enjoying a creative resurgence, particularly following the formation of its own Languages and Cultures Network (LCNAU) less than a decade ago,<sup>1</sup> Language Studies in Australia is a scholarly area that is well equipped to play a strong role in debates around the future of higher education. Whilst many of the challenges it reflects upon, the principles it espouses and the practices it develops, mirror those that presently concern colleagues in the United Kingdom and the United States, its situation is sufficiently different in terms of its history, structure and size to warrant examination in its own right, particularly in regard to its experience of Indigenous languages or multicultural education. Yet it remains sufficiently similar to be able to contribute to debates on the big questions in languages scholarship that preoccupy colleagues across the globe: connectedness, interculturality, collaborative practice. And, needless to say, sufficiently pioneering to have made its own distinctive contributions to the global field.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, the Australian languages sector, as a product of successive periods of social change and shifts in government priorities,<sup>3</sup> has developed its own idiosyncrasies, all of which contribute to its current mood and energies. On the one hand, it is by its very nature an intersection, a place where diversities meet and coalesce. On the other, it is at an intersection in its history, where it can either continue to practise all the forms of professional connectedness that characterize its operations, or yield to pressures to reduce its numbers, scope or function. However, given that it cannot but be the polar opposite of raging political discourses that decry diversity, it remains firmly ensconced in its cohesive and enabling function of providing a meeting place for voices and cultures.

“Intersections” thus constitutes the fitting thematic thread to the essays in this volume, whose aim is to depict the multi-faceted yet cohesive nature of Australian languages scholarship. Explicitly addressed in a number of chapters, and running discreetly through all, this thread connects them all to a lived reality: the field of languages and cultures, as it is practised and reflected upon in Australian universities today, is essentially an interdisciplinary and interconnecting space, one in which linguistic and disciplinary diversities meet and gather strength, rather than collide or disperse along different pathways. To appreciate this fully we need to remember that this was not always so. In the university system of yore, there existed real and

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<sup>1</sup>For the history of LCNAU, the role of its founders (Nettelbeck, Hajek, Lo Bianco) and its mission within the Australian higher education sector, go to <https://www.lcnau.org/background/>. For further details, see Hajek et al. (2012).

<sup>2</sup>We need only to highlight the influential work of scholars such as Michael Clyne (2005), Joseph Lo Bianco (1987).

<sup>3</sup>For a comprehensive study of this history, see Baldwin (2019).

imagined national language boundaries which once hindered or discouraged those language scholars who sought to exchange their experiences and their expertise with one another and with other disciplines. In the current university context, the release of languages and cultures from these constraints and their move into intersecting spaces—both physically and mentally—has created new opportunities in terms of collaboration and partnerships. It has also enhanced their capacity to engage in the full and frank practice of interdisciplinarity—which happens now to be a proclaimed article of faith in the mission statement of the contemporary Australian university. Should we take this to mean that languages have achieved an unassailable position within Australian academe? Given their history, this would be no doubt a premature conclusion, but reflecting upon today's languages departments as intersectional spaces provides a rich metaphorical seam that will enable us to mine deeper into those spaces.

In order to contextualize the issues explored in the chapters which follow, it is important to reflect here upon the ways in which language scholars adopt strategies in terms of both policy and practice that bring forth ever stronger forms of connectedness in teaching and research. Commencing with a selective overview of recent policy debates and controversies centred upon languages in higher education, we then examine the place and spaces that languages occupy within universities, and discuss whether, overall, they may be collectively endangered, precariously situated or able to develop and prosper within their current configurations. Next, we look at the selection of research studies that we have chosen for this volume, and interrogate them as strands of our line of enquiry, before finally concluding as to whether languages scholarship in Australian universities may have reached intersections, meeting points or levels of interconnectedness that could facilitate its collective journey along future pathways.

## **2 Pathways to Policy Renewal**

The positive awareness of their interconnectedness to their fellows and to the values that their institutions profess does not mean that language scholars have become exempt from the severe challenges that persist within their daily working lives or naive about the enormity of the task that confronts them. The increasing restrictions placed on university funding in general, and for the humanities in particular, the failure of universities to embrace the centrality of language learning as part of their globalization push, the world-wide resurgence of nationalisms, or the ever-pervasive influence of the “monolingual mindset” in Anglophone countries (Clyne 2008; Hajek and Slaughter 2014), are powerful and corrosive forces to be confronted and contested. In such circumstances, the temptation to adopt a bunker mentality is quite understandable. However, if learning languages has long been recognized as a means of building resilience and developing the capacity for problem solving, it is unsurprising that language teachers should seek to demonstrate these self-same qualities as they contemplate the future of their knowledge base and the consequences for their students of any potential threat to its stability.

Of the many responses possible to the challenge, one has been to raise the alarm.<sup>4</sup> While a recognized political strategy, and a powerful impetus to the creation of LCNAU,<sup>5</sup> this has also led to the development of a “languages in crisis” paradigm whose effects have been amplified in the media (Mason and Hajek 2019, p. 189). On the one hand, it is undeniable that such campaigns have served to create awareness of the low student participation rates in language learning, and punctually incited the political class to introduce measures designed to remedy the situation.<sup>6</sup> On the other, the problem continues to appear intractable, since the varying efforts of governments and educational systems and institutions to bring significant change have been essentially unsuccessful.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, a perverse effect of such alarm-bell campaigns has been their reinforcement of negative public views of language study, and of the bunker mentality amongst language teachers, constantly obliged to defend their status and mission against the perception that the situation they face is warranted or just inevitable. It has been convincingly demonstrated that media interest in tertiary language study, normally slight, is only mobilized if there is the hint of a crisis, which further reinforces the notion that languages are a perpetual source of trouble, rather than a major social asset (Mason and Hajek 2019, p. 192). This is not to say that strategies targeting the political class or the media are futile exercises or that the political adoption of an effective languages policy encompassing all education sectors would ever cease to be the most desired end result for all language educators; merely that the thematics of catastrophe have yielded few positive outcomes and that new modes of engagement and persuasion are required if languages are to re-engage in a battle under terms they can influence, if not dictate.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The *Languages in Crisis* report launched a crucial and influential campaign, highlighting, amongst many other issues, that “the number of languages taught in our universities continues to fall. Of the 29 languages still on offer at tertiary level, nine are offered at only one Australian university and only seven are well represented across the sector” (Group of Eight 2007, p. 4). See also Martín (2005).

<sup>5</sup>See <https://www.lcnau.org/background/> for the chronology of the steps that led from the initiatives of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Group of Eight Universities and individual researchers to the creation of LCNAU as a professional association and lobby group for languages scholars in the tertiary sector.

<sup>6</sup>Dunne and Pavlyshyn list the large number of government reports on languages commissioned between 1987 and 2006 (2012, p. 10). Since that period the report *Australia in the Asian Century* is one of the most significant (Australia in the Asian Century Implementation Task Force 2012).

<sup>7</sup>M. Haugh points to the gap between policy and successful implementation, particularly in Queensland (2019, p. 25), while the reasons for the persistence of such a gap at the national level are discussed in J. Lo Bianco and Y. Slaughter (2017, p. 449). See also Mayfield (2017).

<sup>8</sup>There are interesting signs of the development of new approaches to orienting campaigns in favour of languages education. Mason and Hajek conclude that “more attention needs to be given to the multiple ways in which language can be used as a resource not only for utilitarian purposes but also humanistic purposes.” (2018, p. 17) While concurring with Mason and Hajek that languages should not be seen as a “problem”, Haugh believes that there is a strong “socioeconomic” case to be made in their favour (2019, p. 30). In the United States, a campaign is already being mounted around a “new narrative” for languages that rejects economic rationalism altogether in favour of “solidarity” (Reichman 2019).

In Australia, one of the issues around policy and media attention has also been that many initiatives tend to target the school sector (Mason and Hajek 2018).<sup>9</sup> If the higher education sector does not currently create as much public interest as schools, then predictably political motivation regarding universities will remain low. This is not to deny that the attention paid to schools is a good thing in itself, for the reinvigoration of language learning in the primary and secondary sectors would undeniably translate into better outcomes within the tertiary sector. The fact remains, however, that discrete government funding initiatives in higher education, involving strict control over policy outcomes, are desperately needed if participation rates are to be improved in significant and durable ways. Specifically targeted funding is the essential driver for this increasingly cash strapped and risk averse sector. Of equal importance is that language policy initiatives need to stem from a sustained bipartisan interest in the issue rather than a sporadic and occasional interest dictated by political expediency.<sup>10</sup>

To demonstrate the harm done by the latter form of intervention, we need only point to the three mutually nullifying policy phases originating from within the same political party in relation to the Diploma in Languages. This award has proved to be a particularly useful addition to languages offerings in the higher education sector, enabling students to pursue languages study in addition to their principal degree, when those degree structures were too tightly packed to allow for extra subjects, as in medical or engineering degrees, for example. In November 2013, Federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne announced that 2000 new places in the languages diploma would be made available, even going so far as to suggest that he was considering the merits of granting students unlimited access to such courses (Lane 2014). In 2017, Simon Birmingham, his successor to the portfolio, and member of the same political party, proposed a series of measures that would consign this same diploma to the ranks of fully fee-paying awards, and hence to oblivion (Lane 2017). Even though Birmingham's plan was eventually shelved by his successor (from the same political party), the uncertainty around the diploma's future and the eventual withdrawal of Pyne's extra places produced a drop in numbers of language students in the universities affected by the loss of those extra places, but also in universities not directly affected by these cuts, and in which numbers had until then been steadily increasing. Although the fall-out from a policy initiative that had made such a promising start has yet to be reliably measured and assessed, the outcome is evidence in itself of the difficulties faced by policy specialists in achieving sustained levels of support for language initiatives in higher education, even where, unusually, these have been universally welcomed throughout the

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<sup>9</sup>The *Languages in Crisis* report also affirmed that key policy documents, such as the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools* and the *National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008* “represent a good start but they do not cover languages in higher education and they do not include recommendations for compulsory study of languages” (Group of Eight 2007, p. 8).

<sup>10</sup>J. Lo Bianco decries the scant regard shown for languages policy by Australian politicians generally, who tend to treat it as a “political football” (cited in Hyland 2008).

sector. If political support cannot be sustained within a single political party, a bipartisan languages policy would seem a distant perspective.

That said, the announcement in 2019 from the Australian Government—formed from the party responsible for the diploma debacle, and from a conservative coalition historically less favourable to policy-making in the domains of multiculturalism and languages education than the Labor opposition—that they would be funding a range of new initiatives in the languages sector may yet prove a new dawn for the cause of community and Indigenous languages, and, announced, but not divulged, a new national languages policy (Department of Education 2019).

### **3 Languages in Universities—Reclaiming a Space of Their Own**

If the public space is still to be invested by a new policy model, plans clearly have continued to be developed and promoted by language policy makers, while frontline language teachers have continued to demonstrate their famous resilience and adaptability by integrating their activities into new learning, teaching and research environments that now prevail within universities themselves. Their adaptability has indeed been amply demonstrated; in the period spanning the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, the study of languages and cultures retained its presence in the curricula of universities thanks to the efforts of language scholars who actively sought to entrench their strengths within constantly evolving institutional contexts. Whilst languages academics may not have sought out, nor relished, all of the changes forced upon them, namely their incorporation into ever larger organizational units, they have not necessarily fared badly from their diverse marriages, particularly when these were unforced or eventually, albeit grudgingly, accepted. Mergers may have damaged self-esteem in the short term, but these were not necessarily all disastrous, in that some strong and influential schools of languages have now become part of the tertiary landscape.

Hence, where individual languages were brought together in meaningful ways, “language ecologies” were free to develop; with them came opportunities for common interests to grow, authentic partnerships to develop and alliances to form—within schools of languages or without—through other groupings, particularly within schools of Humanities or Social Sciences. With size and interconnectedness, languages became, at least in principle, and in the eyes of administrators, a more homogenous group. For, following their period of “mergermania”, universities had come to target the “silo”, or the single discipline, an entity they perceived to be pursuing its own interests rather than prioritizing those of the institution. Rightly or wrongly, language departments once appeared to constitute the very essence of the “silo”, locked within an impenetrable space, alien in their difference. As a consequence of mergers, languages no longer quite fitted the “silo” model and “languages”, in many universities, had become too large an entity to be dispensed with

entirely. Besides, as collectivities, they were now better placed to demonstrate an interconnectedness within their own space and within the fabric of the institution, especially when some of their keywords and practices had come to have currency: interdisciplinarity, intercultural competency, teaching excellence, community of practice, to name but a few.

The recent initiative which may prove a threat to the status and workloads of languages staff is the creation of “teaching intensive” posts within the tertiary system. University staff deemed to be inactive as researchers are nudged, and increasingly forced, towards this type of employment, which in extreme cases involves the imposition of heavy teaching loads and a form of exile from the mainstream of the university. Some institutions see the creation of such positions as a means of promoting the interests and careers of staff who profess a deep interest in teaching and the scholarship around it; others see it as a means of ghettoizing research-inactive staff or those seen to be otherwise unable to “earn their keep”, namely by bringing in external funding to their area. It is yet too early to assess the impact of such moves on languages staff as individuals or groups, but this is the kind of initiative that requires vigilance and that stands, at least for now, in contrast to the destiny of most languages scholars.

We take from this that no single institutional configuration or set of practices brings a guarantee of perennity; no teaching area can be protected from educational fashion, budget restrictions, unsympathetic leadership or overarching political imperatives. Yet where individual scholars and their cohorts have the time and opportunity to interweave their activities tightly within the expectations of their universities in the three areas of teaching, administration and research—expectations which are on the rise, but which are familiar requirements of academic positions, having changed little in essence over the years—, their chances to prosper seem to be on a par with those of other academic groups. In any case, the research output currently emerging from languages areas is a distinct sign of an intact and productive academic culture, its diverse productions contributing to a languages study narrative of connections and convergences. The objective of this volume is precisely to offer a representative sample of this culture and this narrative.

## **4 Intersecting Teaching and Research Pathways**

The different parts of this volume all draw, in diverse teaching and research settings across a variety of languages, a picture of unity spun from diversity, of differing perspectives brought to bear upon policy, research and teaching agendas in languages. Many of the individual chapters are based wholly on the Australian experience, others take a comparative stance and embed their own local enquiries into an international context, and some are the work of international scholars which have a direct bearing on the local scene, particularly in regard to Indigenous languages education and languages policy. But all combine to highlight the preoccupations of the Australian tertiary languages sector.

Each part of this volume is preceded by a summary aimed at demonstrating the intersections between the chapters it contains, in terms of commonalities of discourse, objectives, methodologies, results and vision. These commonalities within the texts provide, overall, tangible evidence of a shared perspective within the languages community, rich with new possibilities for collaborative futures.

Part II is a case in point: three chapters on languages and cultures research use highly specialized areas of investigation as a means of bringing language scholars onto shared ground; one melds research on a particular national culture into a strategy for ushering languages into the fold of collaborative research grant funding, from which it has been virtually excluded; a second delves into a specific cultural history to cast a light on the specificity of another; a third investigates the history of teaching translation, which it reshapes as a communicative activity, in defiance of all that it had come to represent. All exploit the techniques of traditional scholarship to break down boundaries and explore interdisciplinary spaces.

The history of languages within the Australian tertiary sector is the subject of Part III. Critical rather than nostalgic, this backward glance yields insights into the factors that influence language survival in universities today: not only the existence of “language ecologies” but also the combination of innovative teaching, community engagement, and research excellence. In contrast, Part IV, which examines current planning and policy issues, reveals disturbing inconsistencies in the way universities can tackle, or rather shy from, language planning. Departments caught in such a context of ad hoc decision making have no options for survival, despite their best efforts to engage their managers in rational discourse around policy and student wellbeing (Kinoshita 2018). In other examples, where departments do have a say in their destiny, policy directions on vexed issues such as retention or provision of postgraduate training can be developed to advantage, demonstrating the capacity of language scholars for adapting their activities to the changing priorities of their institutions.

The chapters in Part V provide further examples of languages transforming an initiative that was not necessarily designed to include them, or was conceived for other purposes, into a program that works directly to their strengths. By developing courses involving Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and linking them to cultural institutions or community language groups, the program leaders have been able to show their students’ ability to perform in socially and culturally diverse contexts and demonstrate their intercultural competence at work. Similarly, a trial program including languages in business studies was able to demonstrate successfully the advantage that intercultural competence can bring to students aiming to work in a global business environment. All three chapters affirm the value of connectedness between languages, their institutional mission, and the local and global communities in which they operate.

In literal ways, in Parts VI and VII, which are devoted to the uses of new technologies in the language teaching classroom, languages are seen to benefit from connectedness—between teacher and student, student and student, and from country to country. The linguistic benefits of telecollaborative exchanges, in particular, are well known, but the expanded range of purposes to which they are being

put—notably in the teaching of cultures, or in multi-country exchanges—is an encouraging development. While the substitution of online learning for classroom teaching is not seen as an entirely positive development, having been introduced for cost-cutting purposes in a multi-campus situation in a popular language, nevertheless a rigorous trial is introduced in order to derive maximum benefits for students from the exercise. On the other hand, when online learning is introduced to overcome a problem, as in the case of languages with low enrolments, this can be a valid option. If the outcome is positive in this case, it is that a sustained effort has been made to reproduce the benefits of classroom study by developing an online learning community. Other uses of technology, to enhance student practice activities in between classroom sessions, open up possibilities of improving student outcomes in an area over which there has previously been little opportunity for intervention. In all cases, language teachers have expanded their range of skills to produce innovative programs of benefit to the student community and to take the lead in collective planning for the learning environment of the future.

Classroom experiments are detailed in Parts VIII and IX, firstly in language-learning situations and, secondly, in the context of exploring the languages-cultures nexus. All approaches in the first group are deeply anchored in theory and designed to improve learner motivation, as well as to impact positively upon learners' future selves, their capacity for future learning or their ability to engage in collaborative learning. The chapters in the second group, no less grounded in theory, all describe the efforts deployed in creating collegial learning spaces which facilitate the entry of students into new cultural contexts, while minimizing their anxieties and maximizing their linguistic gains. Food studies and theatre performance offer pathways into cultural understandings through forms of “real world learning”, while a translation experiment focuses on reframing assessment practices with a view to promoting learner agency and building a capacity for critical analysis and self-reflection.

Part X offers examples from Australia and other parts of the world in the planning and delivery of Indigenous languages programs. The first chapter focuses on Hawai'i and its Indigenous languages revival program. This program is constructed around language-based identity expressed in *honua*, that is, contexts where the use of Hawaiian language is dominant. The university program that was developed using this model is closely integrated with school programs and a learning network is now well established over a number of island communities. The chapter on China focuses on Yúnnán Minzú University, a university dedicated to enabling ethnic minority students to study their native languages. Although its programs generally have successful learning outcomes, the prospects for employment of its graduates are bleak and teachers remain in short supply. It is suggested that stronger government action is required on these fronts and particularly in regard to endangered southwest minority languages. In South Australia, an innovative training package was developed through the technical education sector to impart the knowledge and skills for speakers of endangered Indigenous languages to teach their own languages and engage in the preparation of resource materials. Although not without encountering severe challenges, this program has survived and has seen its first graduates enter the education system. Although the history and educational contexts of each



of these three language learning programs are vastly different, what they have in common, beyond the expertise and energy of their planners, is the vast amount of community knowledge and good will that supports them and enables them to overcome the myriad difficulties they face in coming to fruition.

Part XI focuses on Australian university courses in Indigenous languages, and four different examples of such courses are offered, ranging from “strong” to revival languages. The resources devoted to the teaching of these languages vary greatly, as does the space they occupy in university programs. Pitjantjatjara from the northwest of South Australia is taught at the University of South Australia in an intensive summer school, while Yolŋu Matha from northeast Arnhem Land is taught within a degree structure at Charles Darwin University. The pedagogy which is used in these programs draws upon the teaching and learning practices used in their respective language communities and the Indigenous educators or advisers who participate in the collaborative teaching models espoused in each program are reflections of the intent of the program planners to create knowledge collaboratively. Both teams report on the success of these programs and the understandings they brought to students of a different way of being and knowing. In the other two chapters, the authors use their extensive knowledge of Kurna and Gamilaraay languages and their revival programs, to mount the case for an even greater investment by universities and governments in Aboriginal language programs, either through the cooperative model of an Australian Indigenous Languages Institute, or through a simpler model, by the offering of new language courses at tertiary level. Following this logic, Indigenous languages would immediately gain in status from being offered at this level and more interest in the maintenance and revival of these community assets would naturally flow. In both scenarios, time is seen to be running out, as the current practice of a single dedicated researcher, aided by a small community of language speakers/custodians, is intrinsically unviable, in that this combination would in itself be endangered by the permanent loss of any one of these parties.

## 5 Conclusion

Throughout the volume, universities are taken to task for their minimal involvement in languages planning and policy, whilst language teachers themselves feature as actively generating the overall sense of direction for languages that their institutions have failed to provide. Whether in the teaching and learning programs which they have devised to train students in collaborative projects, and to enable them to reach deeper local and global understandings with their fellows, or in their research-based efforts to engage with Indigenous communities in the reclamation of their most prized community assets, their language and identity, individual language scholars have demonstrated all of the qualities of commitment to community engagement and every success in motivating students to participate fully in, or “co-create” their own learning, outcomes that universities proclaim as central to their mission. If the common interests of two parties, currently divided by mutual distrust, so clearly

intersect, surely there must now be an opportunity to elaborate on the intersections paradigm, with its intrinsic promise of collaborative engagement and its foundation in a long history of cooperative endeavour.

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## Part II

# Redrawing Disciplinary Frontiers

In this section of the volume, the three chapters apply or illustrate the qualities of an intersecting model for language scholarship, whether explicitly or implicitly. While drawing on differing disciplinary expertise, all three chapters are connected through their engagement with key issues in the field and their spirited defence of practices and values that resonate with languages scholars as a community, but also lead them to question long accepted and limiting “truths”.

Lewis takes up the search for an intersecting model, with its embrace of interdisciplinarity, in the domain of policy and practice. In a lively discussion of the challenges facing languages scholars today, she firstly demonstrates how their capacity to adapt and diversify their disciplinary base has served them well in their quest for survival. She then invites languages researchers to go even further: to delve into and expand their very disciplinary bases to identify the methodologies and narratives that will help them to build bridges between their preoccupations and those of other disciplines, from both within and without the familiar sphere of the Humanities.

In a debate which concerns the community of language scholars, and enlivens the debate around where translation as a language learning activity should “sit”, Anthony Pym makes a plea for new empirical studies on the role of translation in the classroom, while staking the claim that there is no known evidence to support its exclusion. After examining the history of translation within language learning, and recalling his previous findings that a much decried orthodoxy of “grammar translation” had never existed, he argues for the “rebranding” of translation as a communicative activity, by producing a set of principles to support his case, and to serve as a base from which to launch further research into the place of translation in languages education.

Yixu Lu employs a comparatist approach to connect current preoccupations with China’s role on the world stage with myths inherited from European discourses of the past. To do so, she identifies key texts, particularly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that highlight deep and abiding misunderstandings arising principally from the tendency to accommodate China’s case within the prevailing ideologies of the day. She ranges widely across British, French and German sources to contribute to a vital ongoing global debate in the history of ideas. While

dismissing comfortable views prevailing within her own discipline, she also illustrates the particular aptitude of the language scholar for engaging in interdisciplinary debate and drawing attention to wider world problems. To disentangle the discourses, obfuscations and misappropriations of the past is seen as a first step in advancing cultural understanding.

Together these chapters reflect much of the diversity, strength, and appetite for renewal that reigns within the interdisciplinary space occupied by languages and cultures in Australian universities today. It is a space not only where questions of future directions are confidently aired, but also where disciplinary scholarship continues to be expertly and provocatively debated with international peers. Here the traditional pathways intersect seamlessly with the new.

# Research Intersections in Language Studies



**Alison Lewis**

**Abstract** Language studies in Australian universities have weathered considerable crises over the last two decades, and they have done so possibly better than in most English-speaking countries. Many language and culture programs have proved astoundingly resistant, and undergraduate numbers are not only stable, but over the last decade they have been on the rise in many places. Our disciplinary home bases continue to expand to include other areas of the humanities such as film studies, cultural history and socio-linguistics. Recent changes in the higher education sector, such as the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Engagement and Impact Assessment (EIA), present us with a further set of challenges. One way forward, which can capitalize on our transdisciplinarity, is offered by Ottmar Ette, who suggests that we reconceptualize the humanities in terms of what kind of knowledge they produce, and how. In considering this approach, I will explore strategies for developing research collaborations across schools and faculties with cognate and complementary disciplines.

**Keywords** Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) · Engagement and Impact Assessment (EIA) · Higher education · Transdisciplinarity · Humanities · Research collaboration · Language studies

## 1 Challenges for Languages in Australian Universities

Over the last three decades Language studies in Australian universities have faced considerable challenges, or crises, as indeed have their counterparts in most Anglophone countries. The tertiary education sector has weathered passably well many of these crises—the transition to greater managerialism and corporatization,

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the shift to a knowledge economy and globalization of markets—, as it has various administrative restructurings and reforms at the local level. We have arguably weathered *less well* the global shift towards greater monolingualism, or what Michael Clyne and John Hajek have called the “monolingual mindset” (Hajek and Slaughter 2014). Despite the diversity of languages that are spoken in these countries, Anglophone countries are at real risk of becoming nations of “second language illiterates”, as Russell Berman lamented (Berman 2011). Language learning is increasingly seen in Australia, in schools and universities, as difficult, and high-level linguistic competency almost as unobtainable.

Yet, many language and culture programs around Australia have proved astoundingly resilient (Dunne and Pavlyshyn 2012, pp. 11–12). In German, for instance, the number of universities offering language and culture courses—16 of them—has not decreased over the last 30 years but actually increased (Fernandez et al. 1993). Staffing resources may have dwindled, and conditions of employment become more precarious, but student numbers have been relatively stable over the last decade. In some places they have even risen significantly although this trend now appears to be reversing, and will probably continue to fall in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The introduction of so-called breadth or broadening subjects as a compulsory part of every degree in a few universities has revealed a demand for language study that has taken language staff rather by surprise. Growth in student numbers has been accompanied by growth in diversity in the student body, as more and more students from outside the arts and humanities elect to study a language. As student cohorts continue to diversify, so too do our disciplinary home bases. Staff in language departments are increasingly coming from a broader disciplinary base in the humanities and social sciences that include linguistics and applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and pragmatics, literature and culture, film and performance studies, philosophy, cultural studies and cultural history, and gender and sexuality studies. Although this could be construed as a loss of core disciplinary identity, this breadth could equally be considered an asset. Particularly at a time when the higher education sector is undergoing changes in the way it measures research productivity and activity, I argue that this diversity can and must become the language disciplines’ best friend.

Managerialism, with “its language of performance indicators, rankings, quality assurance processes” (Kalfa and Taksa 2017, p. 687), has not only impacted on traditional ideas of collegiality (Knights and Clark 2014), it has also affected academics’ research agendas and behaviours (Nickson 2014). In the latest of higher education reforms introducing “engagement and impact” into the 2018 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) exercise, universities are required to evaluate, in addition to quality, the impact of research on the community, as well as levels of engagement, or outreach, with non-academic partners. Changes introduced by the Federal Government of Australia in 2017 to the allocation of Research Block Grants to Higher Education Providers, specifically those relating to funding for research training (Research Training Program, RTP) and to support the systemic costs of university research (Research Training Scheme, RTS) are leading to substantial shifts in research cultures across the sector. New methods of calculating the block

grants which give more weight to national competitive grant income and so-called “engagement” monies stemming from other government or industry partners, tenders and consultancies, including international funding bodies, will see staff in languages coming under increasing pressure to generate far more research income than has hitherto been the case.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not enough for us to publish, and publish internationally, which is something languages staff do very well. What we need to be able to do is to navigate the shifting terrain of academic and administrative research better and more creatively. As the cartoon (Fig. 1) about life on the metaphorical “island of research” captures so aptly, we all bring an “ocean of experience” to our research work in our doctoral training, and are equipped with a veritable “sea of theory” and ideas. Yet, teaching and researching in an environment that is both increasingly global while still being predominantly monolingual can for languages staff feel as if we are marooned on a desert island. All too easily, we embark on projects from a sound disciplinary vantage point, venturing forth in our enquiries from the “city of hope” only to have our hopes dashed, cruelly, not only on the “peaks of confusion”



**Fig. 1** The Island of Research. First published in 1966 by Ernest Harburg as “Research Map” in *American Scientist*, 4, 470.

Reproduced with kind permission from Ernest Harburg, as a mark of respect for Charles Pierce’s famous call: “Do not block the path of inquiry” (Pierce 1998, Vol. 2, p. 48)

<sup>1</sup>See Research Block Grants Calculation Methodology (Australian Government. Department of Education and Training 2019).



or in the “canyons of despair,” but even on the “deltas of dirty data”. Our best efforts at pursuing large-scale research projects are frequently thwarted on the treacherous “money passes” in the “mountains” of research and data we collect. They are dashed above all in that most inhospitable terrain of all on our island of research, that “great fundless desert.”

## 2 Individual Versus Collaborative Models of Research

In future, languages staff will most likely be expected to meet research income targets, whether from national funding schemes such as the ARC Discovery Projects, Discovery Early Career Projects and Linkage Projects or from other government and industry sources. Staff members’ performance is now measured on their ability to attract other sources of funding such as category 2, 3 and 4. In some universities, Arts faculties are debating whether the definition of research active needs to follow these broader national trends and adopt a far harsher set of criteria that makes research income almost mandatory for senior levels of staff.

Research in the UK indicates that the imposition of such targets is having significant impacts on the life of individual researchers and research culture in general (Nickson 2014, p. 61). In a study of one UK university, Nickson identified both enabling and restrictive impacts of management practices on the individual researcher (p. 71), finding among other things that many researchers successfully negotiated their engagement with new regimes of monitoring research so that they could pursue their own agendas. Researchers were thus able to “achieve their goals in spite of management practices, rather than because of them” (p. 71). By the same token, many perceived the new managerialism as restrictive, and were feeling isolated, under pressure, and undervalued (p. 71).

There is sufficient anecdotal evidence to suggest that Australian researchers are responding much in the same way. I propose that one way languages staff can “survive” on the “island of research” and continue to value collegiality and academic freedom, while negotiating new managerial imperatives, is to rethink some of our habituated ideas of how we conduct research and with whom. In the humanities and social sciences, the traditional model has long been the lone scholar, who “squirrels” away at his pet topic, collecting research materials over the course of a career which he painstakingly crafts into a life-long individual research profile that bears his own unique stamp and identity. Indeed, in the past the lone scholar has been something of a “lone ranger”, predominantly western, white and male. As Clegg has revealed, the ideal of the traditional academic is typically encapsulated by an elite in academia which is “mostly white, male and middle class” (2008, p. 331).

The Lone Ranger, as we know from the American radio series, the postwar TV series and films that became popular around the globe, was brave and intrepid; he overcame adversity because he believed that one man had the power to “make the west a better place” (Andreychuk 2018, p. 2). Modelled on the historical Texas Rangers of the early nineteenth century who fought for Texas’s independence from

Mexico, the original radio character created in 1933 was a hero in the “vein of a Zorro or Robin Hood” (Andreychuk 2018, p. 10). The Lone Ranger was dubbed “lone” because all the other Texas Rangers were dead, and he was the only one left. Like so many superheroes of the modern age, the Lone Ranger is a frontier hero, infinitely resourceful, needing little aid from outside to get by, and is always prepared to go it alone. Moreover, the original Lone Ranger “symbolize[s] courage, fair play, and honesty” (Andreychuk 2018, p. 12).

The model of the lone scholar, like the Lone Ranger, embodies many of the “heroic” virtues that have traditionally informed academics’ sense of calling and professional identity. The lone scholar, who today may indeed be female, sees herself at the frontier of knowledge creation; she values independence, collegiality and the freedom to choose her research topics, although these values are under threat by the corporatization of universities (Nickson 2014, p. 52). She is content to gather her data alone, to analyse it alone, and to publish her findings in single-authored publications. The lone scholar, like the Lone Ranger, is also a master improviser and good at adapting her behaviour to achieve her professional goals to meet the exigencies of the teaching and research environment (Bennich-Björkman 2007, pp. 351–356). In fact, the individual researcher in languages has in the past proven extremely adept at adjusting to changing student and institutional demands. One way she has responded over the last 30–40 years to these pressures has been to reskill and to either shift the focus of her field of research to an area deemed more relevant or move sideways into different fields of research altogether. Some trained medievalists in the 1970s in French and German upskilled to become experts in language pedagogy and audio language laboratories, and in the 1980s some rebadged themselves successfully as computer-assisted language learning experts. In general, many academics in language departments have branched out from their original disciplines into neighbouring fields such as literary theory, philosophy, sociology, film, history and linguistics. Many of the generation now over 50 have diversified their research fields or moved sideways into cognate fields—literary historians often add film, cinema studies or performance studies to their domains of expertise. Literary theorists often expand their reach into philosophy or aesthetics, psychoanalysis, media or systems theory. Cultural historians find themselves adding value to their skills by becoming sexuality, economic or military historians as well. Like the Lone Ranger, the lone scholar endeavours to make the most of the equipment she has but she also ensures that she has a greater range of equipment to hand.

While we might admire the lone scholar’s tenacity and persistence in the face of adversity, the language academic might be better equipped to withstand the pressures of managerialism in her institution if she abandoned her isolationist stoicism and brought additional expertise on board from outside. By drawing on others who have similar interests but with different skill sets, language academics may be better served by creating project-specific teams or collaborations and thematic networks, thus sparing themselves much of the pressure to reskill. Teams or clusters of researchers based on a meaningful division of labour between experts can save time and work. Members of teams are more likely to have credible track records and hence greater success in securing external funding, whether this be from national

competitive grant schemes such as the Australian Research Council (ARC) or from external bodies.

Research in the United Kingdom into changing research cultures has shown that academics engage in “informal” strategies to pursue their own research agendas within “formal” management frameworks (Nickson 2014, pp. 72–73). If we include among such informal strategies the choice to join a particular research network or academic-led initiatives to form a specific team to carry out a collaborative project, informal solutions may also offer languages staff in Australian universities palatable ways to navigate the tricky territory of new management frameworks and imperatives. The advantage of such collaborations is that they can capitalize on our existing transdisciplinarity while extending our reach into other topics and fields. These research clusters or collaborations do not need to be with the same colleagues as in our teaching, and may involve colleagues from areas inside the humanities and social sciences as well as outside. This opens up many possibilities for projects of different kinds, for transnational and disciplinary ones, for national-based but transdisciplinary ones, for intercultural and interdisciplinary, or even transdisciplinary and transnational projects. Projects can be either theme-focused, problem-oriented, genre-based, medium-based or historically grounded.

This is certainly not to suggest that research collaborations or concentrations, especially larger scale ones, are easy to forge or without their own intrinsic challenges. In institutions where languages staff are integrated into larger humanities or social science organizational units, there are fewer structural hurdles to overcome to find partners with similar interests. Even so, they can require an enormous effort and time-commitment to mount, and the success rate with ARC projects is relatively low. For the last 10 years the success rate has been around 20% for ARC Discovery Project grants.<sup>2</sup> Of the 17 Discovery Projects funded under the Language, Culture and Communication code (Field of Research code 20) in 2018, only three had single chief investigators.<sup>3</sup> For 2020, single-researcher projects in the 2-digit FoR code 20 were funded at a rate of 2:18. For the same year the ratio of successful projects funded for single-researchers versus teams in the history and archaeology codes (FoR 21) was similar at 4:19.<sup>4</sup> There is a distinct trend in recent years towards larger project teams with multiple investigators. There are other issues too. Apart from the logistical matters of finding suitable partners, there are other things to consider, such as tight restrictions on eligibility for individual schemes, which may change from year to year, and the effort needed to bring the constituent parts of a grant application into a harmonious whole.

Transdisciplinary projects in particular can be complex bridge-building or even diplomatic exercises. Participants must tease out the communalities and affinities

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<sup>2</sup> See ARC Schemes (Australian Government. Australian Research Council 2018) and also Aidan Byrne (2014).

<sup>3</sup> See Scheme Round Statistics for Approved Proposals (Australian Government. Australian Research Council 2019).

<sup>4</sup> See Scheme Round Statistics for Approved Proposals (Australian Government. Australian Research Council 2020).

between the disciplines in “big picture” or meta-disciplinary ways that we are often not accustomed to. In this context I will explore one fruitful avenue for building an innovative conceptual foundation for collaborations between the cognate disciplines of history and literature, which can provide a basis for research collaborations between literary and cultural historians, and by extension, between literary historians and potentially a range of other disciplines.

### 3 Rethinking the Humanities as Life Knowledge

Rather than regarding collaborations simply as a pragmatic response to institutional imperatives, I argue that we should build them on far more solid epistemological ground by heeding some recent suggestions about how to reconceptualize humanities research more generally. An interesting innovation in literary studies in recent years is the “life science turn” exemplified by the work of Ottmar Ette, Professor of Romance Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Potsdam. In a series of influential conference and research publications Ette has provided a blueprint for rethinking the humanities. His research poses the question of what kinds of knowledge (*Wissen*) the humanities produce. Ette’s first essay on his vision for the humanities was prompted in 2007 in the Year of the Humanities in Germany by perceptions that the humanities had long been on the back foot, and in the distribution of resources taken a back seat (Ette 2010, p. 13).

For Ette, literature offers a unique way to bridge the gap between the sciences and arts. For it to do so, however, he contends that we need to rethink literature in relation to the specific contribution it makes to society. Ette understands his new approach as part of a recent rediscovery of the significance of *reference*—a “return of the real” and a rediscovery of “life” (Asholt and Ette 2010, p. 9). Together with his collaborator Wolfgang Asholt, Ette attempts both to breathe new life back into literature and to reposition it in relation to the sciences, as the title of Asholt’s 2010 essay suggests: “new life (in/for) literary science. Literature as knowledge about life?” [*Neues Leben (in) der Literaturwissenschaft?*] (Asholt 2010, p. 65). Intellectual inspiration came from Michel Foucault, who in *Les Mots et les Choses* (The Order of Things) speaks poetically about the emergence of the term “life” in the nineteenth century: “Life is the root of all existence,” he writes, “the nucleus of being and non-being; there is being only because there is life” (Foucault 1989, p. 303).

In his programmatic essay for the volume, Ette argues for reconceptualizing literature as “life knowledge” (*Lebenswissen*), and as a particular way of knowing about life (Ette 2010, p. 11). By extension, literary studies (and here we could add in history) can be seen as a “life science” (*Lebenswissenschaft*) that describes and interprets different forms and aspects of life (*Leben*). Literature is concerned with life in various modalities and temporalities, past, present and future or even with hypothetical forms of life as exist in fantasy and science fiction. Literary studies and

literary history all explore various facets of life that include experience (*Erleben*), survival (*Überleben*) and modes of living together or coexistence (*Zusammenleben*).

Ette's second mission is to address the hijacking of "life" by the pure biological and technological sciences. He argues that the literatures of the world have not banished the concept of life—on the contrary. Hitherto, he contends, literary studies have responded somewhat helplessly when confronted with the term "life". Life has become so obvious in literature that it runs the risk of disappearing or of being subsumed by concepts of reality and society. Yes, as Basseler remarks, if literature is not intimately connected to life then how can it purport to know anything about life (2010, p. 208)? Philologies would be well served therefore in salvaging the term from its exclusive usage in the life sciences—where it denotes mere physical life, rather than how life is lived and experienced.

Ette's project arguably deals no less with life, and life in all its stages and forms. It deals with individual and collective lives, past life and present life, new life, which is closely related to the question of *Überleben*, survival, living on or after, afterlife or aftermath. Ette's life turn also encompasses what Giorgio Agamben calls the "bare life", that form of biopower structured as a state of exception, which is oblivious to the quality of the life lived (Agamben 1998). Bare life is particularly relevant for analysing works that tackle themes such as the plight of refugees in contemporary Europe as well as during previous waves of flight and migration before, during and after the Second World War. There are many other forms of life that literature explores, such as the thirst for life (*Lebenslust*), and the relationship between life and sex/eros, as well as between life and food and hunger.

Ette insists that literature—and we could argue along similar lines for other media such as film, theatre, performance and television—possesses competencies concerning life that are not dealt with by other disciplines. He and his collaborators thus ask if it is not timely in an age of increasing globalization to reposition the humanities in relation to the life sciences for the sake of our own disciplinary survival (*Überleben*). To pose the question as to what literature's specific contribution to knowledge of life is, is by no means trivial. It may seem, Ette realizes, after years of theoretical discussion about literature's self-referentiality and autonomy, rather like a provocation to talk about *the use of literature*. To speak about how we use literature and why we need it, even as a form of life knowledge, could moreover be seen as reducing the complexity of literature. After all, literature, like related media, has its own logic and internal rules. Instead, Ette suggests, we should rediscover what this logic is, and assert it in relation to other disciplines, say, to history. We should thereby not seek to distance literature from these cognate disciplines but to stress its complementarity. We need to rethink why society needs each medium and its accompanying discipline.

Indeed, reconceptualizing literature as a *Lebenswissen* may help us understand better why we need literature, why it was written and why we still read it. Not only may it hold the key to communicating to the wider community why literature matters, it can also be helpful in redefining our disciplinary identity. This rethinking can in turn facilitate a collaborative approach to research, equipping literary specialists better with a rationale for how literature can advance knowledge in ways that no

other medium can. When we argue for the importance of literary knowledge with, say, non-literature specialists, Ette's insights serve to remind ourselves and others that literature bears a responsibility for our knowledge about life, and that it is our task to explain what this relationship to life is, why it is important and how it works. Literature is, says Ette "that 'mobile' of knowledge that allows us to experiment with culturally as well as socially divergent forms of life and norms of life" (2012, p. 9).

## 4 Rethinking Literature as Life Writing

One way in which this anthropological turn in literary studies can encourage us to break out of the "lone ranger" mindset is by rethinking what counts as literature. Rethinking how we define literature can help us to forge links to a host of other disciplines in the life sciences such as psychology, ecology, anatomy, evolutionary biology and ethology. By way of illustration of my argument, I propose to explore here in detail a fruitful alliance derived from my own experience, namely the alliance between literature and history. Both historians and literary historians have long used personal testimony as legitimate sources for their research. Memoirs, autobiographies, diaries, letters and other personal memorabilia are invaluable traces of the past and of past lives that both historians and literary historians draw on in their work. Literary historians tend to read memoirs and autobiography as literature (using autobiographical theory)—and historians read them as ego documents. Both usually fall under the category of memory, and literary scholars and historians alike are concerned with memory, oral and written forms of memory, though literary historians tend to stick with written memory. In German studies memory is a major field of study when dealing with the Holocaust and in recent years has focused on German wartime suffering—exploring memory in fiction and non-fiction. But there is another area of memory studies emerging in the memoirs of the GDR—German reunification has seen a massive boost in personal testimony from loyal communist writers and exiled dissidents to spymasters. Now the next generation of eyewitnesses is writing its stories—second-generation victims of the Stasi who were forced into exile with their parents, and second-generation perpetrators, the offspring of Stasi agents exposed in espionage scandals (Jilovsky and Lewis 2015a, b).

With a view to facilitating collaborations between historians and literary historians, it may be useful to rethink how we view such memory documents. What historians often call ego documents are for instance nothing other than forms of personal writing about life and survival, that is, "life writing" (Mittermayer 2009, p. 90). The same holds true for the literary historian, for whom all forms of memory—autobiography, confessions, memoirs, letters and diaries—are illuminating windows onto the past, not only in connection with literary figures but with non-literary figures. Interpreting these forms of non-fiction involves careful attentive reading for both disciplines; it requires a hermeneutics that can decode their specific discursive formations and ways of making meaning. This requires us to be sensitive to questions

of narrative and narration, to story-telling, questions of perspective and voice, as well as to emplotment.

A literary studies approach that regards fiction as a key source of knowledge about life, say, concerning the past, written in a specific mode, and non-fiction—whether this be autobiography or the life writing in security files—as a complementary source of insights into lived lives, can, I suggest, form the basis for research collaborations between literary scholars and historians. If we can widen the focus of our research projects to encompass a transnational, trans-European or even trans-continental approach to a topic or to include other disciplines, say, from education, linguistics, sociology or politics, languages researchers may be able to turn their sense of isolation into a strength. In the following case taken from my research into East German Stasi files, I argue that a nationally focused project lends itself especially well to a transnational comparison, for instance, with other security services across Eastern Europe and to the recently declassified KGB archives in Latvia and Lithuania. Cognate disciplines in this case would be history, surveillance studies, intelligence studies, cultural studies and legal studies, including transitional justice studies. Collaborations with scholars in these fields are all possible and eminently feasible. By way of an example I will explore the commonalities with history in terms of sources and methodology.

## 5 Rethinking History and the Archive

It is not only texts of memory or the histories we write that require careful reading, and reading that is attentive to the poetic and linguistic elements underpinning historical narratives, as Hayden White famously argued in *Metahistory* (2014). The archive itself needs to be read with a similar hermeneutics of suspicion. The historical imagination, according to White, is constrained by a critical consciousness and a poetic one, the latter being to what extent one can synthesize and shape the prosaic elements of the lived past (White 2014, p. 91). The historian has to choose between possible plot structures and modes of emplotment (p. 92). I contend that these plot structures and the formal and rhetorical structures that White identifies as informing the histories we write about the past—and hence the overarching meta-narratives we apply to create coherence and meaning from our data—are already present in the archives we use. Thus, when interpreting archival documents we need to pay attention to the same poetic, narrative and rhetorical frameworks we would look for in literary texts, whether we are talking about historical documents, medical case notes, government or police records and any other kind of written document that finds its way into the archives.

The challenge for historical scholarship on security files is to determine what these security plot structures were and how they worked to lock those inscribed into them into Cold War ideological straightjackets. As Dominick LaCapra has argued, police reports, for instance, can be read like novels that contain fragments of biographies of suspects, which reveal persistent “fantasies about conspiracies against public order” (1985, p. 126). Police files, like secret police files, are in many ways

variations on the genre of the criminal record. According to Cristina Vatulescu, Soviet secret police files are crime narratives that are less concerned with investigating a particular crime than with compiling an extensive “biography of the suspect” (2004, p. 32). The files share their interest in biography and the character of the suspect with Soviet detective stories. The subject of the file is not the criminal but the political enemy (p. 32). Vatulescu calls Soviet secret police files “arresting biographies,” arresting because they were compiled in order to make an arrest, but also for their arresting mode of address (p. 243). Secret police files from the Eastern bloc, especially those left behind by the infamous East German Ministry for State Security, or the Stasi, can likewise be read as a form of literature which is infused by an overbearing paranoid consciousness that starts out with a suspicion and strives to confirm the “truth” of that suspicion. We could tentatively conjecture that this narrative bears similarities to White’s genre of tragedy in which “both the hero and the common life are transformed” (2014, p. 95), and contradictions are resolved and eliminated.

The 180 kilometres of Stasi files that were miraculously salvaged after the Berlin Wall fell are a powerful archive about the internal operations of a defunct secret service and political police force that provide a riveting window onto this peculiar political consciousness. But even more fundamentally the files are about human lives and how they were formed and deformed by this political consciousness. As Fiona Capp writes: “Scramble the letters of the word ‘file’ and the result is a ‘life’” (1993, p. 3). Not only for this reason is it most useful to classify secret police files as a specific example of life writing. If we define life writing in broad terms as a form of non-fictional writing about the lives of real people, whether biographical or autobiographical, then file writing clearly seems to belong alongside other forms of writing about *real* lives. Moreover, Stasi files tell narratives not only about lives; they are accounts of secret lives and were, at least originally until they were declassified, *secret* accounts of those lives.

If to historicize is to narrativize, as White suggests, we need to turn this archival information into stories. To be able to write about the lives of those caught up in the web of suspicion of the security apparatus, secret police files, like all documents in the archives, must first be made intelligible, and this involves acknowledging their narrative character. According to Paul Ricœur, life stories, whether historical or fictional, “become more intelligible when what one applies to them are the narrative models or plots borrowed from history or fiction” (Ricœur 1991, p. 188). We can read them much as we would biography, even though we do not like to think of literary and bureaucratic biography as similar. But both forms document and construct lives of citizens, thus creating their own particular truths about them. Literary biography often captures heroic or great lives, whereas the bureaucratic secret police biography attempts to grasp the lives of ordinary citizens deemed non-conformist, subversive or dissident. During the Cold War, in western democracies such as Australia, these citizens were frequently communists; in East Germany, they were “hostile-negative elements” suspected of being anti-communists; in the Soviet Union, Ukraine or Romania, they were often wealthy peasants, members of minorities, Jews branded Zionists and counter-revolutionaries among other things.



It is useful to think of Stasi files as “hostile unauthorized biographies” of writers and ordinary citizens who were deemed potential “enemies of the state” (Lewis 2003, p. 377). They were unauthorized because they were construed illegally and without the target’s permission and often through covert practices of surveillance. Moreover, secret police files can be deeply incriminating biographies, as Fiona Capp (1993) writes of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) files on communist party writer Frank Hardy. Hence, the Stasi files are also fascinating biographies of those subjects who did the surveillance: the informants and their double, even multiple lives. In this sense, the secret police dossiers of Stasi victims and informants offer up valuable insights more broadly into the lived experience of communist dictatorships (Lewis 2016a, b; Glajar et al. 2016).

The Stasi files, like most of the secret police files from the Eastern bloc, but also like the ASIO files from the Cold War, are immensely valuable for our understanding of the past. Declassified documents of defunct regimes, for instance, of societies in transition from dictatorship to democracy, are testament to violence perpetrated on individuals and groups, often of crimes that have gone unpunished, and forms of injustice that have yet to be redressed. Hence, they are also important for truth and reconciliation, for assessing the extent of participation in these regimes and for investigating human rights abuses and civil rights violations. The Stasi files also provide chilling evidence of the willingness of citizens of Eastern bloc dictatorships to collude in authoritarian systems of power. They have been key to truth-finding, although their value for reconciliation has yet to be fully recognized.

Literary scholars can bring unique specialist knowledge to the challenging task of interpreting security archives. Versed in reading texts and their multiple shades of ambiguity, literary scholars are well trained to decode the conditions of production of a file, or the context—in the case of Stasi files the context is that of a post-Stalinist dictatorship—in which a file has been opened and archived. We have a keen awareness of the ideological subtexts in literature, which can be put to good use when it comes to reading the rises and falls in temperature of the Cold War at any particular time. We are attuned to the mix of the referential and non-referential in literature, for instance, in historical or speculative fiction. Security files contain texts that too often appear to straddle the divide between fiction and fact, paranoia and reality. To be sure, the files are bureaucratic texts, cold dry records that capture lives in a typically impersonal manner. And yet they are also an extraordinary treasure trove of mundane moments and highly dramatic turning points in individuals’ lives, revealing examples of forced exile or of major professional failures (such as the exclusion from the Writers Guild or the failure to publish a work because of censorship), and often they document the concomitant emotions and affect produced by these crises. It is useful to think of the files as containing a mix of high and low points in lives, a jarring concoction of fragments of lives, or life stories. We can think of them therefore as poetic and prosaic “file stories” (Glajar 2016, p. 57). File stories can bear uncanny resemblances to fictional stories of espionage or to love stories and romantic tales, although they often disappoint in their banality. And sometimes these real file stories can be stranger than fiction, as the saying goes: they can be larger than life, and sometimes even outrageously implausible.

File stories often start out as paranoid defensive narratives—of treason and counter-revolutionary activity in East Germany, and of communist infiltration in Australia. These narratives functioned like overarching ideological meta-narratives that framed the individual biographies of communists in the Stasi files and anti-communists in the ASIO files, and locked their targets into subversive behaviour. Over the lifetime of a file, the secret police collected evidence that cemented these hostile identities, only registering incriminating evidence and ignoring all that seemed to exonerate the target if it did not fit into the security world view. During the collecting of information, the apparatus wrote its targets into wider Cold War meta-narratives about sabotage and enemy influence.

The aim of these bureaucratic biographies was simply social control, to create acquiescent and docile social subjects. As texts, therefore, they were implicated in the workings of power, making them a pernicious “technology of power” deployed to demonize, harass, and intimidate suspects, to arrest and even to torture them. But, as Capp writes, “once people were characterized as dangerous social types—as subversives—they were written into a self-perpetuating dossier over which they had no control. They were forever under suspicion until the file was discontinued, destroyed or the person died” (Capp 1993, p. 5). After unification, targets or victims were offered the unique possibility to view the incriminating evidence collected on them, and learn the truth about the regime’s surveillance. Despite the distorted overarching view framing each target’s life story, much of what victims found in their files—incontrovertible evidence of betrayal and denunciation, sobering insights into the regime’s Machiavellian plans to sabotage their writing and ruin their lives—proved true and verifiable. While it is possible that an individual entry in a file might be falsified or embellished, it is highly unlikely that any one entire dossier was a fabrication. For victims, secret police files have therefore proven to be an invaluable resource, especially since they have been able to “write themselves out of the Stasi files” upon reading them. Before the fall of the Wall this was virtually impossible, and even after unification it has taken time for East German victims to apply to see their files, to begin to correct and overwrite them, thereby challenging their secret police record and narrating their stories from their personal perspective. For the spies who wrote the greater part of the files, it has proved much harder to write themselves out of the secret police narratives, since the legislation governing access to the files was not designed to assist perpetrators. Most perpetrators are denied access to the files, unless they are thought to be serious about making amends and seeking reconciliation with their victims.

## 6 Summary

In summary, for language scholars, navigating the island of university research has possibly never thrown up so many challenges as it has now. The paths are windy, there are treacherous passes, and mountains to climb, often it seems to little avail. In Germany there is a saying which comes from a poem by Brecht: The travails of the mountains lie behind us, in front of us lie the travails of the plains. And in East

Germany, this was often seen to mean that despite the herculean effort of overcoming Nazism, it still was not going to be an easy task to build socialism.

And indeed, on the island of research the plains look as daunting as the mountains. However, if one takes a closer look, it appears that there is some uncharted territory on the island. It is no coincidence that the big uncharted territory lies adjacent to the great fundless desert. It might be appropriate to rebadge this territory, calling it “collaboration outside of language and/or discipline base”. If the task of collaboration outside one’s home discipline seems as though it might create more problems than it solves, it is worth remembering that in the cartoon world of the “island of research” the uncharted terrain is also next door to that other island we all aspire to reach one day: the “know-it-all” island.

In terms of the broad sweep of research in languages in Australia, we need to think beyond our traditional disciplinary background in creative ways to find common ground with cognate disciplines with similar interests. This can in turn encourage us to widen the focus of our individual research topics and fields, and assist in devising projects and mounting teams to make bids for funding for projects on transnational and interdisciplinary topics in which we have a stake. The key to the success of such bids for projects may well be to mine a rich source of archival material and to find a common denominator with other disciplines that can foster further enquiry and a fruitful dialogue. Some such common denominators that can lend projects methodological coherence can be found in questions of performance, bodies and embodiment; texts; semiotics, or, in the case of the project I have outlined, in life writing and secret police documents. Finding bridges between the natural sciences and literature—reconceived as a life science—may be another way of smoothing the path to collaboration.

To return to the solitary researcher as a kind of Lone Ranger, we should not be surprised to find that despite his creed of battling the Wild West alone, the legendary Lone Ranger was never really alone. He always had help gathering his firewood, and galloping around the great deserts of the Wild West—if not from women, then at the least from his horse Silver, but also from his tireless sidekick Tonto. I suggest we ought not forget Silver and Tonto, and what the three of them could contribute and achieve together. The lone researcher will still be a model the ARC continues to fund, and the model we pursue in many projects, but it is not the only model. Thus, to steer clear of those valleys of despair and the great fundless desert we need not only funding sources but also collaborators who can complement, inspire and enhance our research, and lift us out of the lonely fog of the ranger mindset.

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# Rebranding Translation



Anthony Pym

**Abstract** Immersion ideologies long tried to banish L1 from additional-language teaching, and translation with it. Translation is now returning to the language classroom, however, bolstered by new ideas of what it can be and just a few empirical studies of what learning outcomes it can contribute to.

This chapter looks back on the history of translation in additional-language teaching, with particular attention to the social contexts involved, the dominant ideologies of language learning, and the various types of translation used. The basic claim is that the exclusion of translation relied on the assumption of a monolingual community, and that this assumption necessarily relegated translation to a post-hoc checking activity. On the other hand, when the community is assumed to be multilingual, translation assumes a more central role as a set of socially useful skills and its conceptualization broadens into a range of dynamic communicative activities. This second frame is then further reinforced by the availability of online translation technologies, widely used but rarely taught.

A second aspect of this history is the way in which ideologies have operated in the absence of controlled empirical research. A few new empirical results nevertheless indicate that communicative translation activities correlate with some improved learning outcomes. They might provide an occasion to improve on the past.

**Keywords** Translation · Additional-language teaching · Immersion · Online translation technologies · Communicative translation · Learning outcomes

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## 1 Translation Now

Translating is coming back to additional-language teaching. This is a general trend that has been going on for a few decades; it should be news to no one. Indeed, when I asked attendants at the LCNAU conference in Adelaide to raise their hand if they used translation when teaching languages, the forest of positive responses was so thick that I suspect that, in the particular field of language teaching in Australian universities, translation never really went away.<sup>1</sup> The prime question here could be not *whether* translation should be used, but *what kind of translation activities* are best suited to additional-language teaching (Königs asked the same question in the German context in 2000).

In some less enlightened parts of the world, however, translation has been effectively buried beneath the ideals of various immersive and communicative methods. It is still considered a very bad thing. A few decades ago the situation reached the point where, in France, proponents of the *méthode directe* had the use of L1 officially banned from the L2 classroom, and with it all possibility of using translation (Harvey 1996, p. 46). The prime reason for this was that translation activities stop students from thinking in L2, and thus hinder them from attaining spoken fluency—which is actually a good argument, if and when spoken fluency is the only aim we have when learning a language. On the other side of business, there are educationalists who actually want a lot of L1 and L2 mixes in the classroom but see translation as being too restricted for the kinds of multilingual skills required. For Zarate et al. (2004, p. 230), translation would be no more than “a reformulating activity that obscures all the challenges to intercultural communication”; what students really need, apparently, is “cultural mediation” (in the United States one would say “translanguaging”). A third mode of attack then comes from language educationists who see translation as a stratospherically difficult language competence, to be attained only by professional translators and thereby condemned to be of no profit or interest for lesser mortals. This is how a 2018 *Companion Volume* to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, which in 2001 included translation and interpreting as full parts of “mediation”, scandalously does not include them among the descriptors and scales for “mediation skills”—translation has apparently become so hard that it is off the scales for language learners (Council of Europe 2018, pp. 35, 107, 113). So translation is somehow either too banal or too difficult for the language class.

What interests me here is that translation can have a positive image in some university settings and such a negative image in what is still mainstream thought on language teaching. It is a problem not of *what* translation really is, but what people *think* it is, and how much they are prepared to explore it. There is a serious issue of

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is based on a keynote address given at the Fourth Biennial Colloquium of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU), at the University of Adelaide, on November 27 2017.

branding at stake. And if you are on the side of translation, as I am, there is a serious need for *rebranding* in some quarters. But how can that be done?

Before responding to that question, let me seek a little inspiration in history, since it is in the history of language teaching that many of the current misconceptions and fears are based. For centuries prior to immersion ideologies, language teachers were using translation in their classes. Were they all really so wrong?

## 2 A Typology of Translation Activities

We know Roger Ascham used translation in his classes in the sixteenth century because he tells us quite a lot about it in *The Scholemaster* (1579), self-described as the *plaine and perfite way of teaching, to understand, write and speake, the Latin tong*. A perfect method seems worth following in some detail. After the instructor explains basic syntax and presents a lexicon, the learner is shown a relatively easy Latin passage and text-based teaching begins:

First, let him teach the childe, cherefullie and plainlie, the cause, and matter of the letter: then, let him construe it into Englishe, so oft, as the childe may easilie carie awaie the vnderstanding of it. Lastlie, parse it ouer perfitlie. (Ascham 1579, p. 8)

So to teach children Latin in a “plain and perfect way”, you first write out a translation for them? No, not quite. The learner’s initial understanding of the foreign here seems to be through *spoken* exchange (“cherefullie” is not a written mode), an oral discussion of words and meanings. Only then is that first understanding of the foreign concretized by a “construal” in the target language, presumably spoken by the instructor—by which we might understand a form of translation that includes explanations and probably fragments of the start text. Following that, the teacher runs through the spoken rendition, again speaking. Then the whole thing is repeated by the learner, speaking but not yet writing:

This done thus, let the childe, by and by, both construe and parse it ouer againe: so, that it may appeare, that the childe douteth in nothing, that his master taught him before.

This privileging of spoken exchange is perhaps motivated, since the text in question is Cicero, the archetypical orator. Yet the perfect method is supposed to be general in application, to both the spoken and written modes. It is only after three or so spoken treatments of the text that a written rendition is sought, along with first mention of the verb *to translate* and the presence of paper:

After this, the childe must take a paper booke, and sitting in some place, where no man shall prompe him, by him self, let him translate into Englishe his former lesson.

There is only one learner, of course, given the exclusive nature of sixteenth-century education. And the learner is not necessarily a man, despite the pronouns: Ascham’s most famous student, from 1548 to 1550, was Elizabeth Tudor, future queen. This learner is left to invent her own English translation; no model translation is in sight. And she is working on a substantial piece of text, rather than decontextualized words or phrases. The method proceeds:



Then shewing it to his master, let the master take from him his latin booke, and pausing an houre, at the least, then let the childe translate his owne Englishe into latin againe, in an other paper booke.

So the Latin text is taken away and then, at least an hour later, the learner has to back-translate from English into Latin, again in writing. In this case there is indeed a model translation, Cicero's Latin, and the exercise would seem to have more to do with memorizing that text rather than inventing a rendition. That memorization then becomes a product to be evaluated:

When the childe bringeth it, turned into latin, the master must compare it with *Tullies* booke, and laie them both together: and where the childe doth well, either in chosing, or true placing of *Tullies* wordes, let the master praise him, and saie here ye do well.

Affirmative pedagogy, of course: no scolding of errors, since “there is no such whetstone, to sharpen a good witte, and encourage a will to learnyng, as is praise” (Ascham 1579, p. 8).

Translation works both ways here, into and from English, and is informed by several purposes: first, understanding in spoken exchange and a spoken rendition in English, then written expression in English, and finally, yes, text-based memorization of the start text. Of these three, the translation into English is specifically designed to improve the learner's capacity for expression, and this purpose is recommended for any vernacular: “what tonge soever he doth use” (p. 8).

These various types and uses of translation might be schematized as follows:

1. **Initial construal**, in spoken exchange, most probably mixing the two languages concerned. Note that the learner here is already able to write; they might be aged more than 12 or so; there is no suggestion of immersion in a monolingual exchange where the additional language is used exclusively. It is implicitly recognized that internalized or “mental translation” is one of the ways the learner is going to understand the L2 text anyway.
2. **L1 translation** (classically known as “version” and sometimes as “direct translation”), in written mode, going into the learner's strongest language in order not just to show that the foreign text has been understood, but also to develop expressive resources in that language. As such, there is not necessarily any one model translation to be attained in this mode, in keeping with what is elsewhere recognized as the indeterminacy of translation (from Quine 1960).
3. **L2 translation** (classical “prose”, also misleadingly called “inverse translation”) is here used as a written learning exercise based on memory, but this need not be so. Prose also involved original composition in the L2, and translation into the additional language is, in our century, more than a pedagogical necessity for those languages where there are not enough competent foreign translators to handle the demand (as is the case for translations into English from Chinese, Japanese and Korean, for example, along with European languages with smaller numbers of speakers—in all such languages, translators regularly work into their L2).

Beyond Ascham's particular circumstances, one might add two further modes of translation that are common enough in the literature:

4. **Checking translation**, in either direction, is when translation exercises are used as a check on prior acquisition. Ascham's two translation directionalities would indeed appear to be working in this way, and one can extend the category to all the tests and exams where translation is used to check that non-translational skills (such as grammar and usage) have been acquired.
5. **Translation criticism** should necessarily arise in an activity with more than one learner in the group, as different versions are compared and commented on. An ideal moment could be where two or more learners disagree about the best rendition, enter into debate between themselves, and discover at some point that their arguments need technical terms to describe translation, if not some useful theoretical concepts.
6. **Full translation**, which really deserves a better name (non-pedagogical? extramural translation?), would then be what learners do once translation skills have been fully acquired. Elizabeth Tudor went on to translate major texts from Latin, French and Italian (see Elizabeth I 2009), not as learning exercises but as translations to be read and used by those around her (including, for example, the first chapter of Calvin's *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne*, rendered just 5 years after she had acquired translation skills from Ascham). This would be an application of Ascham's method, although it is certainly not the only application: Elizabeth spoke in French, Italian and Latin to foreign emissaries, and gave extemporaneous speeches in Latin on visits to Oxford and Cambridge. Translation skills serve more than translation.

There are at least those six things that can be done with translation. And there are many more: just get any repertoire of activities for communicative language teaching and add another language to each scene. Inventing translation activities is not hard. A more difficult task is to say why the effort might be worth the candle.

### 3 A Potted History of Debates

A common story is that translation was used all the time in the bad old days when classical languages were being learned: students would have learned the additional language by doing no more than writing boring translations from and to it, without communicative context and with all kinds of interference of one language in the other. That translation-based methodology would then have been unthinkingly dragged across and applied to the teaching of *modern* languages under the name of "grammar translation". Somewhere near the end of the nineteenth century, epiphany then occurred: teachers started discovering that languages have to be learned through immersion in spoken communication, as opposed to the bilingual scene of written translation. And variants on such immersion and communicative methods have just been getting better and better ever since.

There are several things wrong with that narrative, and indeed with the counter-narrative that would have a mindless century-respecting pendulum swinging back and forth, for and then against translation in additional-language learning (Kelly 1969/1976). I have taken some time to look at the main nineteenth-century textbooks used for teaching French, German and English as additional languages in Europe and the United States (the survey is in Pym 2016a), analysing them in much the same way as I have tackled Ascham above: who was being taught, at what level, for what purpose, and in what way. My general finding, echoing that of Siefert (2013), is that there was basically no such thing as “grammar translation” as a singular orthodoxy—the term was coined *après coup*, by detractors of translation near the end of the nineteenth century. Several other points come to light:

- All the commercial textbooks claim to teach the additional language in the shortest time and in the best possible way, in keeping with the marketing principles used at least since Ascham, with not much change over the years. The early major bestseller, Meidinger, claimed that “learning from rules is the shortest and safest way to learn French” (1783/1799, p. 2, my translation here and throughout), so translation was used to illustrate grammatical rules. A little later, though, Seidenstücker, another bestseller, claimed his method was “imitating, as closely as possible, the natural way in which children come to gain knowledge and use their mother tongue” (1811/1833, p. iii), although he also made extensive use of translation as a learning activity. So commerce was served by contradictory arguments, and translation activities were used right across that spectrum.
- All the textbooks that use translation as some kind of central learning activity are designed for learners above the age of 12 or so, where mental translation was likely to be involved in initial construal. Even the methods that purported to base themselves on the way young children learn were not designed to teach young children.
- There are actually very few textbooks that do not allow space for spoken exchange, in addition to or alongside the written exercises. There are indeed some, but they seem to have been catering for the growing market in self-learning, and translation was indeed one thing that buyers could do at home by themselves.
- The major innovation in the German textbooks from the beginning of the nineteenth century was careful attention to inductive learning, in keeping with the principles of Prussian New Humanism. This meant the learner was invited to discover grammar through contact with the language, with translation exercises being used to introduce points of comparative grammar—thus teaching about *differences* between languages rather than inviting interference.
- The pedagogical progression in translation activities meant moving from simple to hard, with various checks on acquisition along the way. This involved using sequences of quite different translation activities. It also meant using decontextualized phrases and sentences at the initial levels, sometimes with quite comic results. Yet it would be unfair to characterize a whole method on the basis of such examples alone.

Of particular interest here is the way in which the inductive approach meant integrating translation as a kind of written code-switching. This produces variants rather like the spoken exchanges that Butzkamm (1980) calls the “sandwich technique”: L2 and L1 are alternated, as in “You’ve skipped a line. Du hast eine Zeile übersprungen. You’ve skipped a line.” Seidenstücker (1811/1833) uses techniques like the following, where the word-for-word vocabulary is given prior to the translation exercise:

*Vous, ihr, avez, habt, livre, Buch, acheté, gekauft*  
 Vous avez un bon père et une bonne mère. Avez-vous un livre? Le livre est bon. Nous avons acheté un bon livre. Le livre que vous avez acheté, est bon. [...] (p. 2)

Yes, the sentences to be translated are decontextualized and rigorously non-authentic, but they only occur at the initial stages of the method.

Ploetz (1848/1877) uses italics to indicate the grammar point that the student should focus on when translating, in a book that makes heavy use of translation and appears to be designed for self-teaching:

*Nos soldats ont combattu contre vos ennemis.* (Lesson 13)

He also gives clues pointing to the grammatical differences between the languages, either by inserting notes or by adding numbers to indicate the desired target-language order:

Heute habe ich (Frz. ich habe) zwei Briefe dem Briefträger gegeben. (Lesson 30)  
 Hat man nicht eine<sup>2</sup> herrliche<sup>1</sup> Aussicht...? (Lesson 41)

Another technique used to much the same effect is to make translation exercises easier by bending the start text to fit the target-language grammar. Here is an example from Ollendorff, where the English speaker is learning French:

Have you the bread?—Yes, Sir, I have the bread.—Have you your bread?—Yes, I have my bread. (1846, p. 10)

Spoken English would perhaps be happier with “Do you have the bread?” or “Have you got the bread?”, but here “Have you the bread?” is preferred because it is more likely to suggest the French “Avez-vous le pain?” (which could also be formulated in several different ways). This bending of language is quite common in the translation-based textbooks; it is one of the main features picked up in the later criticisms of translation activities. Once again, though, the bending and decontextualizing were mainly at the initial stages of the courses. More advanced lessons gave longer texts to be translated, allowing the learner to bring together numerous acquired skills.

As you go through the literature, you become aware not just of the many different ways translation activities were used, but also of the variety of arguments that were mobilized for and against translation. As noted above, diametrically opposed educational philosophies could nonetheless justify translation. One that stands out from the ruck is Claude Marcel’s insistence that, for learners who have already acquired *written* competence in L1, translation is actually the most natural approach, since it fulfils the role that immersion plays in the child’s learning of that L1:

The native expressions addressed to [the child learning L1] are always accompanied by tones, looks, and gestures, which explain them at once. The translation attached to the text [by the advanced learner of L2] interprets the foreign words at once, as the language of action interprets the native [language]. (1853, p. 93)

With translation, the L2 “ought, therefore, be understood by the learner in less time than the native language by the child” (1853, p. 93). That is, translation can save time, which is precisely what good marketing required.

Marcel later assumes that L1 acquisition progresses inductively through understanding speech, speaking, understanding writing, then writing (1869, pp. 11, 14). In L2 acquisition, on the other hand, the proposed order is reading, hearing, speaking and writing (1869, p. 22). In this way, Marcel attaches the advantages of his initial translations explicitly to reading (the first phase), then includes two-way translation exercises of the checking kind in his section on writing. That is, translation plays two quite different roles, at two quite different stages of the learner’s progression.

This is one of the insights that seem to have been forgotten. The experimental use of translation was interrupted, in some countries for many generations, as another kind of experience intervened.

## 4 Immersion Against Translation

In the second half of the nineteenth century, criticisms of translation came from two quarters, involving two quite different kinds of arguments.

The first was from German immigrants in the United States who had learned English as adults, basically through immersion in American society. If *they* could do it, then so could everyone else. In 1866 Gottlieb Heness opened a German-language school where young boys spoke German for four hours a day, five days a week, and they did indeed learn German very quickly. Heness claimed his students could speak fluently in 36 weeks, “a shorter time than any other method of study” (1867/1884, p. 7).

Heness’s basic claim was then picked up, schematized, and successfully marketed by Maximilian Berlitz, albeit with one major difference: whereas Heness had restricted his method to young learners, since “it is very difficult for the adult to understand and speak without translating” (Heness 1867/1884, p. 10), Berlitz offered the method to everyone. His marketing strategy recognizes that the best way to learn a language is actually to travel to the country where it is spoken, but attending Berlitz classes can do the same thing more cheaply and in a more organized way:

Instruction by the Berlitz method, is to the student what the sojourn in a foreign land is to a traveller. He hears and speaks in the language he wishes to learn, as if he were in a foreign country. He has however the advantage that the language has been methodologically and systematically arranged for him. (Berlitz 1888/1916, p. 4)

This “as if he were in a foreign country” means that translation is radically excluded from the Berlitz method, among other reasons because “knowledge of a foreign tongue, acquired by means of translation, is necessarily defective and incomplete; for there is by no means for every word of one language, the exact equivalent in the other” (1888/1916, p. 4). For the purposes of justifying his argument, Berlitz reduces translation to a word-for-word replacement exercise. This strategy was to become quite common.

The second main criticism of translation came from European academics who insisted that the classroom was a space where students should be taught to *speak*, rather than just write. The founders of what became known as the “Reform Movement” were not gratuitously phoneticians: Jespersen, Passy and Sweet. That said, only Jespersen radically excluded translation, and he did so in two contradictory ways. First, like Berlitz, he adopted a particularly myopic definition of translation, seen as a one-to-one pairing that hides the specificity of L2 and which embraces no explanatory elements. Taking the example of the many ways of rendering the English pronoun “it” in German (according to gender and case), Jespersen regrets that the learner who relies on any one translation will apparently fail to see those differences (1901/1904, p. 135). Second, he argues that there is little social need for translation: “while there is [...] a constantly increasing number of people who need to express their thoughts in a foreign language, there are really very few who will ever have any occasion to exercise skill in translation” (Jespersen 1901/1904, p. 53). If you are not going to become a professional translator, forget about translation.

So translation was either too simple to convey useful linguistic knowledge, or too complex to be used in everyday life. Many language teachers would seem to have agreed.

## 5 Who Needs Translation?

Now, who might need to learn to translate? An example is actually given by Heness when he recounts how one of his students, having spoken German all day at school, replied when his mother asked him what he had been learning. The boy “began to stammer, unable to speak intelligibly”, then confessed: “‘Mother, if you will let me talk in German, I will tell you all;’ and he gave a full account of the day’s adventures in German” (Heness 1867/1884, p. 6). Heness presents the story in order to illustrate the *success* of his method, apparently for a land where everyday life would require no mediating bilinguals, no movement of content between languages, and perhaps no translators. Others, no doubt including the boy’s perplexed mother, might wonder whether extreme immersion will really save the world.

For almost all the nineteenth-century textbooks, languages are attached to national cultures, which are located in separate countries, and so an additional language is routinely called a “foreign language”. That is why immersion through travel was presented as an ideal way of learning a language: one crossed a border and went from one immersive space to another, as was the experience of the

immigrant (who might become the instructor in the United States) and the “grand tour” (for the rich, presenting the ideal that poorer learners were condemned to imitate by paying Berlitz). That is also the way the European phoneticians justified their “direct” method: the learner imitates the crossing of a national border.

That said, when the German immigrants began to draw on their own experience, they occasionally recognized a rather different geometry. Heness’s justification for his pedagogy actually goes back further, to his experience in Germany when going to school meant progressing from a regional Bavarian variety to *Hochdeutsch*—not from L1 to L2, but from something like L1 to L1.5. Similarly, his American students could be immersed in German because it was not entirely foreign to them: they were going from one language to a cognate language, progressing through the overlaps. The application of nationalist immersion ideology did all it could to eclipse those overlaps, as we see in the case of the stuttering schoolboy, but it was nonetheless formulated from within a social space where the different languages were simultaneously present. Had the boy learned through translation, he should have been able to communicate proficiently within that multilingual space. Elizabeth Tudor, who was taught through translation, was able to move quite successfully through the multilingual spaces that constituted her court.

Who needs translations? One kind of answer concerns the traveller or the young child, and quite another pertains to language learners who can write and who become part of multilingual, multicultural societies, not as professional mediators but as citizens negotiating the linguistic engagements of everyday life. If such societies are to be inclusive, mediation of many kinds is necessary, and immersion need not be a priority.

In short, multilingual societies need translation. It is for this precise reason that the original 2001 version of the *Common European Framework Reference for Languages* recognizes four kinds of language activities through which learners acquire skills: reception, production, interaction and *mediation*, with mediation largely being the translation of oral or written texts (Council of Europe 2001, p. 15).

## 6 So What Is Translation?

As might be clear from this rapid overview of the last few centuries, one of the main ways to argue against translation is to see it as just one thing, mostly either as a simple language-replacement exercise (of little learning value) or as a complex professional activity (needed by very few people), with nothing in between. As noted above, both those reductive definitions are actually present in the 2018 *Companion Volume* to the *Common European Framework Reference*, where everything possible is done to keep mediation from being “reduced to translation”, along with repeated insistence that professional translators and interpreters use skills that are far beyond those accessible to normal language learners. The battle is far from over.

The history of teaching methods can nevertheless show that translation involves much more than word-for-word at one end, then specialized magic at the other. So,

too, can minimal attention to what the trainers of professional translators have been doing for the past 70 years or so. This concerns not just the various complex models of translator competence (which unfortunately tend to reinforce the idea that translation is only for a few highly gifted specialists) but can more specifically draw on the various typologies of translation solutions, which would result from the discursive strategies that translation can entail.

One such typology, drawn from many previous attempts, is presented in Table 1, which is designed to encourage learners to consider the many ways that translation problems can be solved. (If there is no particular problem, then the translator is in “cruise mode”, at the top of the table.) Solving problems can be deceptively easy at the most abstract level: you copy some kind of expression, you change some kind of expression, or you put something else (those options are in the left-hand column). Each of those basic strategies then includes some general solution types (the middle column), which in turn can be broken down into open-ended lists of tricks that

**Table 1** A typology of translation solution types (cf. Pym 2016b, p. 220)

Cruise mode (normal use of language skills, reference resources, parallel texts, intuition—anything prior to bump mode—so no special solutions are needed)		
Copying	Copying words	Copying sounds Copying morphology Copying script ...
	Copying structure	Copying prosodic features Copying fixed phrases Copying text structure ...
Expression change	Perspective change	Changing sentence focus Changing semantic focus Changing voice Renaming an object ...
	Density change	Generalization/Specification Explicitation/Implication Multiple translation...
	Resegmentation	Joining sentences Cutting sentences Re-paragraphing...
	Compensation	New level of expression New place in text (notes, paratexts) ...
	Cultural correspondence	Corresponding idioms Corresponding units of measurement, currency, etc. Relocation of culture-specific referents ...
Material change	Text tailoring	Correction/censorship/updating Omission of material Addition of material Reorganization of material ...



translators can and do use, depending on appropriate communicative circumstances. Any learner who can do all those things appropriately will be able not just to translate, but also to mediate effectively between languages in a very wide number of situations.

This is not the place to elaborate further on the solution types. Let the table suffice to illustrate that translation is not just one thing.

## 7 Principles for a Pedagogy of Communicative Translation

If there is to be a general rebranding, the message for language educators has to be that translation is not simple; it involves a wide range of transformational skills that can be used to do more than translate in a word-for-word sense. It could also quite happily be attached to parts of “mediation” or “translanguaging”, if those terms make the educationalists happier and as long as the activity is based on texts of some kind—translation should retain the advantage of making learners pay close attention to written or spoken utterance, actual language use, and to construe meanings carefully from there. (This might be a Protestant virtue, sticking to prior text, as opposed to a sense of mediation that basically involves telling stories with whatever means available, but I am not here to argue theology.)

If translation is to be brought back into additional language learning in any general way, the arguments have to be rather more astute than simply pointing out that the bad old days were not really so bad. One argument is to insist on the range of translation solutions and the way different translation activities can suit pedagogical progression, to counter the characterization of translation as “too simple or too complex”. Another argument is to point out that translation can be more than a checking exercise: it is always a *communicative* activity, with the adjective in lights, since “communicative” is the word that language educators all over the world rate most highly in their descriptions of teaching methodologies (see Pym et al. 2013). So let’s take their favourite word and apply it to translation.

What would a manifesto for communicative translation look like? Here are some possible principles. Many of them draw on the lessons of history, while others address the problems of our present:

### 7.1 All Translation Is Communication

Translation is communication when it reaches a receiver (in written or spoken mode, since both are concerned here); it is communication when performed in a role play setting or similar exercise; and it is also communication when used to check on acquisition, since it communicates the acquisition level to the instructor. In short, translation is always communicative, in many different ways.

## ***7.2 One Pedagogy Serves Both the Spoken and Written Modes***

The professional distinction that is made between spoken translation (“interpreting”) and written translation (“translation”) is not useful in the learning of additional languages and should be dispensed with. Learners should be speaking and writing all the way through, as they have been doing for at least a few centuries.

## ***7.3 The Spoken Is the Primary Situation***

As seen in Ascham, the pedagogical use of written translation can and should begin from spoken translation, along with whatever other kinds of spoken checking operations might be desirable. This principle also applies to the training of professional translators: if they start from spoken interaction, they instinctively break with the literalism that most beginners assume is required in translation. When you translate out loud, there is less linguistic interference, particularly when you are communicating with a person who is right there in front you.

## ***7.4 Translation Is for More Than Professionals***

There has been a long, unspoken pact between translation scholars and translation professionals, where the former use the latter as a model to be reproduced, and the latter occasionally allow themselves to be studied in that light. Any such agreement should be broken. Translation skills can be used by anyone, since linguistic inclusiveness and interpersonal development start at grassroots level, in everyday life. There will always be high-risk events where highly paid professionals are required, but translation should be seen as a social activity open to anyone who is interested and motivated. There will always be opera singers (I hope), but everyone can still learn to sing (better).

## ***7.5 Online Technologies Are Always Integrated***

These days translation is open to all because anyone can use free online machine translation, with rapidly improving results for many language pairs. Since anyone can access the technology, everyone should be taught about the *limits* of machine translation and the ways it can be integrated into post-editing processes, with or without translation memory suites. Like mental translation, which has always been present but has rarely been recognized as part of the learning process, machine translation has to be explained and integrated into all additional-language learning, from the beginning.

## 7.6 *The Full Range of Solutions Is Taught*

Once they start to explore the limits of machine translation and the possible ways to improve it, learners tend to find that what the machine offers is rather limited in terms of translation solutions. It rarely ventures beyond the odd change of perspective and density, with the rest remaining as literal as possible (although there are curious omissions in neural outputs). Going beyond the machine thus means incorporating solutions at the top and bottom ends of Table 1, importing words and structures when desired, risking complex transformations, and editing content where necessary. Students should progressively be coaxed to a stage where they can play with the full orchestra of solutions.

## 7.7 *Success Is Judged in Terms of Communication, Not Just Equivalence*

So what is a *good* translation? Many different criteria come into play in different kinds of activities, so there can be no one-size-fits-all response. Each activity has its learning objective, and that is where success is to be judged. More important, simple backward-looking equivalence to the start text will often not be enough: we are no longer in the business of memorizing Cicero. Success more generally means fulfilling the function required in the specific communication situation, as has been accepted in translation studies for several decades now.

Together, those seven principles might invite educators to rethink translation activities in communicative terms. And they should do so across the board, both in additional-language teaching and in the training of professional translators.

## 8 What Is to Be Discovered?

The role of translation in additional-language learning is something that also requires serious research. Over the years I have had the honour of co-supervising three doctoral theses on the general topic, as well as leading a project for the European Commission. These few forays might serve as indications of the kind of research that can be done, in addition to the studies reviewed in Pym et al. (2013).

Peveati (2014) and our European Commission project (Pym et al. 2013) both focus on the opinions and attitudes of teachers concerning the use of translation in the additional-language classroom, both using the same questionnaire. Peveati finds that the transferability of translation-related learning (i.e., the degree to which skills acquired in translation activities can be used in other language tasks) is to some extent thwarted in the Italian context by teachers' conceptions of translation as being no more than a tool for formalistic, contrastive language work. Pym et al. (2013, pp. 121–122) find that the resistance to translation differs in each country but

is particularly pronounced in France and Spain, which happen to be among the countries with the lowest language-learning scores in Europe.

Ayvazyan (2017) presents the results of an experiment with 61 university-level learners of English in Catalonia, with translation activities and non-translation activities being alternated week by week. It is found that the use of translation activities correlates with a higher degree of student-initiated in-class interaction and thus a more pedagogically inclusive learning environment.

Artar (2017) reports on an experiment carried out in Turkey where 30 advanced learners of English were divided into two groups, one of which did translation activities while the other did non-translation activities. After 8 weeks, the scores of the translation group were significantly higher for writing activities, although there was no significant difference in the scores for spoken activities.

There are also ad hoc observations that merit some future research. For example, in my experience as a trainer of professional translators, I have regularly found that heritage speakers with relatively symmetrical bilingualism fare worse in translation tests than do late learners with more asymmetrical bilingualism. Other translator trainers have made similar observations. It could be hypothesized that late learners of L2 grasp the language through mapping operations that are similar to those activated in the translation process, and that heritage speakers tend to have had fewer occasions to develop mapping operations to the same degree. Further, late learners of L2 have relied on written images of the language, mapping written words, whereas early learners have a spoken experience of L2, less given to the written kind of mapping. This could mean that written translation skills are eminently transferable, but that they might not be of the same nature as spoken production skills. As mentioned, Artar (2017) found that translation activities aided *written* performances but did not significantly affect *spoken* language skills.

Some of these findings obviously support a rebranding as communicative translation, as does the historical overview offered above. I am not drawing principles out of thin air. The more important point, though, is that ideas about translation should be open to empirical testing, without pretence to any absolute truth, neither for nor against. There are empirical studies that identify some beneficial effects of translation activities, and there are none, to my knowledge, that support the unthinking exclusion of translation from additional-language teaching.

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# Conceptualizing China in Modern Europe



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**Abstract** Understanding China is a challenge, not least because we tend to become involved in contradictory past understandings. From the early eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century there is a curious oscillation in Western ideas of China from the strongly positive to the equally negative. Thus, for Leibniz, on the threshold of the Enlightenment, China was defined positively as what Europe was not, whereas for Herder and Hegel China was immune to progress. Ferdinand von Richthofen displaces the myth of stagnation and sets the pendulum swinging towards a China full of the promise of an industrialized future. This study takes a fresh look at the views on China by some prominent European intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and argues that China's changing image from a utopian model of statecraft to a senile and corrupt culture results from the process of sanctifying the idea of "progress" as the telos of human history in modern Europe.

**Keywords** China · Europe · Enlightenment · Nineteenth century · Leibniz · Herder · Hegel · Von Richthofen · Utopia · Progress

## 1 China: History of a "Confusion"

Understanding China is a challenge. It becomes more so at a time when China's rise to a world power is indisputable, especially in the balance sheets of many economic experts and political strategists. While China delivers a seemingly endless supply of consumer goods and infrastructure investments around the globe, large parts of the Western world remain suspicious of China's intentions and values. Is China's rise beneficial to the rest of the world or does it constitute a threat to the "free world" of democracy? To take one example: when Australia's former Prime Minister Tony

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Abbott addressed the Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo, he delivered this assessment of Australia's relationship with China:

While we now have more flights from China than from any other country and while our economy is more closely tied to China's than to any other, it's still an "interests" partnership rather than a "values" one. [...] But we aren't entirely confident that, when China's interests differ from Australia's, there is a shared set of values that will allow a mutually satisfactory outcome (Abbott 2016).

Mr. Abbott's feeling of alienation from China finds expression in his suspicion that there is no "shared set of values" on which trust between the two countries could be based, although he did not elaborate what such values might be. However, the unease expressed here, and the nebulous suspicion of mutually incompatible values, is nothing new in Western perceptions of China—indeed it is much more the rule than the exception.

The eminent American scholar of Chinese history, Jonathan D. Spence, writes in his book of 1992, *Chinese Roundabout. Essays in History and Culture*, the following:

If we are unclear today about our feelings for China, we should not worry over much. Westerners have been unclear about China since they first began to live there in any numbers and to write about the country at length. The history of our confusion goes back more than four hundred years [...] (Spence 1992, pp. 78–79).

While agreeing with the basic point made here, it is perhaps an exaggeration to speak so offhandedly of "the history of our confusion", as if Western thought on China were endemically confused and incoherent. What Spence means, I think, is that if we take an aggregate of Western views on China over centuries, the result appears confused, but if we look at individual views within this mass, then they reveal themselves to be quite precise and well defined. One reason for the effect of apparent confusion is that views of eminent European thinkers on China may not really be about China at all, but rather target some group close at hand in Europe which the author wishes to scarpify, using the Chinese as a rhetorical device to contrast with the European practice which the author opposes. Another reason may be that the view may have been formed on the basis of very little direct knowledge of China, and tailored to suit the structure of a distinctly European discourse (Mungello 1985).

Clearly, such discourses have a history, and it is this history that I will discuss here. Looked at more closely, the "history of our confusion" could be resolved into intelligible patterns. In the eighteenth century, views of China become an arena for conflicts within the Enlightenment. In the nineteenth century, we may observe how aspects of the Enlightenment pave the way for the ideologies of colonialism. After reviewing a sampling of differing and changing views on China, we shall ask if there is any master narrative we may use to structure any apparent confusion. I suggest that Western ideas of China have a different historical trajectory from that other history of factual encounters between Europeans and Chinese, and that China's changing images in Western discourses are the results of sanctifying the idea of "progress" as the telos of human history in modern Europe.

## 2 Leibniz: A Utopian View of China

At the dawn of the eighteenth century, we find a vision of China refreshingly free from mistrust and suspicion in the writings of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. This mathematician and philosopher advanced an ideal of Europe that opposed intolerance and sectarianism. Leibniz had studied in Paris, had declined the post of Vatican librarian and maintained a wide network of correspondents throughout Europe. Leibniz's knowledge of China was the best available to someone who never left central Europe, for he was immersed in the works of the Jesuits who had a long-standing presence at the Chinese court. He also corresponded with those active in the field (Perkin 2007). As the Jesuits found much to admire in Chinese culture and society, so also did Leibniz. Indeed, he saw China and Europe for all their differences as complementary pinnacles of civilization. So, he writes in his tract *Novissima Sinica*, first published in 1697:<sup>1</sup>

I believe it has come about through a unique decision of Fate that the highest culture and the most advanced technical civilisation are today collected, as it were, at two extremes of our continent, namely in Europe and China, that like a Europe of the East adorns the opposite end of the Earth. Perhaps Divine Providence is pursuing the aim of gradually leading the lands that lie between to a more reasonable way of life, while the civilised peoples at the two extremes, which are most distant from each other, are reaching out towards each other (Leibniz 1697/2011, p. 9).

Leibniz then enumerates the areas in which Europeans are superior to the Chinese: abstract thought, mathematics, the science of warfare and, of course, the Christian religion. But then the Chinese have their own areas of superiority:

Certainly, they surpass us (though it is almost shameful to confess this) in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of morals. Indeed, it is difficult to describe how beautifully all the laws of the Chinese, in contrast to those of other peoples, are directed to the achievement of public tranquillity and the establishment of social order so that men shall be disrupted in their relations as little as possible (Leibniz 1697/2011, p. 11).

Leibniz opposes the stability of the vast Chinese empire to the condition of Europe, divided by the hostility between Catholic and Protestant and given to warfare between states. Moreover, in 1692 the Chinese emperor, who had a very positive view of the Jesuits, had accorded Christianity equal status with other religions. Leibniz is convinced that “each people has knowledge that it could with profit communicate to the other”, envisaging a harmony of the best of European and Chinese attributes and achievements under the guidance of Divine Providence. For him the fusion of Chinese and European cultures had in it an enormous potential for progress. This utopian ideal would be united in the Christian religion—provided, of course, that Christians could overcome their own internecine quarrels. For Leibniz, the two civilized extremes of the Earth would thus be united in progress—not the

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<sup>1</sup>I use the edition by Heinz-Günter Nesselrath and Hermann Reinbothe (Leibniz 1697/2011). All translations from German sources are my own.



secular idea of progress that was to come to the fore later in the eighteenth century, but one willed by Divine Providence, albeit dependent on human good will and cooperation. Following the Jesuits, who were willing to adapt Christianity to some extent to Confucian rites, Leibniz found much to admire in Confucianism:

To offend Heaven is to act against reason, to ask pardon of Heaven is to reform oneself and to make a sincere return in word and deed in the submission one owes to this very law of reason. For me, I find all this quite excellent and quite in accord with *natural theology*. [...] It is pure Christianity, insofar as it renews the natural law inscribed in our hearts [...] (Leibniz 1697/2011, p. 11).

Leibniz singled out another positive quality of the Chinese that later writers were to turn into a negative, namely their unquestioning obedience to superiors, to the aged and within the family. This would later be seen by the French philosopher Montesquieu and others as suppressing individuality and inhibiting all kinds of freedom, thus enjoining servitude and ruling by fear. But at the beginning of the eighteenth century it was an aspect of Chinese society that Europe would do well to emulate. In the conclusion of *Novissima Sinica* Leibniz's doubts sit firmly on the European side:

May God let it come to pass that our joy [in the Christianizing of the Chinese] is well founded and lasting and not destroyed by imprudent religious fanaticism or by internecine strife among those who have taken the mission of the apostles upon themselves or by our countrymen setting bad examples (Leibniz 1697/2011, p. 31).

The century that followed was to see Leibniz's vision unravel. Quarrels among Christian missionaries saw the Chinese Emperor forbid the religion once more. Some travellers were less than impressed by the Jesuit image of China, derived mainly from attendance at the Imperial Court and contact with high officials. The British commodore George Anson visited Canton in the 1740s and found it an abominable place, the Chinese officials corrupt and the merchants untrustworthy. In his published account of his travels, he refutes the Jesuit image of China in scathing terms:

And from the description given by some of these good fathers, one should be induced to believe that the whole Empire was a well-governed affectionate family, where the only contests were who should exert the most humanity and beneficence. But our preceding relation of the behaviour of the Magistrates, Merchants and Tradesmen at Canton sufficiently refutes these Jesuitical fictions. [...] Indeed, the only pretension of the Chinese to a more refined morality than their neighbours is founded, not on their integrity or beneficence, but solely on the affected evenness of their demeanour, and their constant attention to suppress all symptoms of passion and violence (Anson 1748, p. 543).

Anson's book became a bestseller, was reprinted many times and included throughout the nineteenth century in most compilations of the history of voyages and travels. It would be fair to say that Anson's travel accounts contributed to and sustained a negative view of China in Europe. However, it should be pointed out that Anson himself did not write the travelogue. It was compiled by the chaplain on his ship. The European image of China fragmented—not as a result of Anson's travel accounts, but rather from a general awareness that China was so vast and

multifarious that many different images of it were viable. Anson's book aimed at refuting the Jesuits' positive image of Chinese society, but in fact served mainly to add another possible version to the Chinese enigma.

Leibniz's utopian view of a China that could progress and develop in peace and harmony with Western Europe was, at least, based on the best contemporary reports of China available. There were no alternative versions of China in competition with the reports and letters that Leibniz used. As the century advanced, more information on China became available, with some, like Anson's, sharply dissenting from the glowing accounts by the Jesuits still in circulation and very influential. What followed after Leibniz's vision of a future harmony of East and West, with each party's best qualities contributing equally, was effectively a *choice* as to what reported aspects of China were to be singled out and used. It must be said that the choice as to which vision of China was to be accepted has very much to do with differing views between Enlightenment thinkers. In fact, the Enlightenment was alive with agendas, and images of China were deployed to advance or oppose widely differing causes.

Certainly, Leibniz had had an agenda in attributing to China's state religion a totally European rationality. His greatest hope was to see the breach between Catholics and Protestants healed, which had seen so much blood spilt in Europe. Thus, his projection of a thoroughly European "natural religion" on China's monolithic state was unashamedly utopian. Compared with some later agendas, this was quite innocuous. For the Enlightenment at large, the main advantage of images of China was that they could not be refuted by empirical evidence. The Jesuits had reported on only one stratum of Chinese society. Accounts by travellers were likewise piecemeal. There was still room for sweeping assertions about China that were safe, because no one could verify or refute them. No one could take the time to go there or, once arrived, acquire the language skills to support or deny a specific claim.

### 3 The French Enlightenment: Clashing Agendas

Voltaire, who was educated by the Jesuits, adopted and enhanced their positive image of China, but then used it to assail European Catholicism (Rowbotham 1932). He insisted on the antiquity of Chinese civilization at the expense of the Judeo-Christian tradition. When a work by the Catholic theologian Bossuet entitled *A Discourse on Universal History*, first published in 1681, was reprinted in 1738, Voltaire borrowed from Montesquieu the device of inventing a naïve Oriental to comment on European manners and customs for purposes of satire. Voltaire's imaginary Chinese is puzzled to find that, in Bossuet's history of the world, the vast Chinese Empire is not mentioned at all. Bossuet was concerned solely with history as it figured in the Biblical tradition and thus omitted all mention of China and India. Voltaire then went further, and, in his treatise on world history, the *Essay on the Customs and Spirit of Nations*, he began not with Biblical antiquity, but with

Chinese antiquity—a provocative innovation that shocked his readers. In his *Philosophical Dictionary* he summed up what he had written often elsewhere:

The constitution of their empire is the only one entirely established upon paternal authority; the only one in which the governor of a province is punished, if, on quitting his station, he does not receive the acclamations of the people; the only one which has instituted rewards for virtue, while, everywhere else, the sole object of the laws is the punishment of crime; the only one which has caused its laws to be adopted by its conquerors, while we are still subject to the customs of the Burgundians, the Franks, and the Goths, by whom we were conquered (Voltaire 1752, §II).

Voltaire's agenda is to have in his image of China a frame of reference in which there is always a praiseworthy alternative to the abuses he castigates in Catholic Europe. In the same article of the *Philosophical Dictionary*, he concedes—in a more realistic mode—that the Chinese common people are no more virtuous than the French, that they are full of prejudices and superstitions, and that Chinese science lags behind that of Europe (Voltaire 1752). But when it comes to public institutions, Voltaire's freely improvised version of China is unfailingly superior to its European counterparts.

Given the enormous influence the thought of Rousseau was to have on later generations, it is surprising to find that in the 1300 pages of his writings on society and politics, China is mentioned just once, and this in a highly polemical context. In Rousseau's *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* he pursues the agenda of proving that literate civilization has corrupted great nations and sunk them in decadence. After citing various examples of societies brought low by their own culture, he happens on China:

There is an immense country in Asia in which literary culture is the path that leads to the highest offices of state. If the sciences purified human behaviour, if they taught men to spill their blood for their native land, if they incited men to be more courageous; then the peoples of China ought to be wise, free and invincible. But there is no vice to which they are not prey, no crime which is not common among them [...]; neither the wisdom that is claimed for their laws, nor the multitude of inhabitants within this vast empire were able to protect it from subjection by the ignorant and crude Manchus—so what use to it were all of China's scholars? What benefit did China derive from heaping honours upon them? Would it not be to be inhabited by slaves and lowlives? (Rousseau 1750/1964, p. 11)<sup>2</sup>

There is no sign that Rousseau had ever studied the history and culture of China. China gets exactly the same treatment as Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and Byzantium. Empires tend to decline and fall with time. For the purposes of Rousseau's *Discourse*, they fell because of their own literacy. His remarks on China are the culmination of a rhetorical tirade that pays scant attention to historical fact. For the Enlightenment in general, the Chinese examination system could seem superior to the widespread practices in Europe of simply buying or inheriting offices, with no criteria of fitness or expertise. In terms of Rousseau's agenda, literacy—and the arts and sciences it makes possible—is a primary evil. Thus, while Voltaire could find no fault with the institutions of the Chinese state, Rousseau

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<sup>2</sup>Translation by Anthony Stephens.

could find nothing good about them. Looking at the whole context of Rousseau's condemnation of China, it is clear it would make little difference to his rant if he had stopped at Byzantium and left China out altogether. For Rousseau, China was simply not a prime target. Voltaire had observed how China had assimilated its conquerors into its culture and ruling structures. Thus, the Chinese state had survived the Manchu conquest, and the Chinese Empire in 1750, the year of Rousseau's *Discourse*, was clearly not lying in ruins and populated largely by slaves. But to suit Rousseau's agenda, it had to be. Contemporary China had to have gone the way of Rome and Byzantium, perhaps because Voltaire, Rousseau's constant target for rhetorical gibes, was so convinced it was a well-functioning state whose organization was superior to those of Europe.

It must be stressed that Rousseau had little interest in China. Nowhere else in his writings does he enlarge on the subject, whereas for Voltaire his own selectively positive version of China is a constant point of reference. But what Rousseau had written seemed to accord with the convictions of those who contested the rosy images of China the Jesuits had put in circulation, and its questionable context was soon lost to sight. The myth of Chinese decadence had no single point of origin, but the tenor of Rousseau's rhetoric was to recur in subsequent decades. As George Steinmetz observes in *The Devil's Handwriting*, "the theme of Chinese stagnation and decay that emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century condemned Chinese civilisation as a geriatric ruin, lacking all internal dynamism and capacity for development." (2007, p. 393) It is characteristic of the Enlightenment that agendas could clash for their own sake, especially if their subject matter was non-verifiable, as was largely the case with images of China.

#### 4 The German Enlightenment: Herder's Diatribe

If we look to Germany, then it is no surprise that Voltaire's friend and sometime host, King Frederick II of Prussia, should have imitated the device that Voltaire had borrowed from Montesquieu of having an imaginary Chinese comment on European customs and institutions. Thus in 1760 he circulated a satirical pamphlet entitled *Report of Phihihu, Emissary of the Emperor of China in Europe*. The text tells us very little about Frederick's image of China. Rather, the papacy in particular and the practices of the Catholic Church in general are held up to ridicule by the staunchly Protestant king. Once more, the image of China is pressed into the service of an agenda that has nothing specifically Chinese about it.

From Germany comes one of the strangest, most negative and most influential images of China to emerge from the Enlightenment, namely the violent condemnation in Johann Gottfried Herder's *Ideas Towards a Philosophy of Human History*, a massive work, published between 1784 and 1791.<sup>3</sup> Herder had no special

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Goebel (1995).

knowledge of China. He had obviously read Leibniz, the Jesuits and Voltaire, and his discussion of China begins by conceding some of those positive aspects of Chinese society in their accounts: the absence of a hereditary nobility and the institution of a nobility of merit; the respect for elders and superiors in Chinese social organization; the religious tolerance that enabled the peaceful coexistence of various sects. For no apparent reason, he then turns on the Chinese and blasts them with all the rhetoric he commands. The Chinese Empire—so Herder affirms—“is an embalmed mummy painted with hieroglyphs and shrouded in silk; its inner circulation is that of hibernating animals” (Herder 1784/1985, p. 129). For Herder, genetics and climate determine cultures, and the Chinese are descended from Mongols, one of the “ugly peoples”, about whom nothing good can be said. From then on Herder’s diatribe spares nothing Chinese at all. Herder’s rhetoric is reminiscent of Rousseau’s, but whereas Rousseau limited himself to one paragraph in his entire work, Herder’s castigations extend over several pages, attacking the Chinese character, the Chinese language, and the Chinese script with much vitriol. The word Herder applies repeatedly to the Chinese is “childish”—they are unpleasant children, for they are hypocrites, by nature corrupt, incapable of doing good. The state they have themselves invented is a mechanism to ensure slavery, and in it all are slaves.

Scholars have attempted to explain Herder’s fanatical denunciation of everything Chinese, pointing out that the Jesuits had been disestablished by the Pope in 1773, not long before Herder began to write his *Ideas*.<sup>4</sup> It may thus have seemed opportune to this staunch Protestant to be rid of the Jesuit heresies on China once and for all. Moreover, he had the one clear agenda of depicting the Germanic peoples as being close to nature in their development and “authentic”—and, needing a complete antithesis, he made China embody all that is artificial and false. In short, the Germanic peoples have as their destiny to be young and progressive—so the Chinese are chosen to be senile and stagnant.

Herder derived his ammunition for the destruction of everything Chinese from the writings of the Jesuits, but he turned everything on its head. As was common in this century with sweeping generalizations about China, no evidence is adduced in support of Herder’s claims, and dogmatic statements alone suffice, for who could prove them wrong? Herder’s extraordinary demolition of China would probably have been forgotten, were it not that the drift of his thinking accords with the intellectual climate of the late eighteenth century. For Herder writes: “[...] ancient China on the edge of the world has stood still in time in its half-Mongol constitution like a ruin from a past age” (Herder 1784/1985, p. 133). Whatever historical forces may be at work—and Herder is by no means clear what these may be—they have bypassed China and left it isolated in a state of “childish slavery” immune to progress. This figure of thought was to find an echo in the image of China that later appears in Hegel’s lectures on the philosophy of history.

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. Hsia (1985, p. 383f).

I do not suggest that Herder invented this image of China. Rather, he has selectively exaggerated much that was being said of China by others towards the close of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, his books were a symptom of the changing intellectual climate, rather than a revolutionary advance. The century had begun with Leibniz's vision of a golden complementarity of East and West and of human progress guided by Divine Providence. By the century's end, little remains of this optimistic synthesis. The issue of Chinese despotism, first raised by Montesquieu, bulked larger as the century drew to a close and individual liberty became a foremost preoccupation in Western Europe. The unchanging quality of Chinese society was found to be in opposition to those ideas of progress that became dominant as the century drew to a close. Once most thinkers of Western Europe had subscribed to ideals of progressive change as something to be actively striven for, then China, through a process of Othering, was found to be in a state of stagnation. Thinking in binary opposites with corresponding emotional weighting was as common in the Enlightenment as it is today, and, as the nineteenth century began, it seemed to be China's turn to embody all the negatives.

## 5 Nineteenth Century: Hegel's Metaphysics of History

A further impetus to this trend came from Lord Macartney's embassy to the Chinese Emperor in 1793–1794. The embassy failed to secure the treaties with China on access and trade that were its goals, but it was widely publicized throughout Western Europe.<sup>6</sup> One of the books that emerged from the expedition, John Barrow's *Travels in China* of 1804, was a best seller and did much to confirm the negative image of China that was now dominant. Barrow's book showed China as a "stagnant and regressive despotism" (Kitson 2013, p. 193). His account enjoyed the advantage that had previously been that of the Jesuits' reports: Barrow had actually been in China for some time, and had been able to observe Chinese society from the humblest workers to the Imperial Court at first hand. As in Anson's book, the Jesuit depictions of China are contested and dismissed by Barrow as fictional. Whilst Barrow's book claimed to be wholly empirical, it contained many distortions of fact and false conjectures. But, once more, no one was in a position to refute Barrow's claims, as China remained largely closed to European merchants and travellers.

The philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel has become famous, or notorious, for placing China outside the movement of world history:

History must begin with the Empire of China, for it is the most ancient state of which history makes report [...]. In early times we see China develop into that condition in which it remains today, for as there is as yet no opposition between objective being and subjective motion, so there is no possibility of change, and the static quality that constantly reappears

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Steinmetz (2007, pp. 361–432).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Peyrefitte (1993).

replaces that which we would term the historical. China and India lie, as it were, outside world history, representing the precondition of those factors whose coming together is necessary for history to begin its living progress (Hegel 1837/2017, p. 147).<sup>7</sup>

Hegel uses “history” in two senses. Initially, it is used in the conventional sense of human records of the past. Later it signifies a dynamic and quite abstract process by which the World Spirit—*Weltgeist*—attains full self-awareness. The World Spirit may attain its full potential only in the Christian/Germanic world. China, in Hegel’s terms, has been frozen in a state before the dynamic of world history begins, so that the Chinese cannot develop that reflective subjectivity that manifests itself as freedom.

Hegel’s vision of world history was so emphatically Eurocentric that all the possibilities for the unfolding of creative subjectivity that were given in Europe must needs be lacking in China. Hegel enumerates and explains these deficiencies. Like Herder, Hegel was thoroughly acquainted with the Jesuit reports on China and reproduces material from them in his account, including extracts from early Chinese history. But for Hegel, history had come to a stop in China before it had really begun, and thus progress there was impossible. Such subjectivity as might develop in China could not be the real thing, since China lies outside world history and world history is essentially the moving forward of the World Spirit, powered by the unfolding of genuine, Western subjectivity.<sup>8</sup> As Steinmetz observes, for Hegel “the distinguishing feature of the ‘character of the Chinese people’ was that ‘everything that belongs to Spirit [...] is alien to it.’” (2007, p. 402) Hegel’s arguments have in common with images of China in the Enlightenment that they are immune to any questions of verification. The highly abstract motions of the World Spirit took precedence over any merely empirical events. The philosopher Karl Löwith sees the secular idea of progress that becomes dominant in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as deriving from the indisputable developments in the natural sciences in Europe and forming an analogy to these. He then asserts that for Hegel “the ancient peoples of the East did not achieve a world-historical existence as they lacked the self-awareness of the Spirit that attained its peak and depth in Christian Western Europe” (Löwith 1983, p. 415). While Leibniz had recognised the West’s superiority in the sciences, but seen it as balanced by China’s excellence in social organization, by the time of Hegel’s metaphysics of history little remained of Leibniz’s utopian view of Chinese society. China’s deficiency in the sciences could appear to be in parallel with a social decrepitude, the twofold negativity excluding it from the progress of the World Spirit.

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<sup>7</sup>I use the edition by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Hegel 1837/2017).

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Francke (1970) and Bernasconi (2016).

## 6 The Late Nineteenth Century: The Ideology of Colonialism

The gap between metaphysical and secular ideals of progress was to be filled by the ideology of colonialism in the later nineteenth century. A certain irony surrounds the fact that, within metaphysical conceptualizations of progress, the image of China should shift from the ideal complementarity to Europe that Leibniz envisaged to the negative opposition posited by Hegel. The Opium Wars were to reveal a China at the mercy of predatory powers. In fact, the nineteenth century came to be dominated by that secular idea of progress that had taken shape in the latter part of the nineteenth century and from which China was just as firmly excluded as it was from Hegel's metaphysical version. Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* were delivered between 1822 and 1830 and published posthumously in 1837. In them the image of China is still monolithic and the focus is on Chinese religion and culture. China was still closed to the West, with the exception of trade in Canton. But in 1839 the first Opium War begins, and at its conclusion there are five treaty ports and the image of China as an intact entity is shattered. Karl Marx wrote of China in 1853, three years before the beginning of the Second Opium War of 1856:

Complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of Old China. That isolation having come to a violent end by the medium of England, dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air. Now, England having brought about the revolution of China, the question is how that revolution will in time react on England, and through England on Europe (Marx 1853, para. 7).

It is interesting that Marx takes up once more the image of China as a mummified corpse that had been used by Herder a good 70 years previously. Elsewhere Marx praises and condemns European capitalism at the same time. Asia needs to be exploited by capitalism to be brought out of its stasis; on the other hand, the colonialism that ensues is unpardonable aggression.

During the Enlightenment, vulnerability had not been part of the image of China. Up until the first Opium War it had been thought that China could defend itself. Thereafter, China appears as prey at the mercy of predators. Stasis equates to senility, and the colonial mindset sees no chance of regeneration. The new Western image of China is that of a helpless victim to be exploited piecemeal. After the second Opium War, the Western image of China could scarcely sink lower, and yet: in the area of German interest in China a significant change of image did occur.

Germany was to acquire one colony in China in 1897, the port of Qingdao in Shandong. But before this, a colonial mentality was well established in the German print media in anticipation of a widely extended German Empire that was never to come about. With China now open to Western travellers, and the conviction that Karl Marx had aired in 1853 that Asia was ripe for an economic revolution to be driven by Western capital, many German scientists and engineers traversed the vast land on the lookout for opportunities for exploitation. From today's perspective, the most interesting of these was Ferdinand von Richthofen who explored much of



China in the years 1868–1872.<sup>9</sup> The vigour and lucidity of his contributions to German geographical writings on China may be seen to bring about a paradigm shift within the genre. For his vision of China displaces the myth of stagnation and senility in favour of an industrialized future in which China is full of youthful promise. It is as if he could not see a Chinese landscape without envisaging a railway network to exploit its industrial potential, especially its coal reserves.<sup>10</sup>

Richthofen saw that China was ripe for an industrial revolution, the only question being which European nation would provide it with the necessary external stimulus to set the whole process going. He recognized the enormous potential latent in Chinese labour—something his contemporaries largely ignored in their search for mineral deposits. In one report from the province of Shansi, he praised the hospitality of the nomadic tribes, but continues: “yet one glance suffices to perceive the superiority of the industrious Chinese, although the stage at which this race has come to a halt on its previous march towards progress is indeed a low one” (Richthofen 1873, p. 142). Here we may recognize Richthofen as a reader of Hegel, fully conversant with the myth of China having succumbed to stasis in the distant past. But Richthofen’s innovation is to see that this stasis need not be permanent, that China was ripe for a process of industrial modernization, needing only appropriate investment and knowhow from the West. Richthofen’s vision of a fully modernized and productive China was not to become a reality for a hundred years, but this image of China stands out from the many accounts of China’s stagnation and immobility in the nineteenth century as one pointing to China’s future.

## 7 Conclusion

To summarize: I suggest that what one scholar has termed the “history of our confusion” with regard to Western perspectives on China can be seen to be made up of many different images that are quite precise in themselves because they embody clear agendas. In general, these agendas have more to do with European controversies than with any Chinese reality. If we still look for any common thread, any master narrative to structure successive visions of China, then I suggest we might consider changes in the European idea of progress. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, what Leibniz sees as the best of Chinese culture and civilization ideally complements what is best in Western Europe. Divine Providence will propel both halves of the enlightened world forward in harmony for the betterment of humankind. As the century progresses, various alternative versions of China become prominent. In some of these, Chinese society appears less than ideal, subject to tyranny, frozen in time. In parallel to this, progress becomes less a function of Divine Providence than a quite secular process, driven by technological advances,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Osterhammel (1987).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lu (2016).

social upheaval and the thirst for individual liberty. In this perspective, China no longer complements Europe at its vital best, but drifts into becoming its negative opposite: static, “mummified”, marginalized.

Thus, in the early nineteenth century, China is stranded somewhere outside the dynamics of history. A proof of this is then apparently given by the ease with which the vast empire is defeated in the two Opium Wars. After the second, China appears ripe only for dismemberment and colonization by European powers. One German colonialist visionary, Ferdinand von Richthofen, is then able to reverse the image of China as mere prey waiting passively for predators. For he sees, as do many other European adventurers, the enormous mineral wealth awaiting exploitation in China. But he sees also—and more significantly—the great potential latent in Chinese labour and creates a powerful image of an industrialized China to come—albeit one needing the stimulus of colonial powers to come about.

In all of these alternative versions of China, we cannot help but see the dominance of Western concepts over whatever Chinese reality they may claim to encompass. The nineteenth century sees an enormous growth in the amount of empirical knowledge of China available to Western thinkers, but the transition from an idealist ideology to a colonialist one seems scarcely affected by this. Again and again we perceive Western thinkers apply a small number of concepts to encompass the vast diversity and complexity of China. In conclusion, I suggest that, for as long as the Chinese enigma is seen as yielding to a few basic concepts, then it will remain intractable. We may smile at some of the simplifications current in the middle of the eighteenth century, but we should also ask: are we really any further advanced today?

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## Part III

# Histories of Languages: Intersecting Trajectories

The place of languages and cultures disciplines within the Australian University system is regularly and ritually a source of concern for language scholars. Their history explains why this is so, and why collective memory remains important. In recent times, vigilance once more became the order of the day when cuts in government funding to universities immediately precipitated the demise of several language programs (all of these in what the national system deemed to be major languages). Elsewhere, a cost-cutting strategy has been to strip language departments of their research capacity by designating all staff as teaching-only. Although these actions are not as yet widespread, they have again alerted language scholars to the need to look to ways of consolidating their standing and defending their role within their home institutions. They also look increasingly to the past in order to understand how certain well-established programs continue to remain so, why certain contexts tend to engender instability or why some languages are more vulnerable than others to the vagaries of funding models or the politics of the day.

While the historical overview of the Australian languages sector provided by numerous government commissioned reports and major studies by language policy experts, notably Joseph Lo Bianco (2009), and most recently Jennifer Baldwin (2019), has plotted many of the political and global contextual reasons for various crises and periods of renewal, there remain many of the individual language histories to be written. These too have their importance. The reasons for the favour or disfavour in which languages departments are held within their own local context can offer new insights into the institutional fortunes of languages within academe, and these can be richly instructive for those seeking information on the rise and fall of language programs and on any effective local strategies adopted to enable programs to prosper.

The three studies in this section all provide such information and such insights. Hajek and Baldwin's overview of Italian Studies in Australian universities firstly offers a model and a set of principles and methodologies by which city-wide or institutional studies of individual languages can be undertaken. The authors also plead for more such studies to be undertaken before the oral or written testimony of early witnesses is lost, and, with them, an understanding of the different types of

pathways leading to the establishment or disestablishment of languages in specific universities. Hajek and Baldwin point to the need to determine how language ecologies can work to foster the introduction of new languages and ensure their survival, within both a particular institution and a wider context.

For their part, Duché and West-Sooby have examined the history of language studies through the substantial archives within their respective institutions, the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide respectively. Duché focuses on the specific example of French Studies at Melbourne, while West-Sooby looks at modern languages at Adelaide as a whole, plotting their differing trajectories within the same institution. In both studies, the appointment of strong and charismatic personalities, who promote innovative curricula, a strong research culture and extensive community outreach, is seen as a vital element in managing and sustaining their discipline. It is true that universities are now much bigger institutions than they were in the days of founding pioneers such as A.R. Chisholm and J.G. Cornell, and that competition for the approval and support of senior managers is far more cut-throat than in those times. However, these studies show that respect is still largely earned on strong performance in the same three areas, all of which, when combined together, enable language studies to fit squarely with the current agendas of Australian universities.

That history does repeat can be a reassuring situation for language scholars.

# Remembering Language Studies in Australian Universities: An Italian Case Study



John Hajek and Jennifer Baldwin

**Abstract** Language studies in Australian universities have a long and complex history—that differs according to such things as language, institution, national imperative, etc... One essential but often overlooked part of the discipline of languages and cultures in our universities is recording and understanding precisely that history. Recording how and why specific language programs were established, for instance, is important for establishing a permanent record of historical continuity and for understanding the past and the present of language programs in the Australian tertiary sector, as well as their possible interconnections and differences.

In this chapter we describe a pilot study exploring the beginnings of Italian language teaching and programs in tertiary institutions in Melbourne—and especially their somewhat inorganic expansion across the city from the late 1950s, into the 1980s and beyond. We are specifically interested in trying to understand how and why Italian language (and Italian Studies more generally) came to be taught in different universities in that city. While we present some of our early findings, including: (a) the effect of institutional type; and (b) the useful assistance of colleagues in other languages, at the same time we also have an interest in mapping out and reflecting on the methodology adopted and the challenges faced. It is hoped that our pilot study might in this way assist and encourage colleagues at other institutions to record the history of language studies in their individual institutions or cities, but who might wonder how to approach the issue in terms of possible data collection and analysis.

**Keywords** Language studies · Australian universities · Melbourne · Italian studies · 1950s–2000s

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## 1 Introduction

The importance of Language studies in Australian universities has been captured in many documents, including in reports and studies written by those actively involved in all aspects of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU), e.g., Nettelbeck et al. (2007). Even before the formal creation of LCNAU in 2011, there had been, for instance, a significant conference on tertiary language studies entitled “Marking Our Difference” that was held in Melbourne in 2003 (Wigglesworth 2004), a report by the Go8 universities in 2007 (*Languages in Crisis: A Rescue Plan for Australia*), and the national languages colloquium also held in Melbourne in 2009. The colloquium was the final precursor to the establishment of LCNAU, which occurred with the significant support also of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC).<sup>1</sup>

LCNAU, as the only peak national body of its kind in Australia’s tertiary sector, leads the way in endorsing the importance of language and culture teaching and learning in our universities. It has a number of critical aims, of which the two of perhaps the greatest relevance here are:

- The sharing of present and future good practice;
- And encouraging and enabling university research. (LCNAU background 2018)

To these two objectives we would link an important imperative, that of documenting our history, i.e., the history of the teaching and learning of languages in the Australian tertiary sector, so that we can understand better how we arrived at the place we are at now. There are certainly many references to the beginnings of language teaching in some published official histories of universities, of particular departments and faculties (e.g., Harvey et al. 2012) and other more general documents, such as national reports, e.g., the 1991 Leal Report. However, many histories of Language studies in Australian universities remain to be written. We also believe it is important to dig deeper to uncover how and why the teaching of specific languages began in a particular place and what were the driving forces behind such events. Our research project, only pilot in nature, is of course preceded by much more detailed and developed histories of Language studies, such as that written by Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby (2012) (published in Harvey et al. 2012) and by Ivan Barko and Angus Martin (1997).

We have a number of aims in pursuing a project on the history of language programs at university level. We wished in the first instance to record the establishment and early history specifically of Italian language teaching and Italian Studies at tertiary level in Melbourne—home of Australia’s largest Italian-born and

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<sup>1</sup>The ALTC was renamed the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) in 2011, and remained the funding body under that guise for LCNAU in its initial phase in 2011 and 2012.

Italian-speaking population; and establish the historical continuity as well as connections within and across language programs and institutions in that city.

We also wanted to understand what happened in the past so we can better understand the present—to what extent have events in the past determined the current provision of Italian language teaching and Italian Studies programs in Melbourne? A better understanding could also assist in identifying the feasibility and mechanisms for the establishment or re-establishment of future language programs, not just those involving Italian.

An additional aim was to map the methodology we used to navigate the challenges for remembering the history of language programs, e.g., variable access to data sources. Given the nature of the process there is also scope for some reflection on our part which might be helpful too in assisting and encouraging others to do the same for their languages, institutions and/or cities and states.

## **2 Why Italian in Melbourne?**

We began our project by choosing to focus on the beginnings of Italian language studies in the tertiary sector in Melbourne. The reasons for such a choice are straightforward. Italian is firstly a language with which we are very familiar and for which we have significant pre-existing knowledge and contacts. It also presents itself as a good test case as Italian has been offered in a diverse range of institutions in the Melbourne metropolitan area since it was first taught at the University of Melbourne. In most cases the beginnings of Italian language teaching and programs are also still within living memory, although increasingly in the last few years we have also lost important people who held critical memories going back decades.

As we shall see, we have learned in the course of this pilot study that the development of Italian language teaching in Victorian universities is more complicated and diverse than we had ourselves previously understood while also showing quite discernible patterns of development with long-term consequences.

## **3 Methodological Approach and the Process of Data Collection**

Our methodological approach was multi-faceted, and care was taken to understand the challenges presented by the collection, validation and interpretation of data.

We used a variety of primary and secondary sources to gather our data and focused on qualitative methods of doing so. Given that we were attempting to construct a history it was important to use multiple sources (O'Toole and Beckett 2013,



p. 55). This enabled us to cross-reference information from oral sources and written sources, primary and secondary. Such cross-referencing can alert the researcher to possible inaccuracies in both primary and secondary sources (Mcdowell 2013, p. 56). It is also important to note that any history constructed will never be absolute or unchallengeable. Some documents may seem to be an accurate record of the past but could also be what “the writer believed had taken place” (O’Toole and Beckett 2013, p. 55; Mcdowell 2013, p. 56). Similarly, oral history collected through interviews is of course never likely to be a complete account of what happened as interviewees’ recollections may be partial or selective or simply inaccurate. Another cautionary note which applies to both oral and written sources is that what was deemed important or unimportant in the past is not necessarily the perspective current-day researchers would have (Mcdowell 2013, pp. 61, 62, 75). All of this is not to dissuade us from our task but cautions us to be as careful as possible in our work, and flexible enough to change any claims we make, if more accurate information becomes available.

The process of data collection we adopted was fairly straightforward—at least in principle. The first step was to establish which tertiary institutions we wanted to investigate, i.e., all locally established universities in Melbourne. With this in mind we examined a series of reports for any details they might provide on when Italian Studies courses and programs had started and in what context they had been established. We then tracked whether they had continued. The documents consulted included the Wykes Report (1966), the Wykes and King report (1968), the so-called Kramer report (Australian Universities Commission 1975), the Hawley Report (1982) and the Leal Report (1991). The Italian profile in the Key Languages in Australia series (Di Biase et al. 1994) published by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia was also a valuable resource. These reports provided useful background information, as well as varying amounts of historical detail about the tertiary teaching of Italian and Italian Studies in Melbourne.

We then consulted a range of other resources to find additional material, wherever possible. University archives sometimes contained correspondence files, faculty meeting files and professorial board files of minuted decisions. When searching various university archives for historical material and contacting archivists for advice on elusive material, often the archivists themselves went out of their way to suggest additional materials which might be of use.

Faculty handbooks and university calendars (often digitized) were a rich resource with respect to the names of lecturers, and instructors, the course structures and the departmental grouping in which various languages were located. However, it was often necessary to refer to an “institutional family tree” to find out the previous names and component structures of a now amalgamated institution where a particular course had originally been introduced. Metropolitan newspapers (often digitized now) were a source of letters written to the press in the 1950s as various sections of

the community agitated for Italian to be taught at the University of Melbourne. The journal *Babel* contained valuable articles and language surveys. The Dante Alighieri Society located in Carlton, close to the University of Melbourne, holds important records which we also consulted. Useful information was also found in the *Australian Dictionary of Bibliography* and in public obituaries.

A very helpful resource was that of word-of-mouth collected from key stakeholders, such as past and present teaching and administrative staff. This allowed us to establish who is in touch with whom—ex-teachers and ex-lecturers—and who knows whom. It was sometimes just a chance comment that led to the identification of people who were previously unknown to the authors, but who were known to others we had previously contacted but who had not mentioned them. In one case we found a useful contact simply by picking a name out of the phonebook that seemed to be located in the right part of Melbourne where this person was thought potentially to be living.

Finally, a series of interviews were conducted and recorded—once the necessary ethics approval was received. These were mostly in person but in some instances because of the constraints of distance and ill health of the interviewee, information was obtained by email. Interviews proved to be particularly helpful for our study. They allowed the researchers to ask questions of interviewees to confirm previously reported facts but also to uncover information that may not have been considered useful in the past. Such interviews sometimes elicited insights from interviewees that researchers had not previously considered and helped to gather valuable information as to how historical developments impacted on the individuals concerned and the courses they taught—in addition to providing helpful historical detail about institutional provision of Italian language teaching.

One worthy interviewee with extensive knowledge of the University of Melbourne, other institutions, and the wider Italian community, was interviewed, with his full approval, in his nursing-home bed. He had much to say! Sadly, he has since died. We are also aware of other important figures more generally in the tertiary languages sector in Melbourne who have passed away in recent years, such as Professor Michael Clyne. Unfortunately, their encyclopædic knowledge and oral anecdotes about languages at universities in Melbourne were never recorded for posterity, although they were often related verbally to others including the first author. What this underlines of course, is the need to document such oral history before it is too late.

For each institution we examined we have tabulated the resources available to us. As is clear from Table 1 below, access to data sources differed greatly across institutions. Only in the case of the faculty handbooks and calendars were we able to use the same data sources for all institutions.

**Table 1** Access to data sources across institutions

	UniMelb <sup>a</sup>	La Trobe	Monash	Deakin <sup>b</sup>	ACU <sup>c</sup>	Swinburne <sup>d</sup>	RMIT <sup>e</sup>	VU <sup>f</sup>
Published languages surveys & reports	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes
Archived correspondence & Faculty files	Yes		Yes			Yes		
Archivists			Yes			Yes	Yes	
Faculty handbooks/ calendars	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Institutional family trees				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspapers, e.g., letters to the editor	Yes							
Early issues of <i>Babel</i>	Yes							
Dante Alighieri society records	Yes							
<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>	Yes							
Obituaries	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Word of mouth	Yes	Yes	Yes					Yes
Interviews	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

<sup>a</sup>University of Melbourne includes the Melbourne College of Advanced Education

<sup>b</sup>Deakin University (previously State College of Victoria at Toorak, Victoria College and Prahran College of Advanced Education)

<sup>c</sup>The Australian Catholic University (previously the Institute of Catholic Education)

<sup>d</sup>Swinburne University of Technology (previously Swinburne Institute of Technology, and Swinburne Technical College)

<sup>e</sup>RMIT (also incorporating the previous State College of Victoria at Coburg, and Phillip Institute—Coburg Campus)

<sup>f</sup>Victoria University (formerly Footscray Institute of Technology)

## 4 The National and Local Context: Language Studies and Italian Past and Present

As part of our first step back in time we also explored the general tertiary landscape from the 1950s when the expansion of Australia's university sector was well under way. The Australian Universities Commission began to control funding to a large extent and its decisions progressively expanded some discipline areas and restricted others. It often blocked funding to institutions wishing to introduce a language, stating that this was an unnecessary duplication of an offering of that language at another metropolitan university.

Across the decades from the 1950s to the 1980s technical colleges and institutes of technology also grew in number and size during the expansion of the tertiary sector. These new institutions were more vocational and community-oriented than

traditional universities, enabling a wider variety of languages to be introduced, which were often linked to courses with a vocational or community focus.

The tertiary sector reforms begun in 1988 by the then federal Minister for Education, John Dawkins, transformed the tertiary sector through the merging of vocational entities with both existing and new universities, a process which led to the creation of a unified cohort of some 34 universities by 1992. This process resulted in many language programs, including Italian, being brought into the university sector (Baldwin 2019).

Not surprisingly, given the history of higher education in Australia outlined briefly above, there have been two distinct strands in the development of Italian language studies in Victoria: one through the three traditional universities established in Melbourne and the other through the merger and/or transformation of vocational institutions, such as colleges of advanced education and institutes of technology. In the first instance, the three traditional universities typically introduced Italian within the generalist Arts degree. In the college/institute sector, however, the push was often for Italian specifically in its role as a significant community language. Offerings were often couched in vocational terms and their courses (in interpreting/translating, ethnic/multicultural studies and teacher education) aimed to meet the particular needs and interests of the Italo-Australian community.

Victoria cannot claim to be the first Australian state to have taught Italian language formally in a degree course in the tertiary sector. That honour belongs to the University of Western Australia when Francis Vanzetti was appointed as a part-time lecturer in 1929 (Alexander 1963, p. 715; UWA 1929, pp. 138, 155). The University of Sydney followed in 1930, when two benefactions enabled Italian teaching to begin (Turney et al. 1991, p. 510; University of Sydney 1931, pp. 788–789).

Today the current picture is that, in the Melbourne metropolitan area, Italian language teaching continues at the University of Melbourne, and at Monash, La Trobe, RMIT and Swinburne Universities, and has recently been revived in limited fashion at the Australian Catholic University (ACU). It is not currently taught at Victoria University and Deakin University, although it has been available in both institutions in the past. Elsewhere in Australia, the teaching of Italian continues to be widely available in the university sector (Dunne and Pavlyshyn 2015).

## 5 Universities at Foundation

In this section we discuss the history of Italian at the three tertiary institutions that were originally founded as universities in Melbourne: they are the University of Melbourne, La Trobe University and Monash University.

In the case of the **University of Melbourne** the earliest history of discussion about the teaching of Italian language was discovered in the University Archives through documents detailing discussions of a 1913 Joint Committee of Enquiry into a range of University issues (University of Melbourne, Joint Committee of Enquiry 1913, p. 10). This document revealed that there was an interest in expanding the

range of languages, including Italian, but also significant concern that funds were scarce. So whilst acknowledging the importance of an increase in the number of language offerings, the committee looked for ways to introduce more languages at little cost. The proposal was for the appointment of Readers (later called instructors) but no action was taken that year.

After World War I, the issue of the introduction of more languages arose again. The instructorship scheme was introduced in the Faculty of Arts where the instructor was not paid by the University, but directly by the students. The University took a 10% cut of instructors' fees for "administration" but it actually cost them nothing. The instructor was not a staff member of the University of Melbourne. As such, the University could claim to be teaching Italian, but it did not bear the cost of the teaching staff, and the subject, as far as students were concerned, was not for degree purposes.

We know from the University Calendar that the first instructor in Italian language in the Faculty of Arts was Dr Omero Schiassi who began teaching in March 1928. More information about him is available from his *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry (Griffin 1988) but also from a pen portrait of Schiassi by Alan Chisholm (1958), a lecturer in French in the 1920s who was later to become the Professor of French at Melbourne. Archival correspondence reveals that Professor Chisholm had an instrumental role in enabling Schiassi's appointment in 1928 and continued to support him throughout his teaching career at the University. Schiassi himself sent a barrage of letters to the Registrar throughout the 1930s and 1940s pleading for Italian to be part of a degree course. This did not happen, as the Registrar claimed again and again that finances would not permit it. However, after the war, Schiassi was made a tutor in Italian within the Department of French and served in this role until his death in January 1956.

During the 1950s a campaign for the inclusion of Italian as a degree subject gained momentum, spearheaded by Professor Chisholm, and Dr Soccorso Santoro, a prominent member of the Italian community. Whilst many letters of support were written to *The Age* newspaper by University staff members, there was also a groundswell of commentary from the Italian community as Santoro mobilized its support (Letters to the Editor 1956). When Commonwealth funding for languages was eventually recommended in the Murray Report of 1957 (Commonwealth of Australia 1957), these monies finally enabled the University to fund Italian Studies properly and on an ongoing credit-bearing basis. In 1958, Italian was approved as a degree subject by the University, to be located within the French department where formal credit-bearing teaching within the Bachelor of Arts began in 1959—with the appointment of Colin McCormick, who had first arrived from the United Kingdom in 1950, to teach Italian at the University of Sydney (Obituary 1987, p. 6). It is this moment then, 1959, that we consider pivotal in the history of Italian Studies in Melbourne, as the starting point of fully credited tertiary provision of the language in that city and the state of Victoria.

Several written resources document the lead up to and the beginning of this fledgling program at the University of Melbourne. These include: Chisholm's (1957) article in the journal *Babel*; Mayne's account of the Dante Alighieri Society

(Mayne 1997, pp. 106, 108); and correspondence in the University of Melbourne Archives (UMA 1958–1959).

Italian Studies remained within the French department until 1963 when it was established as its own department. This was not the only case of Italian teaching beginning within a department of French in Melbourne. As we shall quickly see, the influence and mentoring of French departments have been important for the establishment of Italian language programs and departments elsewhere in Melbourne.

Elsewhere in the university, the teaching of Italian was available for some time in the late 1980s and into the 1990s specifically in the undergraduate program of the Institute of Education which arose through the merger of the university's Faculty of Education and the Melbourne College of Advanced Education (MCAE) in 1989. The MCAE (itself the product of an earlier merger in 1983) was a major teacher training college that directly adjoined the university's campus. It is clear from handbook records that Italian was introduced in the mid-1980s at the MCAE to be taught specifically as a community language—at a time when the teaching of community languages was rapidly expanding in primary and secondary schools across Australia. Unfortunately, there are many gaps in our knowledge of the history of Italian teaching at MCAE, and much more research is needed.

**La Trobe University** was the next university to offer Italian language—commencing in 1974—in response to a growing need from the large migrant Italian population in La Trobe's northern suburbs heartland. The La Trobe University Handbooks of the time document the teaching arrangements whereby the University of Melbourne agreed to teach Italian at La Trobe University for the first three years from 1974.

The driving force for this arrangement was Elliott Forsyth, the foundation Professor of French at La Trobe, who was able to provide helpful information before he passed away in late 2012. Thus, just like at Melbourne, Italian began as a subject within a French department. In the first instance a formal arrangement was struck between the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University, whereby Melbourne University lecturers travelled (sometimes by taxi) to La Trobe to teach. By the end of 1975 it was clear that La Trobe had sufficient regular demand for Italian and McCormick who was still the head of Italian Studies at Melbourne indicated that his program could not manage it any longer due to the heavy demands on his staff at both universities (Forsyth, personal communication, February 9, 2012). La Trobe then advertised for a lectureship at the end of 1975 (Pagliaro, personal communication, October 20, 2016), and took over primary responsibility for teaching Italian in 1977 (La Trobe University 1977, p. 204). Its first appointment in Italian Studies was Tony Pagliaro, a graduate of the University of Melbourne. Italian Studies continued to be located within the French Studies department until an endowed chair for the former was created in 1982 (Scott 1989, p. 178). The first professorial appointment in Italian was Giovanni Carsaniga, who arrived from the UK to take up the Vaccari Foundation chair. He later took up the chair in Italian Studies at the University of Sydney.

**Monash University's** entry into the direct provision of Italian language teaching was somewhat later. Information was difficult to find at first. Several visits to the

Monash University Archives, and discussion with very helpful and interested archival officers, uncovered extensive correspondence and faculty committee files which detailed early attempts in the 1970s to introduce Italian. Interviews with former and current staff members provided helpful additional detail with respect to the 1980s.

Monash's first attempt to introduce Italian was in 1973, and the program was to be completely internally funded. The aim was to design a course at both beginners and intermediate level, which would specifically meet Monash's needs rather than duplicate what was already offered at the University of Melbourne. This did not happen.

In 1975, a submission to the Working Party on Languages and Linguistics sought a sizeable establishment grant but the Working Party only supported Italian as a Continuing Education course (Australian Universities Commission [aka Kramer Report] 1975, clause 4.18). A further request for funds from the Universities Commission was sought in 1977. Again it failed as the now Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) cited the courses in Italian already being taught at La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne. An approach for funds to the Director-General of Education in Victoria also failed. As a result, Monash could obtain neither Commonwealth nor State Government funding and could not finance provision of Italian from its own funds. Information from archival correspondence and committee minutes indicates which academics at Monash University were the driving forces for the push for Italian language teaching, which had come not only from French academics at Monash but also from Michael Clyne, in the German Department, who was a well-known proponent of community language education. Monash was keen to offer Italian to its students who would otherwise have had to travel quite a distance to undertake complementary studies at another university.

It was not until 1985, however, that Monash came up with another proposal: that French and Spanish departments would be amalgamated into a Department of Romance Languages and that Italian should then be introduced as a third Romance language. By reducing the commitment to Spanish teaching (where enrolments were falling), Italian could be incorporated. This proposal was approved by the TEC. It was willing to allow Monash to introduce Italian as long as Melbourne was amenable to this, but it also hoped that Monash did not think TEC was moving away from its desire to avoid unnecessary duplication of language teaching. With the support and input particularly of senior members of the French Studies program, Monash University eventually began teaching Italian in 1987—a welcome addition for students who previously travelled mostly to the University of Melbourne to study Italian. Monash's first appointment in Italian Studies was Joseph (Joe) Gioscio, a graduate of the Universities of Melbourne and Strasbourg. Sadly, he soon fell ill and passed away in 1988 (Musolino 1988–1989; Musolino, personal communication, September 12, 2017), at which point a new appointment in Italian Studies had to be made.

## 6 Universities That Were Previously Colleges of Advanced Education/Institutes of Technology/Institutes of Education

**Swinburne Technical College**, which eventually became **Swinburne University of Technology** in 1992 was the first in the vocational college/institute sector to decide to teach Italian. In 1967 there were internal discussions about the expansion of courses in the humanities and the growing need for people proficient in languages in industry and commerce. The former Swinburne Archives officer (now retired) supplied a copy of an annual report document from 1967 detailing those discussions. Three past teachers of Italian at Swinburne were also identified and interviewed. The College took its cue from the Martin Report (Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education 1964) stressing the need to increase Australia's potential for trade with foreign countries. There was also behind-the-scenes activity. According to one interviewee, there was a push from the Italian community to have its language taught formally. Swinburne College of Technology handbooks of the era confirm that pilot courses in Italian (as a significant community language) and Japanese (for trade reasons) began in 1969 with the approval of the Victoria Institute of Colleges. Italian was first listed in the 1970 Swinburne College of Technology handbook as a subject in a General Studies diploma, subsequently becoming a subject in a BA degree. Through an unexpected contact in the secondary school language teaching community, we were able to identify and fortunate to track down the very first teacher of Italian at Swinburne, Brian Warren, himself an ex-high school teacher, who was already teaching French at Swinburne. Brian was later joined by Charles D'Aprano in the teaching of Italian. Over time, as a result of a series of restructures Italian was subsequently moved from the Arts Faculty to the Business Faculty becoming part of a double degree (Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Arts (Italian)) and then more recently back to the Arts Faculty as part of a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Business combined degree.

**RMIT's** Associate Diploma (Interpreting/Translating) introduced in 1978 is indicative of Italian being included in a vocational course rather than in a more traditional academic course. Concern had already been expressed about resettlement issues for the many migrants coming to Australia. This course was funded by RMIT to enable interpreters and translators to be trained to meet community needs, including those of the Italian community. When funding ran out after 2 years, the interpreting/translating course was discontinued at RMIT and picked up and funded by the then **Prahran College of Advanced Education**. In 1981 this course was upgraded to a Bachelor of Arts (Interpreting and Translating). This course continued when Prahran CAE became part of **Victoria College** and subsequently part of **Deakin University**. Much of the history of this course in Interpreting/Translating was gleaned from an interview with a former staff member, Adolfo Gentile, who had worked in the course through all its various institutional iterations at RMIT, Prahran CAE, Victoria College and Deakin University. And of course, the various handbooks of these institutions provided the formal detail.



In 1981 what was then the **State College of Victoria at Coburg** (which eventually became **Phillip Institute-Coburg Campus**), also in the college sector, introduced Italian, Greek and Turkish through an Associate Diploma in Ethnic Studies—at a time of significant interest in ethnic studies amongst Melbourne’s burgeoning migrant communities. This formal teaching of these three languages was in advance of TEC funding which was allocated from 1982. The program was very popular and attracted sufficient student numbers to keep it going (Carroll 1995, p. 39). Phillip Institute became part of RMIT in 1992. Teaching of Italian initially continued at the Coburg campus after amalgamation but was formally discontinued due to lack of demand a few years later. By 2011, RMIT was teaching some Italian again—at its main city campus as an individual Arts elective—through the employment of casual tutors. This limited provision has continued to this day, subject each semester to student demand.

**Victoria University** (previously **Victoria University of Technology**) was established in 1992 with the **Footscray Institute of Technology (FIT)** as its core. Italian was introduced at FIT in 1986, taught by John Lando as an exchange lecturer from the Institute of Catholic Education. The impetus for this teaching seems to have come from a recommendation of the 1980 review by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) of Multicultural and Migrant Education. Subsequent funding was allocated by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for the next triennium. In 1987 a lecturer, Nina Bivona, was formally appointed and Italian was taught in a Community languages stream in the Bachelor of Arts (Multicultural) and in a Bachelor of Arts (Australian Cultural Studies). When Footscray Institute of Technology was eventually merged into the new Victoria University of Technology (and later Victoria University (VU), the Italian language stream in the Bachelor of Arts (Australian Cultural Studies) continued. However, by 1998, Italian language was no longer taught at VU due to declining demand. Students were now referred to the possibility of cross-institutional studies in Italian at ACU, La Trobe, Melbourne, Monash, RMIT and Swinburne. All that remained at VU were two Cultural Studies subjects, taught in English, “Images of Italy”, and “Italian Presence in Australia after World War II”. These subjects have long since gone.

**Deakin University** entered the field of Italian language teaching by virtue of its amalgamation with the Melbourne campuses of Victoria College in 1991. It had not previously taught any languages since its establishment as Victoria’s first regional university in 1974 through the merger in Geelong of the Gordon Institute of Technology and Geelong Teachers College. Through the eventual incorporation of Victoria College, Deakin inherited a series of language-oriented programs, one of which was in Interpreting/Translating, with Italian as one of the available language streams. This was an important course, approved by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) for providing accredited interpreters and translators. Unfortunately, that specialized program was closed in 1998, due to declining demand. Again, the Deakin University handbooks and the handbooks of its previous iterations were important in tracing the development of the Interpreting/Translating courses. The Deakin University Archivist was particularly helpful in suggesting archival resources held at Deakin. Extensive detail on this

course was also gathered from an interview with the last Head of the Department of Language and Culture Studies, Adolfo Gentile, who, as already noted, had taught in the program in its various iterations across institutions since well before Victoria College was merged into Deakin. In a more recent initiative cross-institutional teaching arrangements were made with the University of South Australia (UniSA) in return for the teaching by Deakin of Arabic. Tutors for each were placed in receiving institutions, while primary teaching was offered in distance fashion. The arrangements did not last long and Italian was discontinued after a matter of a few short years (2009–2011).

**The Australian Catholic University (ACU)**, on its formation in 1991, took on the already existing Italian language program of the former Institute of Catholic Education (ICE) located in Melbourne. Italian language studies from the BA degree were offered within Education courses, with a particular emphasis on the communicative ability/real life contexts necessary to teachers of primary and secondary students of Italian. Italian-born John Lando who had pioneered the teaching of the Italian language in 1983 at ICE continued this work at ACU. Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to find information about why precisely Italian was introduced nor how it was funded at ICE. Given the timing, however, which coincides with the demand for community language teachers in schools at the time, Italian was an obvious choice for a Catholic institution which attracted large numbers of Italo-Australian students wishing to become teachers.<sup>2</sup> It appears that ICE may have funded such teaching themselves, with additional funds for a language laboratory coming from the Italian social welfare organization CO.AS.IT (Comitato Assistenza Italiani). The ACU archives were searched but there was still nothing available which gave information about Italian and its beginnings at ICE.

Curriculum changes in Education courses at ACU from 2007 made it difficult for students to pick up Italian as an elective major, leading to a decline in enrolments. Eventually, from the beginning of 2012, the teaching of Italian language units was discontinued and continuing students needed to pick up the Italian language course online from the University of South Australia in order to finish their course.

Fortuitously, however, due to a push from ACU International, ACU accredited and introduced from January 2017 a Diploma in Languages with Italian and Spanish languages which was offered collaboratively between Education and Arts. This course was firstly offered at ACU Melbourne and North Sydney, and in 2018 it was also introduced at Brisbane and Strathfield campuses. It should be noted that the provision of Italian Studies at ACU is supported only by staffing on a limited sessional basis.

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<sup>2</sup>The first author recalls many of his cohort in Italian at the University of Melbourne on completion of their undergraduate studies in 1982 and 1983 going to ICE (later to become part of ACU) to train as teachers—most of these then became Italian teachers in Victorian schools.

## 7 On the Origins of Italian Language Teaching and Italian Studies Programs in Melbourne: Observations and Implications

In the course of recording the early history of Italian language teaching and Italian Studies in Melbourne, we discovered that the provision of Italian language teaching has typically very different origins from that of other languages, albeit with some common threads, and that the 1970s and 1980s really were the golden days in terms of introducing Italian language (and Italian Studies more generally) into individual tertiary institutions in the city.

There is a clear historical split between traditional universities (i.e., institutions founded as universities) and the rest (i.e., universities created solely through the merger of previously vocational institutions and institutes of technology).

The three traditional universities share some interesting similarities with respect to the provision of Italian, which was always envisioned primarily as a component of a traditional arts degree without any specific vocational outcome.<sup>3</sup> While the teaching of Italian at the University of Melbourne was already formally established in 1959, this university and La Trobe University have a clear interconnected history of teaching provision in the 1970s, with staff from the former travelling to the latter under a short-lived agreement—before La Trobe established its own program. Monash University eventually followed suit by setting up its Italian Studies program some years later—after years of funding resistance over duplication at Melbourne and La Trobe. Initial permanent staffing at both La Trobe and Monash Universities was provided by graduates from the University of Melbourne—linking all three departments at a personal level.

What is also striking about each of these traditional universities is the critical support and input from colleagues in other language programs, especially French, at each (as well as German at Monash)—a fact not known to many today but which we have been able to highlight here. This is a valuable reminder of the value of language programs and colleagues working together at a local institutional level—for the benefit of students and universities—much like LCNAU does now at a national level. Colleagues in French and German could see the evident benefits of providing (and even hosting) Italian—particularly in light of the noticeable presence of the Italian community in Melbourne—which had expanded rapidly from the 1950s on and whose children were now entering their universities in large numbers. There was also of course the additional prestige of Italian language and culture themselves that helped to make the case.

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<sup>3</sup>A minor exception involved the merger of the teacher training college, Melbourne College of Advanced Education (MCAE), into the University of Melbourne. As noted previously, MCAE maintained its community language education (mainly Italian) in its teacher training programs from the 1980s well into the 1990s. The history of Italian Studies at MCAE follows a pattern entirely consistent with other historically vocational institutes regardless of which university they ended up in.

Elsewhere, in the college/institute sector, Italian language teaching typically developed independently of the traditional university sector, without any apparent coordination between institutions. However, we are also aware of several staff who taught in both sectors, before Dawkins's tertiary unification occurred. Swinburne Technical College, which eventually became Swinburne University of Technology, is a good example of this separate development, and is the only example of a former college/institute to have maintained Italian language teaching and associated Italian Studies program in uninterrupted fashion to this day.<sup>4</sup> In many colleges and institutes Italian teaching was often developed as part of a non-traditional vocational or academic structure or discipline area, e.g., interpreting and translating, and ethnic/multicultural/community studies. Here the community language role of Italian was pivotal, although it does not appear to be sufficient to support programs in the longer term.

We have learned too of the positive and negative effects of amalgamations of institutions and restructurings within institutions. Languages are often the casualties in restructures and cutbacks—often as a result of declining or fluctuating interest in specific discipline areas, such as ethnic and multicultural studies. This pattern happened at Deakin University, RMIT, VU and ACU. What we have also found are courageous attempts to revitalize languages with a mix of teaching arrangements, such as at Deakin University and ACU.

Overall, it is clear that the type of institution (traditional v. non-traditional), and associated discipline type (part of traditional non-vocational Arts degree v. non-traditional/vocational discipline area, even within an Arts degree) at the time of the introduction of Italian language teaching has had a significant impact on the long-term viability of Italian programs over time. Whereas full Italian Studies programs continue to exist in the three traditional universities today, viability is much more chequered in the non-traditional sector, as associated demand in non-traditional disciplines declined. Very limited teaching has been reinstated at RMIT and ACU, but only Swinburne retains a program with any full-time staff. In this last case, a critical fact here may be that Italian was introduced as part of a General Diploma (a qualification awarded before entering a traditional BA)—rather than as part of some specialist or community focused qualification or discipline area more typical of the non-traditional sector.

## **8 Reflecting on the Process: Data Sources, Complex Strands and Final Thoughts**

While the use of written records was very helpful, documentation was often lacking (cf. Table 1). On reflection, we understand how critical it was for our project to interview past and current staff at different universities. They were identified

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<sup>4</sup>This is not to say the Italian Studies program here has not been periodically threatened with closure.

through personal knowledge, contacts or university calendars. All of this can be a very time-consuming process. There were instances where we simply could not find a person who had moved interstate, and there were some instances where key people who were part of the beginnings of Italian language programs did not wish to be involved in an interview for the project. Others were unable to assist because of illness or the frailty of old age. The phone book is a surprising source of assistance if one is prepared to follow up information that may or may not be correct.

We were astonished, too, by what people knew about courses and personnel involved in the early days, often involving information of which we had no prior knowledge. In this way, after following up information from a secondary school teacher of Italian in regional Victoria, we discovered that a foundation member of the Italian language staff at Swinburne Institute, unknown to us, was living in retirement in the country. It then turned out, on checking, that he was also known to many of the staff we interviewed at different institutions.

Most people are keen to remember and to share, and are actually pleased that someone is interested in documenting their part in the history of Italian language teaching. But not all people we contacted were so willing to participate—and the histories and memories that they might have remain elusive to us.

We have also learned through this project that people do not remember events in the same way or that they even remember the same things. It is important therefore to tap into multiple voices and sources to obtain the most comprehensive information.

We are conscious, though, that time is passing and that those people who were around and active in the 1960s and early 1970s are already becoming hard to track down if they are still alive.

All in all, there are different histories and different outcomes for Italian at different institutions—albeit with clear predictive patterns about the present emerging. Some Italian programs continue to flourish, others have been closed down, with a small number revived in very limited fashion after several years. We are of course intrigued to see if historical patterns we observed for Italian in Melbourne, e.g., (a) the distinction between traditional and non-traditional universities and respective pathways to provision; and (b) the assistance of colleagues in other languages, especially French, may have been replicated elsewhere in Australia, as well as the extent to which they may also be linked to language provision over the long term in other cities and states.

We strongly believe that a nationwide effort of remembering and recording of language teaching, especially the beginnings, would be an important achievement. Those of us who are located in the languages areas of our universities are well placed to write our own histories once the initial research and collation of data have been achieved. Indeed, as previously noted, the work of Fornasiero and West-Sooby (2012) and Barko and Martin (1997) in particular provides excellent models of what detailed historical work can bring to the public record for the benefit of everyone in the sector. Such research could also be a very fruitful student project within languages/linguistics/history disciplines towards an honours or graduate thesis.

While we did not have time or resources to explore this avenue for this study, the new alumni culture fostered by many universities is undoubtedly a valuable resource to be tapped—memory is important for former students as well.

All this is very interesting but the point to be made is this, such history is important and needs to be documented. Of course, the historical research we have in mind has wide scope: Italian is but one language taught in the Australian tertiary sector, with many more language histories still to be written. What is crucial, we believe, is to start now as time really is of the essence.

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# French Studies at the University of Melbourne, 1921–1956



Véronique Duché

**Abstract** The French program, one of the oldest language programs at the University of Melbourne, is currently housed in the School of Languages and Linguistics. Its history is intimately bound up with the career of prominent academics, including A. R. Chisholm, who was arguably “the most influential university teacher of French literature in twentieth-century Australia” (Kirsop 1981, p. 300). In this chapter I briefly retrace the history of French Studies at the University of Melbourne, from its beginnings in 1884, until today. However, in relating this history, I place a particular emphasis on the period of Chisholm’s tenure from 1921 to 1956, since his influence in shaping the curriculum over this period continues to resonate today.

**Keywords** History of languages · Languages education · French studies · Nineteenth-century poetry · University of Melbourne · A. R. Chisholm

I suppose I was born to be a student of languages as a gum tree is born to secrete eucalyptus.  
(Chisholm 1958, p. 133)

## 1 French Studies at Melbourne: A Brief History

Founded in 1853, the University of Melbourne did not initially offer foreign-language courses in Arts degrees. Classics (Latin and Greek) had been on the syllabus since 1854, but modern languages had to wait three decades. The French Studies program is indebted to John Edward Bromby (1809–1889)—a

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schoolmaster and Anglican cleric who advocated for the admittance of women at the University of Melbourne, where he was the first Warden of the Senate. It was Bromby who championed the introduction of language studies at Melbourne.

On 3 May 1880 Bromby gave the Council notice that, reflecting a Senate resolution, he intended to move that French and German should be taught in the Arts degree—they had, of course, been taught at matriculation since 1862. After some shilly-shallying, Bromby’s motion was carried (Selleck 2003, p. 167).

The creation of a new chair in English, French and German languages and literature—a very large chair!—was decided in 1882 (Selleck 2003, p. 200). However, Edward Ellis Morris, the former headmaster of Melbourne Church of England Grammar School who had been appointed to the position, delayed his start at the University.

### ***1.1 E. E. Morris***

Edward Ellis Morris held the position of Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Melbourne from 1884 until his death in 1902. According to Selleck:

Morris’s qualifications were not overwhelming. Neither French nor German was taught at Oxford when he studied there. He had spent time, however, in France and Germany learning these languages as an accomplishment that a well-educated man should acquire. (Selleck 2003, p. 200)

Morris, “a liberal who supported academic freedom, higher education of women [...] and extension of educational opportunity” (Wykes 1974, para. 4), put a lot of effort into promoting the Modern Languages and Literatures program, where he:

introduced pass courses of two years in English and one year of both French and German, and the final honours course and master of arts degree, lecturing single-handed in all three subjects. The university awarded him its first doctorate of letters in 1899. (Wykes 1974, para. 3)

However, as Barko and Martin note, “the major emphasis of the chair was on English, and Morris’s earlier requests to have French and German lecturers appointed to help him with the subjects were doomed to failure” (1997, p. 29). This pattern of administrative attempts to teach French more cheaply by combining responsibility for multiple languages under a single umbrella role would repeat itself over the course of the next century.

## 1.2 *F. I. Maurice-Carton*

Morris was succeeded by French native Ferdinand Isidore Maurice-Carton, who was appointed Lecturer in French in 1902 and “lectured to ever-increasing numbers of students” (About People 1934, p. 11). According to the “List of Graduates, from 14th May, 1856, to 21st March, 1896” published in the University of Melbourne Calendar of 1897, Maurice-Carton had been awarded a Master of Arts. The University Archives hold a professional portrait of him “wearing academic robe, standing at the outside entrance to a building” (McKellar 1914). Maurice-Carton was very active in the promotion of French Studies and published several books. A “List of contributions to literature and science published by members of University staff and students working in the University laboratories, for the year ended 31st July, 1914” mentions four titles that demonstrate Maurice-Carton’s dedication to French Studies:

- M. Maurice-Carton, M.A., B.ès.L. –
- Le Petit Français en Australie (monthly).
- Revised edition (5th) of “Abrégé de l’Histoire de France”.
- Le Français à l’Université de Melbourne (published every two months).
- A monthly contribution to the *Education Gazette of Victoria* on the teaching of French. (University of Melbourne 1915, p. 655)

According to Chisholm himself, “M. Carton [sic] was distinguished by that tremendous vitality (and longevity) which one finds so often among French provincial people” (Chisholm 1934b, p. 18).

Maurice-Carton’s efforts were also recognized in his native land: “For his life work in disseminating the French language and French culture in foreign countries, he was awarded the distinction of Associé de la Légion d’Honneur” (About People 1934, p. 11).

It would indeed be a challenge to follow in the wake of such a successful teacher.

## 1.3 *A. R. Chisholm*

Alan Rowland Chisholm would be the man to take up this challenge.

Born in 1888 in the New South Wales town of Bathurst, Chisholm was a brilliant student. His memoirs reveal that his passion and respect for learning were sparked by figures of his childhood—first by erudite bush eccentric “Old Mr Ross”, and then by a succession of Sydney schoolteachers and headmasters.

As a child, he developed a keen interest in learning Latin. His sensitivity to music and poetry also became apparent at this time.

In high school Chisholm began learning French. He soon fell in love with the language, thanks to innovative teacher Henry Tasman (“Tas”) Lovell.

Chisholm continued French at the University of Sydney under George Gibb Nicholson, who in 1921 would become the first chair of French to be appointed in Australia. Nicholson’s demanding standards developed linguistic discipline and confidence in Chisholm, who graduated at the top of his class in 1911.

Chisholm's undergraduate years introduced him to two more men who would highly influence his already strong interest in poetry and literary criticism: fellow student and future poet, lecturer and critic Randolph Hughes; and Christopher Brennan, poet and head of German and comparative literature at Sydney, "the two most creative scholars Chisholm ever knew at first hand" (Scott *n.d.*, p. 43).<sup>1</sup>

Chisholm had a first class teacher's classification with the Education Department of New South Wales, which was "based on the teacher's efficiency as shown by their classroom work and also on their results in the in-service written, oral and practical examinations set by the Department" (NSW State Archives & Records 1912–1923). After graduating, he taught for almost 18 months, first under Alexander James Kilgour's demanding headmastership at Fort Street (from 16 January 1911), then at the district school of Glen Innes, and very briefly at North Sydney Superior Public School (from 13 April 1912) (Scott *n.d.*, p. 44).

For his scholarly promise and effectiveness as a teacher, Chisholm was awarded a departmental travelling scholarship, which gave him the opportunity to visit Europe and—to his own delight but against Nicholson's advice!—entailed learning German (Scott *n.d.*, p. 44).

This European tour (1912–1914) would take him to Germany, France and England, where he would experience "the learning of a language from the inside" (Scott *n.d.*, p. 49). Chisholm moved first to Berlin in 1912 to undertake a German intensive course at the Institut Tilly, a school run by the highly regarded Australian linguist William Tilly (1860–1935). After an initial career teaching in rural New South Wales, Tilly (né Tilley) had left in 1890 for Germany, where he dropped the "e" in his surname. His rigorous teaching methods gained him many devotees during his time in Germany and later at Columbia University, where he taught English and phonetics (Thomson 1990).

After a successful period studying phonetics, in 1913 Chisholm travelled to France where he attended the Sorbonne, enjoying in particular literary historian Gustave Lanson's lectures and linguist Paul Passy's classes. Making the most of his overseas experiences, Chisholm graduated in Phonetics in both French and German and returned to Australia just before the war broke out, fully equipped for teaching at university level. In his biography of Chisholm, Stan Scott details this return home:

But the omens of war were now unmistakable. Chisholm returned to Australia, where his lecturing career began in earnest. He was appointed lecturer in French and German under Alexander Mackie at the Sydney Teachers' College, and taught there from 15 July 1914 until late 1915.

When Nicholson was practically forced by his job as censor to give up some of his university teaching, Chisholm became acting lecturer in French as well, at the

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<sup>1</sup> Stan Scott (1927–2014) was a disciple of Chisholm. An outstanding and tireless teacher, he specialized in medieval and Renaissance French language and culture and was recruited as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne in 1956. Chisholm's close friend and collaborator, Scott was also his literary executor. He devoted many years to writing Chisholm's biography, and his 270-page manuscript sits in the Archives of the University of Melbourne where it can be consulted. It has recently been edited and published by Wallace Kirsop (Scott 2019).

beginning of 1915, to look after second and third year prose classes—a notable honour in view of Nicholson’s very high standards and his special regard for prose composition (Scott *n.d.*, pp. 56–57).

Determined to serve his country, Chisholm was soon to contribute to the war effort. His double qualification in French and German and his cultural knowledge of both France and Germany made him ideal for a strategic role. Enlisting in 1915, he spent the last two years of the war at the Western Front “at forward posts intercepting enemy communications” (Scott 2007, p. 211).

Chisholm spent his “three and a half years’ active service mostly at the front line or close behind” (Scott *n.d.*, p. 84) and his dedication was rewarded with decorations that included the British War Medal.

Even during these war years, Chisholm always showed an interest in teaching foreign languages:

In his last months of service, Chisholm functioned as “Supervisor of Modern Languages” to the 7th A. I. Brigade, running classes or getting instructors for them, and providing for those who sought further training in England or France before returning home. (Scott *n.d.*, p. 82)

Back in Australia, Chisholm took up his position at the Teachers’ College on 1 July 1919 as Senior Lecturer in French and German, and also resumed his work as an examiner in French for the Leaving Certificate examination. But his capabilities were soon to be more broadly recognized:

Margaret Kerr has described the revolution in modern language teaching wrought at the college by [...] Chisholm, [whose] courses in literary appreciation, especially of nineteenth century authors, were notable for “dispensing altogether with the use of manuals.” In growing acknowledgement of his exceptional competence, the Modern Language Teachers’ Association resolved to launch a journal with Chisholm as its editor. This was the *Modern Language Review of New South Wales* (1920–1921), which was warmly praised in the Sydney Press and in education journals at home and abroad. (Scott *n.d.*, p. 90)

When a lectureship position was advertised at the University of Melbourne, Chisholm applied and submitted his application on 7 August 1920. Although retiring Lecturer in French Ferdinand Maurice-Carton “had strongly advised the appointment of another Frenchman as his successor” (Scott *n.d.*, p. 101), Chisholm’s application had the support of eminent scholars such as George Gibb Nicholson, his previous teacher at the University of Sydney, who praised “his literary and artistic taste” as well as “his effectiveness in teaching prose composition” (Scott *n.d.*, pp. 101–102). The selection was very competitive, with 17 applications received, from which Chisholm seems to have stood out conspicuously.

Maurice-Carton’s recommendation that his successor should be a native French speaker was nevertheless taken up by Chisholm in his appointment of Théophile

Rouel to the position of Assistant Lecturer. Upon Rouel's retirement in 1923, the post was taken up by a second Frenchman, Nazar Karagheusian.<sup>2</sup>

At his arrival in 1921, Chisholm had the challenging task of reorganizing the French Department after the First World War. There were about 120 students, many of them returned soldiers, who, as Chisholm noted in his memoirs, like himself, "were so glad to be alive and out of uniform that their temperament was robust and forward-looking, and their quiet cheerfulness was infectious" (Chisholm 1958, p. 114).

Chisholm enjoyed his position within the university, which for him was "a pleasant village" (Chisholm 1958, p. 105). His "effective academic leadership" (Scott n.d., p. 112) played an important role in the Faculty of Arts, of which he was Dean during the Second World War. The French program flourished during his many years of service (1921–1956), as we shall see later.

## 1.4 *After Chisholm*

### 1.4.1 **Ronald Francis Jackson**

In 1957, Ronald Francis Jackson took over from Chisholm as Professor of French at the University of Melbourne. However, the "changeover in Melbourne was a difficult one and caused more bitterness than was reasonable. A 35-year old reign had come to an end" (Barko and Martin 1997, p. 77). Barko, Holland and Jones identify three figures who were particularly significant in the personal and scholarly development of Ronald Francis Jackson:

The three major intellectual influences in Ron Jackson's life were, chronologically, G. G. Nicholson, Sydney's strict and stern professor of French who inculcated in his students a sense of accuracy and rigour that Ron Jackson always retained, even after he had progressed well beyond the narrow limits of Nicholsonian discipline, and almost simultaneously John Anderson, Sydney's charismatic professor of philosophy whose philosophical realism and political, ideological and religious non-conformism made a profound impact on several generations of Sydney intellectuals, and, last but not least, through his writings Jean-Paul Sartre whom Ron Jackson admired for his intellectual power, his psychological insight as well as his philosophy of personal responsibility and his courage and idealism in the ideological and political arena. (1979, p. 3)

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<sup>2</sup>The choice of Karagheusian ("Kara") as Assistant proved to be very successful according to Scott:

The choice of Kara was a particularly happy one, as he turned out to be a dynamic witness to his native French culture and way of life, an impressive if unorthodox teacher, and a source of animation throughout the Faculty of Arts. If his influence in the department was often complementary to Chisholm's, he was nonetheless an omnivorous reader in French and English, with a spontaneous delight in stylish composition and a wide picturesque vocabulary in both languages. (Scott n.d., p. 116)

Karagheusian was promoted to senior lecturer in 1928.

Following his death in 1976, an obituary notice entitled “Adieux à Ron” was published for Jackson in *Le Courrier australien* (1976, p. 8), an indication of his significance to the Australian French and Francophile community.

### 1.4.2 Allan Keith Holland and Colin Ryder Duckworth

Among those to head the French department in the years that followed were Allan Keith Holland and Colin Ryder Duckworth. Holland (BA Syd.), a specialist of eighteenth-century literature, including l’Abbé Prévost’s *Manon Lescaut*, was both Chairman of the department and Reader. Duckworth, who passed away in 2012, was not only a dedicated teacher, but had a strong engagement with the community outside academic circles, particularly in the domain of theatre. He created “bilingual adaptations” of French plays, directed multiple plays by Beckett, and even acted in film and television roles, including the popular Australian shows “Blue Heelers” and “Neighbours” (Duckworth 2013).

### 1.4.3 A.R. Chisholm Chairs

To honour Chisholm’s contribution to his alma mater a chair was named after him. The A. R. Chisholm professorship was established in 1993, with Professor Colin Nettelbeck appointed as the inaugural chair in February of the following year, followed by Professor Anne Freadman (2004–2011) and then Professor Véronique Duché (2013–today).

## 2 The French Curriculum

The University of Melbourne was not the only tertiary institution to teach French. But its philosophy of teaching seems to have been different from other universities. At the University of Sydney, the French studies program began in the 1850s with the appointment of Dr Anselme Ricard who was followed around 2 years later by “Pierre-Amboise Dutruc, a Sydney wine and spirits merchant and subsequently Mayor of Randwick” (Barko and Martin 1997, pp. 24–25). However, “French was discontinued at the University of Sydney throughout the eighteen seventies, to be re-introduced in 1882” (Barko and Martin 1997, pp. 26), the same year as Morris’s appointment at the University of Melbourne.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Outside of Sydney and Melbourne, the University of Tasmania was the first university to teach French, beginning in 1892. At the University of Adelaide, classes in French were given by the Professor of English and other casual lecturers during the 1880s and 1890s (Fornasiero and West-Sobby 2012, pp. 142–144), but the first dedicated appointment in French did not take place “until 1918 when John Crampton, a London graduate, took up a lectureship” (Barko and Martin 1997,

Although the two universities were establishing French programs around the same period, from the outset there were divergences in their philosophies when it came to teaching French. Barko and Martin observe that “Whilst Sydney’s adoption of the Oxford model, with a strong emphasis on classical education, was not generally challenged, the founders of the University of Melbourne hesitated between different educational philosophies” (1997, p. 26).

## 2.1 *From Maurice-Carton to Chisholm*

The curriculum created by Maurice-Carton, as acknowledged by Scott, was not very well balanced:

Maurice-Carton’s course had been solidly founded on the theory and practice of phonetics (with transcriptions), and stressed translation, grammar, reading, dictation and conversation; but literary, linguistic (mainly etymological) and general history were administered in what would now be thought massive, indigestible doses. There was no real honours school, and no systematic teaching in philology or Old French literature. (Scott *n.d.*, p. 106)

Chisholm modernized Maurice-Carton’s course by broadening its focus to cover medieval and Renaissance texts, as well as more contemporary literature. His intention, he clarified, was to throw “a little more weight on to *modern* French literature than has been done by [his] predecessor” (Scott *n.d.*, p. 106). By 1923, Chisholm had succeeded in replacing the old curriculum with one that was at once varied and thorough. Gone was the requirement to take English subjects as part of undergraduate French studies. Instead, Chisholm introduced a new subject, “French Language and Philology”, which approached grammar and literature from a historical perspective in its examination of Old and Middle French (Scott *n.d.*, pp. 107–108).

In expanding the historical scope of the French program, he also expanded its cultural scope by introducing the study of art and history. The overall aim of the course was defined as “an informed and intelligent appreciation of French culture, with an emphasis on literature, but with due attention to art and history” (Scott *n.d.*, p. 205).

Chisholm was keen to apply his European scholarly experience. Convinced of the importance of phonetics and of following the methods he learnt during the classes he attended in Berlin with William Tilly and then in France with Paul Passy, Chisholm brought Viëtor-Passy teaching to Australia. He adapted Passy’s *Les Sons du français* (1887) to Australian conditions in his own *Manual of French Pronunciation* (1924). However, although his education aligned closely with European standards, Chisholm always strongly claimed the right to intellectual independence, as stressed by Kirsop (1970, p. 7).

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p. 31). For discussion of Queensland and Western Australia see Barko and Martin (1997, p. 36), and, for Canberra and New England (1997, p. 42).

Throughout his long teaching career at the University of Melbourne he succeeded admirably in furthering this aim and creating a French school that was not a pale imitation of some foreign model but a pioneer in critical and exegetical approaches to literature, notably of the Symbolist period.

## 2.2 *The Literary Curriculum*

Despite the changes he introduced, Chisholm did not neglect nineteenth-century literature in the curriculum. It was at the University of Melbourne that he began publicly pursuing his interest in nineteenth-century Symbolist poetry, on which he gave several lectures before integrating the subject into the undergraduate Extension course.<sup>4</sup>

Deeply influenced by Christopher Brennan, who introduced him to French Symbolism and Mallarmé, Chisholm developed his own reading of French Symbolist poetry, initiating a research trend that would soon be known internationally as “The Melbourne School”. For Chisholm, however, research and teaching always nourished each other, as shown by one of his greatest publications, *Towards Hérodiade: A Literary Genealogy* (1934a), which had grown out of his second and third year literature course in 1932: “Evolution de l’esthétique de la poésie française pendant la seconde moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle” (Scott n.d., p. 142).

In *Towards Hérodiade*, Chisholm continued the themes of his Rimbaud study and described the evolution of nineteenth-century poetry in terms of a breakdown of the plastic structure of the universe. The discovery first of an incessant flux (musicalization) and then of the void behind it (silent music) is observed in Leconte de Lisle’s search for Nirvana, Baudelaire’s fusion of the spiritual and phenomenal worlds and, as a culmination of the enquiry, in Mallarmé’s adumbration of the eternal void. His *Hérodiade*, the virginal and sterile heroine of an incomparably beautiful dramatic dialogue, renounces phenomenal existence and seeks beauty only in death. (Scott n.d., p. 143)

The changes introduced by Chisholm were very successful. He prided himself on maintaining a curriculum and teaching style that were as engaging as they were demanding, and which gave students the skills and enthusiasm to tackle Symbolist poets such as Mallarmé and Valéry. According to Scott, “Chisholm’s systematic policy [combined] the width of historical survey (pursued largely as a means) with

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<sup>4</sup>According to Scott, Chisholm

gave a single Extension lecture on “French Symbolist Poetry and its International Influence”. In 1925 there was also a talk on Symbolism at a combined meeting of the French Club and Literature Society (July 21) and, in subsequent years, a course of five Extension lectures covering the precursors and the aftermath of this movement. Unfortunately, of course, the text of these lectures has not survived, and we can only speculate on the approach he is likely to have adopted after the impact of Brennan but before his own deep immersion in Schopenhauer. The titles of these lectures show a critical bias towards psychology and imagery. (Scott n.d., p. 112)



the depth of textual exegesis, which was the true end” (Scott *n.d.*, p. 210). Distinguishing himself from the old ways of teaching literature, Chisholm showed a total respect for the text. He took justifiable pride in this new curriculum:

The one reasonably big thing I think I have achieved here is to lift the standard of literature teaching to a level where senior students can and do appreciate even such things as the *Coup de dés* or the work of poets like Valéry. Not only that: they are enthusiastic about it. (Scott *n.d.*, p. 207)

The depth of Chisholm’s expertise was further demonstrated in the variety of subject areas studied by postgraduate and fourth-year Honours students, from medieval texts to contemporary literature and poetry. From that point on, the three main emphases of the honours course were Arthurian Romance, the nineteenth-century novel, and Symbolist poetry (Scott *n.d.*, p. 209). Scott highlighted the growing number of students doing research under Chisholm’s supervision:

[...] he directed an impressive range of research students, in medieval as well as nineteenth and twentieth-century literature in general, imbuing them also with his sense of exegetical rigour and, perhaps especially, with an even deeper sense of the human and metaphysical mysteries that remain long after the mere letter has been elucidated. (Scott *n.d.*, pp. 214–215)

This success initially created some difficulties for Chisholm and his assistant Karageusian, when teaching and administrative burdens grew as the French Department soon became the second largest in the Faculty of Arts, with 207 students of French in 1924 (made up of 94, 42 and 26 in the 3 years respectively and 45 evening students) (Scott *n.d.*, pp. 112–113).

### 2.3 *Later Developments*

In the decades after Chisholm’s retirement, French studies faced significant challenges as administrators sought to make foreign languages accessible to a broader audience. From the 1970s, beginners courses were offered at universities, and around the same time there was a shift away from the teaching of literature in French studies programs. Barko and Martin argue that literature was not well suited to language programs that sought to be inclusive:

Literature was seen by many as an “elitist” area of study, unsuitable for a growing proportion of the new student body, irrespective of its level of language proficiency. The rise of modern linguistics, a natural companion discipline to language study, was seen by some to be a valid alternative to the study of literature, as was the foreign culture in the broadest sense, in contradistinction to “high culture” of which literature was the obvious, because language-based, manifestation [...]. The questioning of the so-called “literary canon” and that of the concept of mandatory *bagage culturel* occurred in French departments in Australian universities before it affected English studies. (1997, pp. 55–56)

Barko and Martin also note a more general shift in how language programs were conceived:

Another change that has gradually affected most of our French programs, is the broadening of the very meaning of French studies [...]. A broader, decentralised idea of France, with an appreciation of its regional diversity, [has] been discovered and embraced, and the cultural and linguistic richness of the French-speaking world outside France has been incorporated in our syllabi. (1997, p. 56)

## 2.4 *Extra-curricular Activities*

Maurice-Carton encouraged the foundation of the French Club (1903). Under Professor T. G. Tucker's presidency, the Club organized regular French readings and conversation groups. As noted by Scott, it boasted its own official organ: *Le Français classique*, edited by Maurice-Carton from 1908 onwards. After 1910 this was merged with *Trident, a journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, which was edited in English, French and German (Scott n.d., pp. 113–114).

Chisholm was also a fervent supporter of extra-curricular activities to which he devoted much of his time. He was not always on the Parkville campus, and his many responsibilities often meant travelling around the state. For years, he regularly visited Victorian towns—Ararat, Bendigo, Yarrowonga, among others—as an examiner in French and German dictation and orals (Scott n.d., p. 153).

Despite these administrative demands, Chisholm was dedicated to extracurricular activities, giving talks to audiences at the Melbourne University French Club and the Alliance Française, which are both still very active today.

Chisholm also believed in full and healthy co-operation between schools and universities. He created several refresher holiday courses for French teachers during the 1930s, as well as heading the Modern Languages Standing Committee of the Schools Board (Scott n.d., pp. 156–157).

Believing that students needed a solid linguistic foundation to get the most out of university-level French, and, in particular, to increase pupils' and students' experiences of spoken French, Chisholm launched the “Brighter French” movement in 1938 to encourage secondary-school pupils through French-language music and drama events:

It took the form of musical evenings and the production of plays in the schools themselves or, in collaboration with the Alliance Française, at the University's Union Theatre. The casts of these now almost forgotten productions often included celebrities-to-be: Bronnie Taylor, Gardner Davies, Ninian Stephen [...]. The movement did much to popularize French in Victoria generally and reflected the sound but unpedantic nature of Chisholm's approach, his lightness of touch and his undercurrent of humour. (Scott n.d., p. 158)

Chisholm's successors embraced this passion for extra-curricular activities, as shown by the establishment of the French Choral, directed by Dr Alan Herbert,<sup>5</sup> or

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<sup>5</sup> See “Songs the French sing”, a recording published by Broadcast Exchange of Australia Pty Ltd., 33 <sup>1/3</sup> RPM.

the Melbourne French Theatre, founded in March 1977 by students Michael Bula and A. David Gorrie.<sup>6</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

A. R. Chisholm's appointment at the University of Melbourne and his 35-year-long service have had a lasting impact on the French program as well as on French teaching in Melbourne more generally.

After Chisholm, the increased numbers of students led to numerous appointments, and the students of French had the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of many lecturers, French natives as well as Australians.

Ironically, Chisholm never pursued a postgraduate degree. He had no need to, as his work was recognized many times over in the numerous honours he received: Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, OBE, Knight of the Italian Republic, Honorary Doctor of Letters, and Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

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<sup>6</sup>See Jana Verhoeven (2013).

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# Engaging with the Past: Lessons from the History of Modern Languages at the University of Adelaide



John West-Sooby

**Abstract** Modern languages have been part of Australia's tertiary education system ever since the country's first universities were created in the nineteenth century. Their collective and individual fortunes, however, have waxed and waned at various points during that long history. Taking the University of Adelaide as an example, this study seeks to identify some of the key factors, both systemic and local or individual, that have had an impact on the fate of modern languages over the extended period of their history at the institution. This will in turn point to possible ways of negotiating the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

**Keywords** History of languages · Australian universities · Modern languages · Tertiary education · University of Adelaide · British tradition · Curriculum development

## 1 Introduction

In the jungle of the modern university system, the struggle for survival can be a serious drain on people's time, energy and morale, particularly for those in the smaller disciplines such as languages, whose position seems to come under scrutiny every time there is a funding squeeze. It is nevertheless worth reminding ourselves that languages have been taught in Australia's tertiary education system, in some form or other, since the first universities were founded in the nineteenth century. While it is true that this history is not in itself justification for the continued existence of language programs, especially in the minds of administrators for whom tradition counts little compared to the budget bottom line, it can be therapeutic to step back

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from the exigencies of the present and to consider the broader historical perspective—partly to reassure ourselves of the enduring place of languages, notwithstanding their ups and downs, but perhaps also to derive some solace or even lessons from that long and respectable tradition. As Wallace Kirsop reminds us (1991, p. 312), “reflecting on our past is a way of making sense of our present and defending our future.” In order to defend that future, he adds: “We need to know, and to be able to explain, what we are doing.” Taking the University of Adelaide as a case study, the aim here is not to present a history of modern languages at the institution—a task that is beyond the scope of this essay and that has already been the subject of an extended study (Fornasiero and West-Sooby 2012)<sup>1</sup>—but to trace the fluctuating fortunes of languages over that broad history with a view to identifying some of the factors behind the various highs and lows. In this way, some intersections between past and present may come to light.

## 2 Founding Context: The Influence of Tradition

The history of languages at the University of Adelaide dates back to the very origins of the institution, which in 1874 became the third of four universities to be established in the colonies during the nineteenth century, the others being the Universities of Sydney (1850), Melbourne (1853) and Tasmania (1890). In that pre-Federation context, the model on which these fledgling universities were based was that of the British education system, where a training in classical languages was highly valued. Accordingly, when teaching for the Bachelor of Arts began at the University of Adelaide in 1876, Latin and Ancient Greek were an integral part of the curriculum, in addition to the other traditional subject areas, namely Philosophy, Mathematics, English Language and Literature, and the Natural Sciences.<sup>2</sup>

It took another decade before the BA rules changed to allow students to count the study of French and German towards the degree (from 1887 onwards), but modern languages were nevertheless part of the University’s remit from the outset by virtue of its responsibility for the matriculation process. For the very first matriculation examination, in 1876, French and German were granted the status of “special subjects”, alongside Latin and Ancient Greek. Italian was added in 1882. The University’s Education Committee determined the syllabus, set the examination papers and made provision for marking them. French and German likewise featured in the various school-level examinations established during the first decade or so of the University of Adelaide’s existence: the University Primary Examination,<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Much of the factual information presented here derives from that account.

<sup>2</sup> See Newbold (2012) for an account of the history of Classics, including the teaching of classical languages, at the University of Adelaide.

<sup>3</sup> This examination was established in 1878, based on the model of the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations. The five Divisions in which students needed to demonstrate their level of general education were as follows: Division A—The History of England and English Literature;

Junior and Senior Public Examinations, the University Scholarships Examination, among others. Modern (European) languages were thus part of the landscape of the university from its beginnings, albeit at the margins.

The numbers of students presenting for these examinations in French and German provide a measure of the popularity of language study at pre-university level, and perhaps foreshadow the momentum that soon gathered for the inclusion of French and German in the BA curriculum. 1881 is a good reference point, as this was the year in which women were admitted for the first time as undergraduate students at the university. In that year, 4 boys and 10 girls presented for the French papers at the matriculation and University Primary examinations, with 26 boys and three girls presenting for the German papers. The numbers for the period 1881–1883 are summarized in Table 1:<sup>4</sup>

The commencement and pass numbers for the BA in 1882 help to contextualize these figures. So too do the matriculation statistics: there were 58 matriculation candidates in 1881 (of whom 38 were successful) and 48 in 1882. It is interesting to note, in passing, the strong interest in German in these early years—a reflection, no doubt, of South Australia’s unique German heritage—and also the dominant numbers of boys in German whereas for French girls are most strongly represented. This gender distinction would become something of a trend during the longer history of the two languages.

A considerable amount of expertise in foreign languages was readily available among the staff of the university, and that expertise was regularly called upon during these early years, with the university often providing examiners to mark the final papers in French, German and Italian. Some teaching (of French) was also conducted by senior members of staff in the Faculty of Arts as early as 1884, though instruction in modern languages and literatures remained sporadic until dedicated appointments were made. To sum up this foundational period, then, it is fair to say that modern languages enjoyed something of an ambivalent status. On the one hand, their prominence in pre-university examinations shows that they were highly valued

**Table 1** Enrolments for language examinations, University of Adelaide, 1881–1883

Matriculation + University Primary Examination	1881	1882	1883
French (boys/girls)	14 (4/10)	17 (6/11)	26 (4/22)
German (boys/girls)	29 (26/3)	33 (33/0)	14 (10/4)
BA		4 commenced	
		3 passed first year	
		1 passed second year	
		2 passed third year	

Division B—Latin and Greek; Division C—French and German; Division D—Mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry); Division E—the various science disciplines.

<sup>4</sup>Information presented in this paper on enrolment numbers, staffing and curriculum has been derived principally from the following sources: the annual University calendars, University Council papers and Edgeloe (1990).

and considered important to a well-rounded education—and in this, as Jim Coleman has observed in his brief history of the introduction of modern languages in the British university system, they no doubt benefited from the “reflected prestige” of the study of ancient languages (Coleman 2001, pp. 121–123), which also provided the model for curriculum content and teaching methodology (heavily based on the written language through grammar and translation). Conversely, modern language study in these early years was not a core activity of the University and remained at the fringes of its preoccupations.

### 3 Integration: Curriculum Development and Advocacy

It was through the process of institutional curriculum development at degree level that languages took the first steps towards proper integration into the University of Adelaide’s mainstream teaching. A number of undergraduate degrees came into effect during the 1880s, and in all cases modern languages were listed as a pre-requisite for entry to the degree or for the degree to be conferred, or else as an optional subject within it. This was the case for the Bachelor of Science, which allowed space in its first-year curriculum for the study of French and German when it was introduced in 1882. While most science students continued to study Latin and Greek, this initiative is worth highlighting as it was only in 1887 that modern languages were allowed to count towards the BA.<sup>5</sup> For entry to the Bachelor of Medicine, which commenced in 1886, one of the five requirements was a pass in either Greek, French, German, Italian or “any other Modern Language” at the Preliminary Examination of Medical Students.<sup>6</sup> In 1887, the newly introduced Bachelor of Music required students to achieve a pass in “one other language” at the Senior Public Examination—not to enrol in the degree but to take it out. It is clear that, in opening up space for modern languages, this expansion of the institution’s degree offerings paved the way for their subsequent integration within the University’s core teaching activities.

While this development could be attributed to a general acknowledgement of the value of language study, it also owed much to the influence and advocacy of some of the University of Adelaide’s leading figures. Several of the institution’s distinguished scholars had expertise in French or German—or both—and were more than

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<sup>5</sup>In their first year of study, students in the Bachelor of Science had to pass two of Latin, Greek, French or German. As the records show, however, most science students in those early years chose to present for examination in Latin and Greek. It is only in the 1886 Calendar that we find French and German examination papers for the BSc, which suggests that there were no candidates prior to that (University of Adelaide 1886).

<sup>6</sup>This examination required students to sit for papers in English, Latin, Elements of Mathematics, Elementary Mechanics of Solids and Fluids, and one of a number of optional subjects: Greek, French, German, Italian, any other Modern Language, Logic, Botany, Zoology and Elementary Chemistry (University of Adelaide 1887).



willing to contribute to the advancement of the cause of modern languages by taking responsibility for the various examinations, at pre-university then at university level. The Elder Professor of Mathematics, Horace Lamb, served as examiner for German from 1882 to 1885 before handing over the baton, on his departure, to Edward Vaughan Boulger, the Hughes Professor of English Language and Literature, and of Mental and Moral Philosophy, who was also the examiner for French. Boulger subsequently took responsibility for the French and German examinations at the BA level, once they were permitted as third-year subjects for the degree in 1887, having become the first to offer classes in French at the University, in 1884. His successor as Hughes Professor of English, William Mitchell, similarly served as examiner for French and German. His commitment to languages was evident in his first public speech, in which he expressed the view that their study led to an enhanced appreciation and mastery of English. This support was pivotal, as Mitchell subsequently became Vice-Chancellor (1916–1942) then Chancellor (1942–1948) of the University. Others to take on stewardship for languages during the 1880s and 1890s included the University Registrar, John Walter Tyas, and members of Council, such as Horace Lamb, Adolph von Treuer and John Anderson Hartley, who also served as Vice-Chancellor (1893–1896). Languages at that time had friends in high places.<sup>7</sup>

Minutes of the various University committees bear witness to the commitment and advocacy of these influential figures. Boulger, who was appointed to the University in July 1883, wasted no time in pushing the languages barrow, and he found in Hartley a like-minded colleague. The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 9 May 1884 record that it was Hartley who moved: “That it is desirable for the University to give instruction in French and German and that the Education Committee be requested to report whether it is possible to make arrangements for classes in these subjects.” (University of Adelaide 1884a) This motion was duly discussed at the Education Committee meeting held on 13 June 1884, at which Hartley conveyed Boulger’s generous offer to provide classes himself:

Mr Hartley said that Professor Boulger had expressed to him his willingness to give instruction in French and German in the first instance in order to try the experiment of founding such classes and *that* without raising any question of payment. Mr Hartley suggested that the fees paid by students should be paid to the lecturer or teacher as an honorarium. After some discussion it was resolved to recommend that the idea of forming a German class should be postponed for the present but that a class for French shd [sic] be established under Professor Boulger—the success (or otherwise) of which would be a guide as to the future establishment of a German class (University of Adelaide 1884b).

Boulger would have preferred the University to hire dedicated language teachers, but in offering to deliver classes himself, his plan was to generate sufficient interest and demand for such appointments to become necessary in the short to mid term.

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<sup>7</sup>The level of scholarship in French and German that these men possessed is attested by the curriculum for which they had stewardship: in addition to grammar and translation, the curriculum in both languages included philology, literature and the national histories of France and Germany. See Fornasiero and West-Sooby (2012, pp. 140–141) for a more detailed description.

## 4 Becoming Mainstream: Funding and Serendipity

Boulger's strategy met with mixed success. On the one hand, the evening classes in French, after some initial difficulties, attracted sufficiently good numbers of students over the ensuing years for the University to extend the experiment, hiring local native speakers on a casual basis to teach both French and German. This, together with the continuing strong numbers of language students at matriculation level, demonstrated a good and consistent level of demand. On the other hand, the University continued to defer its decision on making dedicated full-time language appointments. By way of illustration, the Education Committee convened on 19 August 1885 to discuss the question: "Whether it were practicable to give instruction in Modern Languages—and whether it were desirable to make two modern languages optional instead of Greek in the Arts course" (University of Adelaide 1885), but this resulted merely in a decision to defer the matter and to ask the Registrar to seek information on what was being done in this regard at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney, and in New Zealand. It appeared, as the French expression has it, that it was "urgent to wait".<sup>8</sup>

The situation changed just before the turn of the century, thanks to an injection of funds and a dash of serendipity. On the funding side, one of the founding fathers of the University of Adelaide, Sir Thomas Elder, died in 1897, leaving a significant bequest to the University's School of Medicine and School of Music. This sudden influx of money provided the institution with some much-needed flexibility for new initiatives in other areas as well. In that same year, a German scholar of some note arrived in Adelaide to assume duties as Pastor of St Stephen's Lutheran Church in Pirie Street. Through his work at St Stephen's, Ernst Johann Eitel, or Ernest John Eitel as he was also known, soon developed links with the local German-speaking community, which in turn brought him to the attention of the University. The combined circumstances of Eitel's arrival, his distinguished background, the sudden availability of funds, and the continued demand for language study led the University in 1898 to offer him an appointment as part-time lecturer in German—an offer he duly accepted.

Eitel's intellectual path to this position was somewhat unusual. His background was in theology, but he developed a deep interest in the language and culture of China during his many years of missionary service in that country. He also served as head of the Education Department in Hong Kong before leaving for Adelaide. This engagement with education, language and culture (albeit Chinese) was in some sense a form of preparation for his new duties as lecturer in German. Eitel certainly approached the task with diligence, in any event, and even a degree of innovation,

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<sup>8</sup>In their "Short History of the Teaching of French in Australian Universities" Ivan Barko and Angus Martin note that there was a similar hesitation surrounding the nature of modern language teacher appointments at the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne: "From the outset the concept that modern languages can be taught on the cheap was embraced by the powers that be. Underlying this idea there was the covert feeling that the teaching of modern languages was not an academic discipline." (1997, p. 23)

introducing a new emphasis on literary criticism that strengthened the German syllabus.

During Eitel's tenure, which commenced in 1899, modern languages began to move from the periphery to the centre of the University's operations, as their place within the BA evolved. French and German had previously been "half subjects" for the third-year examination, but from 1907 they became full-scale individual subjects, to be completed over 2 years. Importantly, from 1909 onwards, a new emphasis on the use of the target language was signalled: as specified in the syllabus entries at that time, lectures for both French and German were delivered in those languages, and students were required to use them to answer all examination questions (with the obvious exception of translations into English). This use of the target language as the language of instruction soon became enshrined as a practice, and has endured to this day in the teaching of modern European languages.

Eitel died in 1908, at the age of 70, and, for reasons that are not made clear in the archival documentation, he was not replaced. It was only at the end of the war that fresh appointments were made in modern languages, first in French, then in German.

## 5 Consolidation and Expansion: Stewardship

In 1918, John Crampton took up a position as "Lecturer in French language in the University and Teacher of French in the Elder Conservatorium" (University of Adelaide 1918). Two years later, Adolf John Schulz, who, as Principal of the Teachers' Training College, had been part-time lecturer in Education since 1910, was given the additional responsibility of teaching the two-year course in German.<sup>9</sup> The timing of these appointments is interesting, coming as they did at the end of the war. It is tempting to surmise that Crampton's position owed something to the connections that had been forged between France and Australia. This may have had some influence; however, the records suggest that educational reasons were the primary motivation for creating this position. Conversely, it might seem that the war would have mitigated against an appointment in German. There were some who argued for the usefulness of "knowing the enemy", but South Australia's strong German-speaking community and the legacy of Eitel would no doubt have been contributing factors. Be that as it may, under the stewardship of these two new staff members, the position of French and German in the University curriculum was finally secured. The differing career trajectories of Crampton and Schulz, however, resulted in contrasting fortunes for the two languages during the middle decades of the century.

In contrast to Schulz, who remained primarily engaged in the field of education and teacher training, Crampton was able to focus all his energies on language teaching and on the development of the French curriculum. A graduate of the University

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<sup>9</sup>For more details on Schulz's personal and professional life, see Penny (1988).

of London, where his training was almost certainly in the Classics (Edgeloe 1990, p. 11), he had also studied at postgraduate level in Paris. The various changes he made to the syllabus led to a strong and steady growth in enrolment numbers that further consolidated both his position and the place of French within the BA. The introduction of a third-year French course in 1924 marked a significant milestone, as it allowed Crampton to relinquish his language teaching duties at the Elder Conservatorium and to devote his entire attention to the teaching of French for the BA. Another major change—and a break with the tradition bequeathed by the teaching of ancient languages—was the addition to the French curriculum of an emphasis on the spoken language. This may be a result of his experience as a student in France, which would have reinforced the importance of practical language skills. Crampton added the study of phonetics to the first-year syllabus, and students in both first and second year were required to undertake a conversation test as part of the end-of-year examination process. In 1927, students for the first time attended group tutorials “for exercises in oral French, including conversation, reading, and dictation”. As Barko and Martin observe, Crampton’s emphasis on the living language, together with the study of historical grammar and literature, “was consistent with ‘best practice’ at the time” (1997, p. 46).

Significantly, when the growth in student numbers justified a second appointment in French, the University formally designated that the development of speaking skills would be the core duty of the successful candidate. The appointee in question was none other than John Crampton’s only daughter, Hope, who joined the staff of the University in 1930 as Assistant Lecturer and Tutor for French. After graduating from the University of Adelaide with an MA in comparative literature on Shelley and Leconte de Lisle, she had spent two years studying in Paris, where she was awarded a Diploma from the Institut de Phonétique. Her extensive in-country experience thus provided her with a solid grounding in language study, to complement her literary training. In order to foster students’ oral skills, one of Hope’s main duties was to establish a “French Language Club”, which she promptly did during her first year in the job. The Adelaide University French Club has its origins here. In those early years, attendance at the weekly meetings of the French Club was compulsory and its activities were a core part of the curriculum.<sup>10</sup> These activities were less formal in nature and included what we would call today role-play exercises and the performance of scenes from plays. This can be seen as the beginning of another enduring tradition: the annual French Club play. Understandably, the dynamic nature of the French curriculum at that time combined with Hope Crampton’s lively and innovative teaching generated much enthusiasm among students for all things French.

During the time of the Cramptons, French began to flourish. German, on the other hand, stagnated during the middle decades of the century. The two key factors in these contrasting fortunes were personnel and curriculum development. On the

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<sup>10</sup>Attendance at French Club remained compulsory at undergraduate level until 1958, three years before Hope Crampton’s retirement.

staffing side, not only did French benefit from full-time positions, but the incumbents were local personalities who were active in the cultural life of the town. John Crampton was certainly in this mould, and when he retired in 1937 his replacement, J. G. (Jim) Cornell, involved himself with even greater energy in those “outreach” activities. Cornell had completed an Honours degree in French at the University of Melbourne in 1925, studying under the charismatic Alan Chisholm. This was significant, as Cornell’s teaching at Adelaide would bear all the hallmarks of Chisholm’s influence: a rounded approach based on a solid grounding in practical language skills and philology, but with a particular emphasis on the study of French literature and culture. Like his predecessors, Cornell had also studied in Paris (1927–1929), earning a Licence ès Lettres from the Sorbonne and graduating at the top of his class. The appointment at Adelaide and elsewhere in the country of Australian-based scholars, many of whom, like Cornell and the Cramptons, had studied in Europe, was an important development which contrasted with the earlier tendency to hire native speakers.<sup>11</sup> As Wallace Kirsop notes, the rationale behind this was the notion that language teachers were “cultural mediators” who helped to interpret foreign cultures for Australian students. While this exclusivist position later softened, through the appointment of French “lecteurs”, for example, which Cornell instigated at Adelaide, there is still a sense in which language departments need to be mindful of the duty of explaining other cultures to Australians “from a local vantage point” (Kirsop 1989, p. 6).

The French curriculum expanded rapidly during the period of Cornell’s tenure, through a combination of personal initiative and institutional change. At the individual level, building on the momentum generated by Crampton’s curriculum developments, Cornell established an Honours program in 1939 followed by an MA program in the 1940s. On the institutional level, Cornell’s arrival in 1938 coincided with significant changes to the rules of the BA. The new regulations required students to complete two major sequences, of three courses each, leading to increased enrolments across the board. One of the ten courses for the Ordinary BA also had to be a language other than English. Candidates for BA Honours had to have passed first-year Greek, Latin, French or German. A pass in at least one course in a modern European language was a pre-requisite for Honours in English, and the ability to translate from French, German or Italian into English was required for Honours in History and Politics.

In the case of French, these developments had a profound effect, not only on enrolment numbers but, just as importantly, on the level of respect the discipline enjoyed. A concrete manifestation of this new-found status was the promotion of J. G. Cornell to Professor of French in 1944. The Honours cohorts in French during this period are a further sign of the discipline’s prominence within the BA. When

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<sup>11</sup> Kirsop elsewhere makes the point that many native-born Australians who studied in France or Germany were not afraid to challenge the models they had encountered there: “The paradox is that in a discipline [French] that can be peculiarly subservient to foreign models people have dared to think for themselves and to want to reform aspects of the way things were done in the Old World.” (1991, p. 309)

Honours in French was first offered, in 1943, two students enrolled. This figure might seem modest by today's standards but it takes on more significance if we consider that, in that same year, there were only two other Honours graduates in the entire Faculty (both in Political Science and History). The flourishing fortunes of French also led to an increase in staff numbers, which had risen to five by 1951.

During all this time, the reliable Schulz, as a part-time lecturer, kept a steady but modest teaching program running virtually unchanged, with the classes for German I and German II remaining combined for almost the whole period from 1920 to the early 1950s. Student numbers give an indication of the growing disparity between the two languages (Table 2):

The numbers in English for 1927 help contextualize these figures. If we recall that at this time English, French and German were grouped together under the banner of "Modern Languages and Literatures", the failure of German to keep pace with its two "companion" disciplines becomes even starker.

It seems unfair to attribute this stagnation of German to Schulz, whose main duties lay elsewhere. It is unclear whether the low demand for German was the result or the cause of the University's failure to make a dedicated full-time appointment in German. The strong anti-German sentiment that developed during and after World War I, and which was rekindled with the outbreak of the Second World War, would certainly not have helped the cause. One might expect that German enrolments would have benefited from the strong German presence in South Australia. However, the young men and women from that community frequently went to Germany to study. This was particularly the case for the trainee pastors in South Australia's Lutheran community. Whatever the reasons, German maintained only a modest presence within the University during a time when French underwent significant expansion.

This situation changed following the appointment of Albert Percival Rowe as Vice-Chancellor in 1948. Although he became a contested figure, Rowe was responsible for an expansion program that saw considerable increases in staff and student numbers. German benefited from this ambitious program with the creation in 1949 of a full-time position of Senior Lecturer, to replace the part-time position occupied

**Table 2** Student enrolments in French and German, University of Adelaide, 1923, 1924, 1927

Pass Students	1923	1924	1927
German	German I: 3	German I: 1	German I: 3
	German II: 3	German II: 1	German II: 3
French (BA only—others in BSc)	French I: 27	French I: 34	French I: 30
	French II: 10	French II: 15	French II: 18
		French III: 7	French III: 9
English			English I: 52
			English II: 21
			English III: 10

by Schulz.<sup>12</sup> It was 2 years before the position was filled, and another year again before the successful candidate began teaching (1952), but the appointment of Derek Van Abbe—not as Senior Lecturer but as Reader in German—proved to be the turning point for German at the University. Not only did Van Abbe completely rejuvenate the German curriculum during his 10 years at Adelaide, but his prolific publication output, at a time when research publication was not an established expectation, brought significant prestige to the discipline. As far as the curriculum was concerned, Van Abbe was quick to make up the ground that German had lost to French, adding German III in 1952 and an Honours program in 1955. With a bolstered curriculum, enrolments in German finally started to increase. Other initiatives added to that momentum. In 1954 Van Abbe offered a course in “Scientific German” which allowed staff and students to attain a reading knowledge of the language for study and research purposes. On the strength of that experiment, he introduced a mainstream beginners course in German in 1959, well before such courses became the norm in Australian universities. French at Adelaide did not follow suit until 1973. With a creative and respected figure at the helm, German was now showing French the way forward.

Further appointments in German soon followed, beginning with Brian Coghlan in 1953 then Hendricus (Henk) Siliakus in 1955. Both were graduates of the University of Birmingham and both had a significant impact on German, and on modern languages more generally, over the ensuing decades, albeit in very different ways. Coghlan was a scholar of literature and music, in particular Wagnerian opera, his work in this area earning him a solid reputation as a musicologist. Thanks to his interests in German culture, he quickly developed strong connections with the State’s German-Australian community and was an active member of the South Australian branch of the Goethe Society. Like his counterpart in French, Jim Cornell, he played a prominent role in the local theatrical and musical scene, serving as President of the University Theatre Guild and as a member of the University Music Society. Coghlan’s appointment as the first Professor of German in 1962, following a brief stint at the University of New England, brought considerable prestige to the discipline. Siliakus, for his part, was instrumental in modernizing the teaching of modern languages at the University of Adelaide. He was the driving force behind the creation of the institution’s first language laboratory in 1964, whose operations he guided from its beginnings in 1965 until his retirement in 1989. By the early 1970s, the ground had shifted: staff numbers in German had grown to nine, whereas French had stalled at seven.

The varying fortunes of French and German during the 50 or so years from the end of World War I to the start of the 1970s can be attributed to a number of factors, but principal among them was the importance of having an imaginative and energetic figurehead, and preferably one with a public profile. By seizing or creating opportunities for curriculum development and teaching innovation, and by taking a

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<sup>12</sup>Schulz retired from the bulk of his duties in 1948 but kept the German program going until the arrival of his successor in 1952.

leading role in what we now identify as “outreach” activities, key players such as John Crampton, Jim Cornell, Derek Van Abbe and Brian Coghlan succeeded not just in consolidating the position of French and German within the institution, but also in enhancing their prestige and bringing them to prominence.

## 6 Ebbs and Flows: Systemic Pressures

Those who followed in the footsteps of those influential figures have often needed to show the same kind of drive and initiative in order to negotiate the opportunities and challenges that have arisen within the tertiary sector in Australia in the latter decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. While modern languages were in a reasonably strong position at the University of Adelaide, as elsewhere, from the 1960s to the 1980s, some systemic challenges did confront them. Chief among these was the change to university entrance requirements in the late 1960s, which meant that a pass in a foreign language at matriculation level was no longer needed for enrolment in the BA or any other degree. This led to a dramatic drop in the numbers of students studying modern languages in secondary schools. In response, university language departments began to introduce *ab initio* courses of study, where these did not already exist, in order to shore up numbers. Curriculum content also began to change, whether in reaction to the need to attract numbers or simply as part of the *Zeitgeist*. During the 1970s, courses in French and German at the University of Adelaide featured the study of cinema, comparative literature, applied linguistics, practical drama and contemporary society. The study of literature remained a central part of both programs, but these began to take on a thematic flavour, instead of the traditional period-based model, and non-canonical texts entered the syllabus—from Austria, East Germany and the broader Francophone world. Whether they grew out of necessity or were the product of a new and broader perspective on the disciplines, these developments were all positive.

The 1970s also saw the establishment at the University of Adelaide of new language disciplines, notably Chinese and Japanese. This was the first of several initiatives that produced an expansion in the number of modern languages available for study. The spur for this was a student petition in the early 1980s protesting against the absence of Italian at the University of Adelaide.<sup>13</sup> When staff in Italian at Flinders University became aware of this, they offered to provide classes on the Adelaide campus. This sowed the seed for what would later become known as the “Outreach Program”, which formalized reciprocal language teaching arrangements between Adelaide and Flinders. One of its features was that staff, not students, travelled across town. Thanks to this and a variety of other collaborative arrangements, students at the University of Adelaide from the mid 1980s through to the end of the

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<sup>13</sup> Tuition in Italian had been offered to students of Music ever since the establishment of the Elder Conservatorium in the 1880s but, unlike French and German, Italian did not transition into a fully fledged BA subject.



1990s had a considerable range of languages from which to choose: Italian, Spanish, Modern Greek, Latvian and Indonesian through the Outreach Program; and Arabic, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian as a result of institutional cooperation with a number of universities (Macquarie, Melbourne, Sydney). Notwithstanding the administrative difficulties that these arrangements occasionally entailed, this looks in retrospect like something of a golden age for modern languages. It is perhaps no coincidence that this period also corresponds to a certain political bipartisanship with respect to multiculturalism and the place of languages, which was exemplified by the Australian parliament's endorsement in 1987 of Joseph Lo Bianco's landmark National Policy on Languages.

In reality, however, the situation of a number of those languages at Adelaide was fragile, with limited student enrolments and small staffing contingents. When funding pressures began to affect the system, that vulnerability was exposed, often with dramatic effect. The recent history has indeed been less rosy. Paradoxically, as we know, student numbers in the tertiary sector increased significantly in the 1990s, but funding became tighter and staffing numbers began to diminish. At the end of that decade, the University of Adelaide lost its Vietnamese program. The vagaries of Commonwealth funding arrangements also led to the Outreach Program with Flinders being wound back. Staffing complements in French, German, Japanese and Chinese began to shrink on the back of retirements and other departures, despite increases in student load.

The story of languages during the last 20 to 30 years is, however, not all doom and gloom. In 1991, the French Department, whose existence had been questioned by the Faculty but was staunchly defended by the Dean, filled two vacant positions with scholars whose research interests in modern and contemporary literature strengthened the publication record and curriculum offerings in French. They subsequently embarked on new research—on French exploration in the Indo-Pacific in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—that highlighted the deep historical links between Australia and France. This work, which has had significant public outreach, was supported by two Australian Research Council grants as well as by the French Embassy in Canberra. Other appointments during the last two decades have added new dimensions to the research profile which likewise enhanced the reputation of the Adelaide French Department and strengthened its position. More ARC success has come in 2018. The situation in German, meanwhile, deteriorated following the departure during the 1990s of its two professors and the subsequent reduction in staff numbers, which put greater teaching pressures on those remaining. The result was a decline in German's research reputation—though the recent appointment of two emerging scholars provides hope for an up-turn. A similar story can be told for the university's Asian languages. As Colin Nettelbeck, John Hajek and Anya Woods (2012) have noted, the increased casualization of language teaching and the erosion of senior positions have had a significant impact on the level of leadership in languages. This only makes it more important for those left standing to rise to the challenge and work to establish a strong research agenda, especially in a context where the quality and impact of research have become national and

institutional priorities (Lo Bianco 2012). Students pay the bills, but research earns respect.

Enrolment numbers of course remain an imperative, precisely because they do provide the funding base. Despite the systemic pressures, or perhaps in response to them, the competition for student numbers has led to many important curriculum initiatives over the last 20 years. At the course level, the diversification of offerings that emerged during the 1970s has continued apace, as language departments have sought to cater for an ever more diversified range of student motivations. Paradoxically, as staff numbers have contracted, the range of course topics has expanded. This has been reflected in the research interests of staff, leading to a fragmentation of language disciplines, as various commentators have observed in the case of French (Kirsop 1989, p. 5; Forsdick 2012; Hainge and Rolls 2014, p. 272). Languages at Adelaide have not escaped that trend. At the program level, following the lead of the University of Melbourne, languages staff at Adelaide successfully argued for the introduction in 1998 of a Diploma in Languages, to allow students with insufficient room in their Bachelor degree to undertake a major sequence in a language. This was specifically aimed at students enrolled in degrees outside of the Arts Faculty but also proved popular for Arts students wishing to add a language major to their degree studies. A Bachelor of Languages was introduced as a niche degree in 2011 and has proven to be more than viable. Finally, while the number of languages offered has decreased, Spanish was established as a discipline in 2009 and has been a valuable addition to the “language ecology” at the University.

## 7 Conclusion

Over their long history, modern languages at the University of Adelaide, despite their ups and downs, have demonstrated their resilience. Institutional and systemic factors have at various times had a decisive influence on their fortunes, for better and for worse. On the other hand, history has also demonstrated the positive impact of strong advocacy and leadership, both within and beyond the confines of the institution. If there is any lesson to be learned from this extended history, it is perhaps that, while systemic changes may be largely out of our control, languages staff need to roll with the punches, bunkering down when times are tough but also seizing opportunities when they arise and even initiating them, with imagination and vision. Further challenges no doubt await languages in the future, and programs may indeed come and go, but history suggests that universities in Australia have not finished with languages yet!

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## Part IV

# Policy Directions: Negotiating Impasses and Finding Pathways

Language departments have had to adapt their curricula and delivery modes to the changing nature of the higher education landscape and to market demand. But to what degree are such changes the result of the reframing of language policy by governments, institutions or languages departments themselves? This section focuses on four different examples of policy making and advocacy for languages. It examines how changing local, national and international contexts have impacted on the very concept of foreign languages, and consequently their provision at all levels.

In the context of two English-speaking countries, the UK and Australia, Liddicoat investigates the place of languages education in the university curriculum by documenting institutional practices and comparing language programs across university groupings. The analysis and discussion of the data highlight a significant degree of variability in the way institutions conceptualize and deliver languages education in both countries. This points to a disturbing lack of shared values across the sector. He asserts that university-level decision-making on the provision of language programs is essentially ad hoc, despite the institutional discourse around internationalization and its importance for student training.

Kinoshita's study likewise reveals the presence of ad hoc decision making relative to languages within the Australian tertiary context. She starts by examining the circumstances in which a cross-institutional arrangement for the provision of Japanese was put in place between the University of Canberra and the Australian National University. This arrangement was implemented following the managerial decision to close the Japanese program at UC in 2013. Based on enrolment data pre- and post-closure, Kinoshita highlights a very significant drop in the uptake of Japanese by UC students cross-institutionally, from 118 commencing students in 2013 to only 8 in 2017. Kinoshita further argues that this cross-institutional arrangement was poorly implemented and has come at significant social cost, with fewer students able to develop the language and intercultural competence required to participate in a globalized workplace.

For their part, Edwards and Hogarth demonstrate how language scholars can work within the interstices of policy and planning to find new opportunities for language study and research. They outline practices that can readily be put in place

in Australian languages departments to support higher degree training in the current environment, particularly in the context of the increasing importance of research income, engagement and impact. They propose three high-level strategies aiming at increasing the number of postgraduate students in languages: the development of strategic partnerships and alignment of research with that of other departments; the positioning of language studies as contributing significantly to highly transferable skills training; and, finally, changes to the way the value of languages research is communicated, as languages are inherently at the centre of transnational and global concerns.

Absalom takes up the question of the poor retention and attrition rates associated with language programs, a question which language scholars have long debated and which is often seen as an intractable problem. In contrast, Absalom sees attrition as an issue to which a different approach should be sought. By highlighting the importance of flexible degree structures, a smooth transition from secondary to tertiary language study, and a focus on gender issues within the tertiary classroom, he points to the need for further research, but also for stronger advocacy of the planning changes within institutions that would facilitate students taking up languages and continuing to study them.

All four chapters highlight, in different ways, the point that universities do not proactively formulate policies around language study. Even the importance of internationalization within the tertiary sector, which is loudly proclaimed as central to its mission both in the UK and in Australia, is not a particular cause for consideration when it comes to institutional decision-making on the provision and content of language programs. The reshaping of practice in language departments is thus more often driven by highly motivated individuals and departments, who must advocate for changes to program planning or find ways to adapt their practice to shifting institutional missions.

# The Position of Languages in the University Curriculum: Australia and the UK



Anthony J. Liddicoat

**Abstract** The development of high-level language abilities is seen in many parts of the world as an indispensable part of education and, in some countries, the study of a foreign language is a normal part of tertiary education for many, if not all students. In English speaking countries, however, this is not the case, and languages have often been marginalized in the university curriculum and their study is often considered a specialist area. This raises questions of what exactly universities offer to their students, how language study is organized and how languages are integrated with other disciplines. This chapter will consider the place of languages in the university curriculum by examining the nature of language study at universities in Australia and the United Kingdom in order to identify similarities and differences in the ways languages are positioned within university curricula, as well as to consider what this positioning shows about how languages are understood as a part of tertiary education in these two English-speaking countries.

**Keywords** Foreign languages · Tertiary education · University curriculum · Language study · Australia · United Kingdom

## 1 Universities and Modern Languages

Much of the research on Modern Languages in university education in the English speaking world has focused on students' participation in such programs or the loss of programs in the tertiary sector (e.g., Baldauf and White 2010; Coleman 2004, 2011; Doughty 2011; Dunne and Pavlyshyn 2012; Godsland 2010; Levine 2011; Martín 2005; White et al. 1997). This research invariably documents an erosion of

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student numbers and programs. There is also a small body of research that examines the impact of strategies adopted by universities or departments to address declining participation (e.g., Brown and Caruso 2016).

At the same time as there is ongoing erosion of modern language learning in universities there is sporadic concern at government level to develop and improve language learning in both the United Kingdom and Australia, and language policies have been developed relating to school language learning (Doughty 2011; Hagger-Vaughan 2016; Lanvers 2011; Liddicoat 2010, 2013; Lo Bianco 1990; Wright 1993). Much of the policy discourse, however, relates to developing high levels of language ability, implying a level beyond what is achievable in schools. This indicates that universities are likely to have an important role in developing the language capabilities that governments desire. However, government language policy in Australia and the UK has not focused on language learning at universities, and policy documents are almost silent on their role in realizing language policy aims. Language-in-education planning for modern languages at tertiary level is thus left up to universities themselves. However, few universities in English speaking countries have developed policy documents to guide decision making about language learning. University language policies are not usually explicitly articulated in formal policies, except in some specific instances such as language requirements for international students in admission policies (Liddicoat 2016). Instead universities' language plans are more likely to be informal and identifiable more through institutional practices than through documents. Moreover, as explicit language policies are not in place to guide decision making, decisions are more likely to be made in ad hoc ways that are motivated by local concerns and short-term institutional pressures.

This chapter aims to investigate where modern language learning programs are offered and what they are like. These aspects of university language programs offer a way of investigating a part of universities' *de facto* language policies and how they construct opportunities for language learning for contemporary tertiary students. It will do this by examining modern language learning in two English speaking contexts, the UK and Australia.

## 2 Data

This study is based on the data presented on university websites in the UK and Australia giving details of modern language studies at each institution for the academic year beginning in 2017. University websites are in many ways not ideal sources of data as they can be difficult to navigate and data may be difficult to locate, influencing the accuracy of information to be gained. However, websites are public documents that represent universities' work to the world and construct an image of what they offer, especially for prospective students. In this sense universities' websites can be considered as a textual instantiation of universities' language policies, and for languages study, often the only textual instantiation. For this reason, they provide an interesting site for investigation, and problems with accessing

information can be considered a part of the picture of how universities publicly represent languages.

The data for the UK come from two large university groupings: The Russell Group, a group of 22 research intensive universities, and the Coalition of Mainstream Universities (CMU), 32 universities created after 1992 following changes to the Education Act, many of which were previously colleges or polytechnics (Hogan 2005). The data for Australia come from three university groupings that roughly parallel the UK groupings: the Group of Eight (Go8), a group of eight research intensive universities; the Australian Technology Network (ATN), a group of five universities focused on industry and professions, previously Institutes of Technology or Colleges of Advanced Education; and the Regional Universities Network (RUN), a group of six universities based in regional centres, and like the ATN, also previously Institutes of Technology or Colleges of Advanced Education (Lafferty and Fleming 2000).<sup>1</sup> Both the Russell Group and the Go8 can therefore be considered well-established, prestigious, research-intensive institutions often labelled “elite”. The CMU, ATN and RUN institutions are more recently established universities but usually with a longer history as specialist technology, teacher education or other institution, with a focus on professional and technical education and a more recently developed research focus, and consequently a lower level of prestige (Halsey 1992; Marginson 2009; Moodie 2008; Paye 2013).

The data come from the advertised language offerings available for credit at each institution surveyed and thus represent the information made available to prospective and current students about the possibilities for language study. The data collection focused on identifying the languages offered at each university, the types of language programs that were available and the time allocations for classroom language learning. The data do not capture all forms of language study available at universities, as universities in both the UK and Australia may offer non-award language classes through Language Centres (c.f. Coleman 2004). In the UK, Language Centres may also offer language study for credit and language offerings can be available as a major or minor. These offerings have been included in the data collection where they are the normal pathway for language programs for credit. Non-award language classes are not included in the data as they tend to be ad hoc in nature and may only be offered in cases where there is sufficient enrolment. Thus, a listing of non-award programs may not reflect the actual language offerings available to students at any given time. Non-award courses may, however, be a real option for some students and, in the UK, non-award language courses may be made available to students free of charge or for reduced fees. In Australia, cross-institutional language study is a relatively common practice, but such opportunities are often ad hoc arrangements made available to individual students rather than sustained language programs. Cross-institutional arrangements have not therefore

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<sup>1</sup>The sample was chosen for comparability of university clusters across the two countries. It does not, of course, cover all universities in either country, and other universities offer languages in each country. This may have consequences for reporting of less widely taught languages, which may not be picked up.



been included in the data unless the program has been listed on university websites as the normal language pathway. Such cross-institutional arrangements, even as ad hoc possibilities, are rare in the UK, but have been included where they are the normal advertised pathway for award-bearing language study.

### 3 University Language Offerings

One of the key decisions made by universities is the languages that are offered for students and the number of languages that the institution will teach and the level to which each language will be taught. The language offerings at universities are shown in Table 1 for the UK and Table 2 for Australia.

Table 1 shows that there are 39 languages offered at the UK universities, with many of these being offered at a small number of universities. The most widely taught languages are Spanish (30), French (29), German (26), Chinese (26), Italian (22), Portuguese (21), Russian (17), Japanese (16) and Arabic (14). The distribution of languages and number of programs shows a strong orientation to Europe in the languages offered, although Chinese, Japanese and Arabic are notable exceptions.

**Table 1** Languages and number of programs offered at UK universities (Russell Group and CMU)

Language	Programs	Language	Programs
Arabic	14	Japanese	16
Basque	2	Korean	4
British Sign Language	2	Luxembourgish	1 (minor)
Bulgarian	1	Norwegian	2
Catalan	9	Persian	3
Chinese	26	Polish	4
Czech	4	Portuguese	21
Danish	2	Romanian	1
Dutch	5	Russian	17
Finnish	1	Serbian/Croatian	2
French	29	Slovak	1
Gaelic	2	Slovene	1 (elective)
German	26	Spanish	30
Greek	3	Swedish	2
Hebrew	3	Thai	1
Hindi	1 (elective)	Turkish	2
Hungarian	1	Ukrainian	2
Icelandic	1	Welsh	2
Irish	1	Yiddish	1 (minor)
Italian	22		

**Table 2** Languages and number of programs offered at Australian universities (Go8, ATN and RUN)

Language	Programs	Language	Programs
Arabic	3	Korean	6
Burmese	1 (elective)	Mongolian	1 (elective)
Cantonese	1 (elective)	Persian	1
Chinese	15	Portuguese	1 (elective)
French	12	Russian	3
Gamilaraay	2	Spanish	10
German	11	Tetum	1 (elective)
Greek	3	Thai	1
Hebrew	2	Tibetan	1 (elective)
Hindi	1	Turkish	1 (elective)
Indonesian	9	Ukrainian	1
Irish	1 (minor)	Vietnamese	1
Italian	10	Welsh	1 (minor)
Japanese	14	Wiradjuri	1 (elective)
Kaurna	1 (elective)		

Few of the languages on offer are languages spoken by the main immigrant communities in the UK other than those coming from the EU, with Arabic being the most widely offered language of immigration. However, most programs at UK universities in languages spoken by immigrant communities are designed for new speakers of the languages. They are either offered as ab initio programs or as programs continuing from A-level foreign language studies. The only languages that are offered in programs especially designed for first language speakers are Welsh and Gaelic, which have special status in the language policies of Wales and Scotland. The presence of such programs can therefore be seen as being supported by more local language policy needs, such as preparation of teachers of Welsh and Gaelic schools rather than of evidence of a university language policy commitment to support language maintenance for minority communities. There is thus little provision for background speakers at UK universities and language learning is understood by universities as being additional-language learning.

A small proportion of these languages are offered only in limited programs in the UK; that is as a minor only or elective. Yiddish and Luxembourgish are offered only by a single institution as minors and are made available only to students who are majoring in German. Slovene and Hindi are also offered at single universities and only as electives. The data do however under-represent the study of these languages as they may be offered at institutions outside the group surveyed. For example, Hindi is offered as a major at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Table 2 shows that a smaller number of languages is offered (29) and the most widely offered languages are Chinese (15), Japanese (14), French (12), German (11), Italian (10), Spanish (10) and Indonesian (9). The profile in Australia shows a focus on Asian and European languages. There is evidence that some of the main

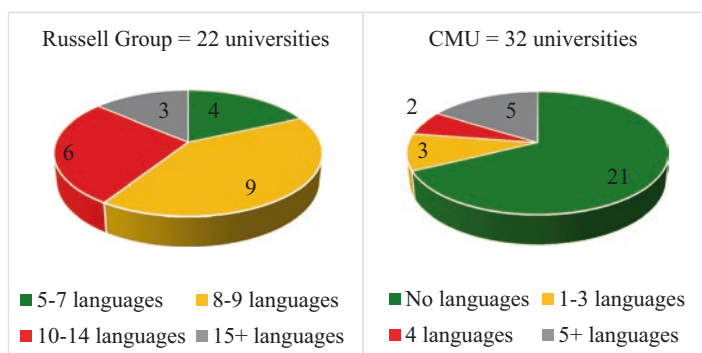
languages of immigration are present in Australian universities, notably Chinese, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese, although the extent to which these languages are offered in programs designed for background speakers is limited. Aboriginal languages have a very marginal presence in Australian universities, and where they are offered it is principally as electives (see Amery, this volume, for further details about Aboriginal languages in Australia).

The pattern across UK and Australian universities shows that a larger range of languages is offered at the UK universities than at the Australian universities, but that the main languages offered in each system are similar. The notable differences are Portuguese, which is widely taught in the UK but is offered by only one university as an elective in Australia, and Indonesian, which is relatively widely taught in Australia, but absent in the UK universities. These differences can be understood as influences of local geopolitical context on language offerings, but local geopolitics seems to play a relatively small role in shaping tertiary level language study in the two countries. In both countries a relatively small number of languages accounts for most of the language teaching with other languages having more peripheral roles in education.

Of the 29 languages listed in Table 2 a very large number are available only in limited programs, with two languages, Irish and Welsh, available only as minors and nine languages offered only as electives. This means that of the 29 languages listed, only 18 are available as majors.

Looking within each system, the distribution of languages in different types of universities shows a distributional pattern that reveals language teaching is concentrated in some university clusters but not in others. Considering the UK, there is a marked difference between language offerings in Russell Group universities and CMU universities.

Figure 1 shows a marked contrast in that all Russell Group universities offer languages, while in CMU universities, 21 universities (that is two thirds of the total) do not offer languages at all. Moreover, the total number of languages offered varies, with no Russell group university teaching fewer than five languages and only five CMU universities offering five languages or more. Languages are therefore



**Fig. 1** Number of languages offered by UK universities (Russell Group and CMU)

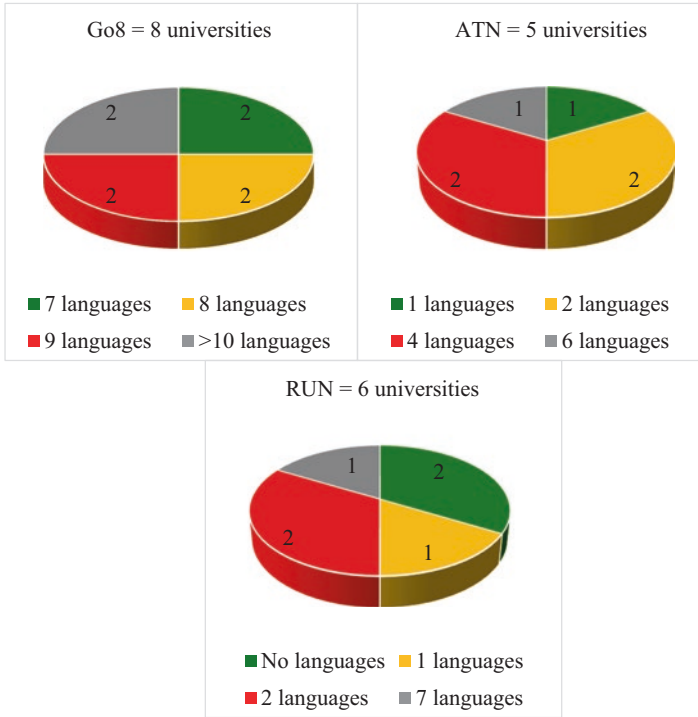


Fig. 2 Number of languages offered by universities (Go8, ATN and RUN)

most concentrated in the more established, academically focused universities and much less present in the newer professionally focused universities. The CMU university offering the widest range of languages offers only eight.

In the Australian data (Fig. 2) most universities offer languages, with only two of the RUN universities having no languages on offer. However, there is a considerable difference in the numbers of languages available. No Go8 university offers fewer than seven languages and most offer considerably more whereas only one ATN or RUN university offers seven languages. Languages are thus more concentrated in the Go8 universities. While few Australia universities offer as many languages as Russell Group universities in the UK, Go8 universities overall offer more languages than either the ATN or RUN universities and most of these universities have very limited language offerings.

Both the UK and Australia show a common patterning of language study. Languages are more likely to be offered in elite, research intensive universities than in others, although this is less marked in Australia than in the UK. This means that university language study is constructed in both countries as part of academic rather than professional education. Moreover, languages are more available in universities which are likely to have higher entrance requirements and are more likely to recruit students from educated middle class backgrounds than elsewhere. Coleman has

argued that the concentration of modern languages in Russell Group institutions has made “language students more of an elite than ever: the high proportion from independent schools, the low proportion from disadvantaged postcode areas or schools providing a high percentage of free school meals” (2004, p. 7). A similar dynamic is arguably also at play in Australia.

## 4 Language Program Types

In discussing the provision of languages in the UK (Fig. 1) and Australia (Fig. 2), it was noted that some languages were available in restricted programs (minor or elective only). When looking at individual institutions, however, a more complex picture of offerings emerges that reveals that other languages may not be offered as majors at all institutions.

Figure 3 shows the types of language programs offered in the UK for each language. It reveals that most languages on offer at Russell Group universities are offered as part of a major sequence in the language. In addition to the restricted programs in Yiddish, Luxembourgish, Slovene and Hindi discussed above, which are all offered at Russell Group universities, Korean is available only as a minor in Russell Group universities and even widely taught languages (such as French, German, Italian, Spanish, etc.) may only be offered as minors in some institutions, while Arabic and Catalan are available only as electives in one institution each. This shows that even in the Russell Group, in which languages tend to be more strongly represented, languages may not be available equally to all students. One reason for this seems to be that not all Russell Group universities are comprehensive universities and languages are more likely to be offered only as minors in specialist institutions. This would indicate that languages may not be considered as essential learning in such institutions.

At CMU universities, languages are much more likely to be offered as a minor or as electives than at Russell Group universities. While all languages except Portuguese are available as majors in CMU universities, most language programs offer less than a full major, except for French and Spanish. The normal duration of language study in these universities is thus likely to be two years or less. Russian, Korean and Thai are the only languages offered solely as majors at CMU institutions, but these are not offered frequently. Korean is, for instance, offered as a major at one CMU university, but is not available as a major in any of the Russell Group institutions. British Sign Language is available only in CMU institutions and is typically offered in interpreter training programs, reflecting the professional focus of such institutions. British Sign Language thus does not seem to have a place in academic education, being offered only in professional education and thus differing from most languages.

The Australian offerings, shown in Fig. 4, reveal a different pattern of offerings from that found in the UK. In this case, restricted programs are offered mainly in the elite Go8 institutions, and ATN and RUN universities are more likely to offer full

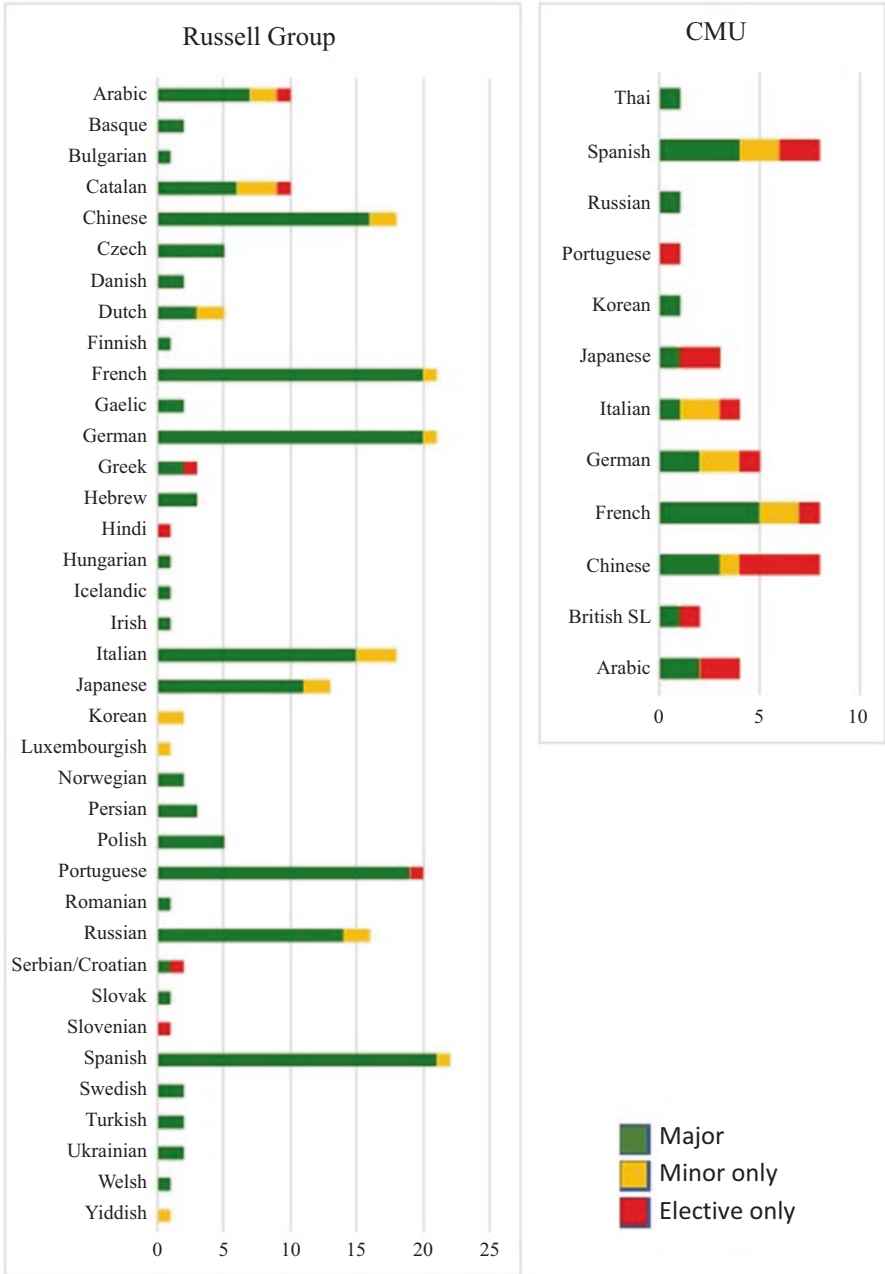


Fig. 3 Language program types: UK universities

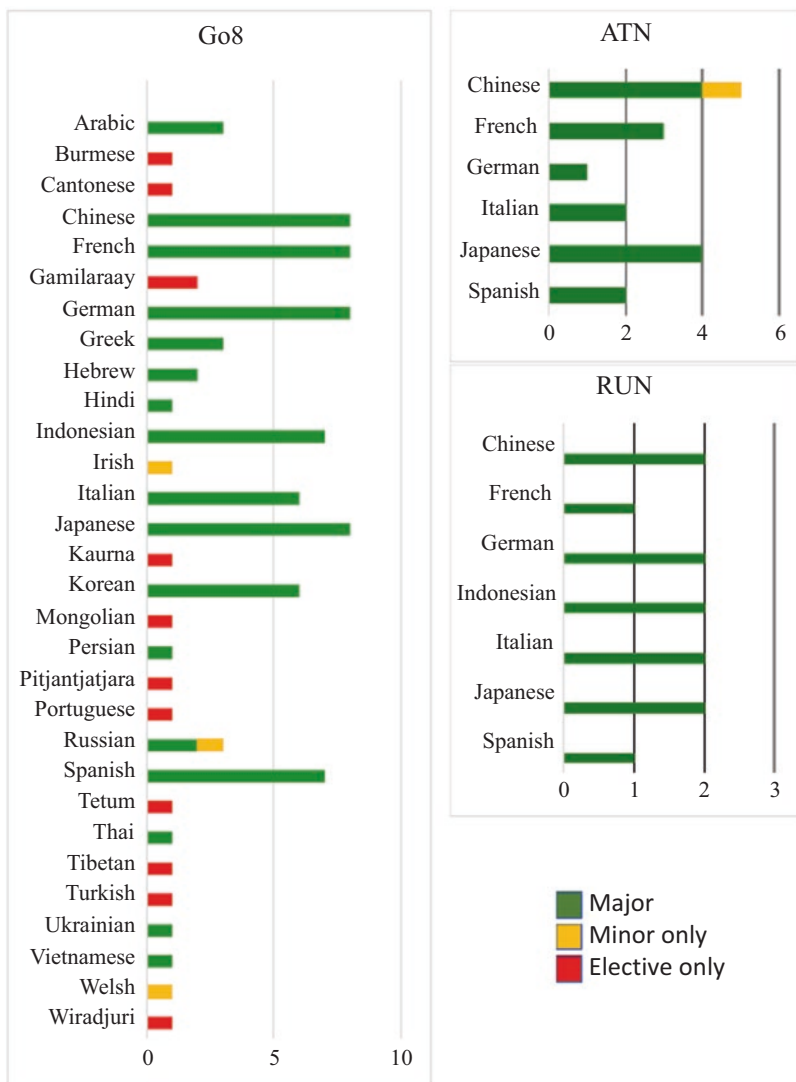


Fig. 4 Language program types: Australian universities

majors in all of their languages, with Chinese being an exception at one university. What the table shows is that across all universities, the main languages taught in Australia are likely to be available as a major regardless of the type of institution, while less commonly taught languages are more likely to be taught as restricted programs, but are only offered in Go8 institutions. The type of program available is thus more influenced by the language than by the institution in Australia. Program type in Australia therefore appears to be less influenced by the distinction between academic and professional institutions than is the case in the UK.

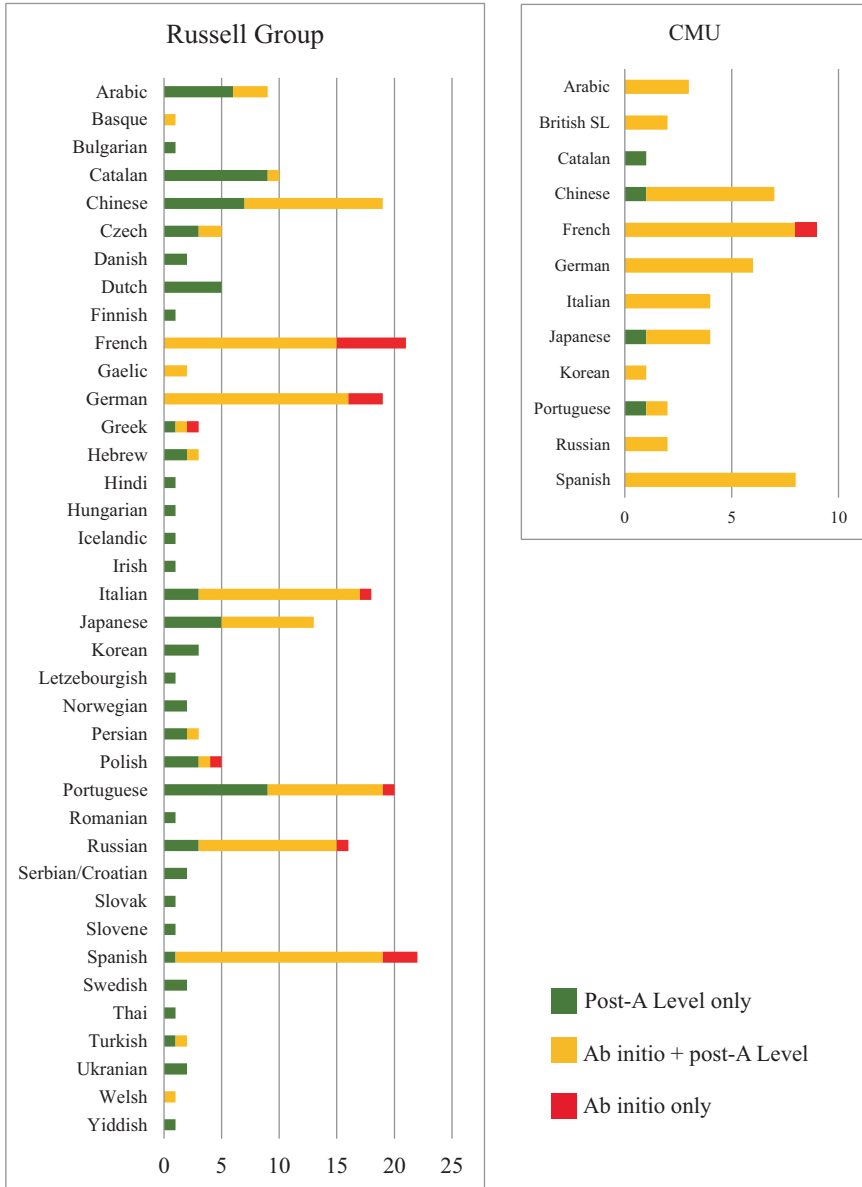


Fig. 5 Entry points: UK universities (Russell Group and CMU)

Language programs differ not only in their duration but also in the entry points that they provide. Language programs may offer pathways that continue study of a language from secondary schooling and pathways for new learners of the language. The entry points to languages available in UK institutions are shown in Fig. 5.



In UK universities some language programs cater only for post-A level students and this is the case especially for languages which are widely taught in the UK at A-level, notably French, German, Spanish (British Council 2016). The existence of such programs implies that the population of A-level graduates for certain languages is able to support programs designed only for continuing students. Such programs are concentrated at Russell Group universities, although there is one French continuing only program offered at a CMU university. Ab initio only programs are mainly found for languages that are not examined at A-level and for which there would not be a cohort of completing secondary students to enter into the program.

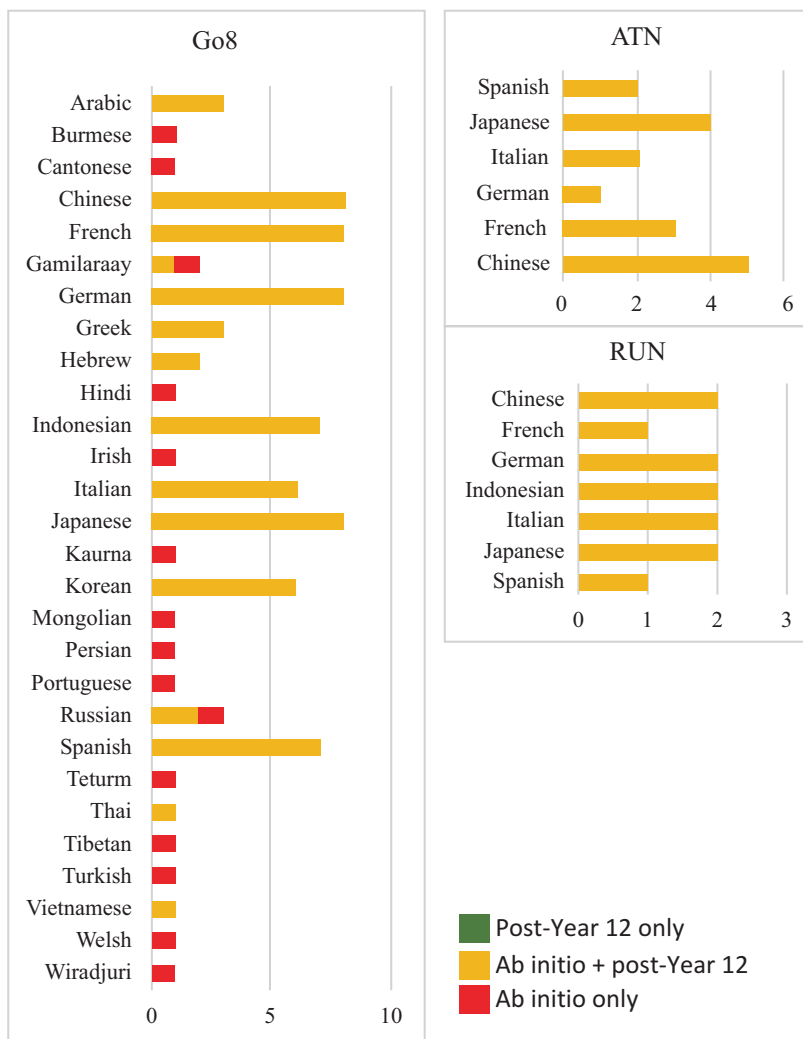


Fig. 6 Entry points: Australian universities (Go8, ATN and RUN)

Many of these programs, however, relate to languages spoken by immigrant groups in the UK, especially languages of the European Union, Arabic and Chinese. It therefore appears that university offerings of such languages are unlikely to be designed to meet the needs of background speakers, who are unlikely to be beginning level learners.

Figure 6 shows that the organization of programs in Australia is different from that in the UK in that there are no universities offering programs only for continuing students. Like the UK, programs that offer both *ab initio* and continuing entry points are the norm and this is true regardless of the university grouping. In some universities, the *ab initio* program is the only language pathway offered in full on campus and students wishing to complete a continuing program need to complete the final year(s) of a major through study abroad or cross-institutional study. This is especially the case at some RUN universities. Only a small number of lesser taught languages are available as *ab initio* only programs, and some of these are also restricted programs providing only basic level language abilities (e.g., Burmese, Cantonese, Tetum, Mongolian and Tibetan). As in the UK some of these languages are spoken as community languages in Australia and the presence of *ab initio* only programs indicates that universities largely ignore background speakers.

The most common model across the universities in both countries is one where both *ab initio* and continuing programs are offered. The actual organization of such programs varies and *ab initio* learners may be enrolled in either converging programs or sequential programs. In converging programs, *ab initio* and continuing cohorts merge at some point in their study. This pattern is relatively common in the UK, especially in programs in Russell Group universities, but is rare in Australia. The point of merger may be in the second or the final year of the program, and where learners are merged in the final year, this is often following a compulsory year of study abroad. In such programs the exit levels of both cohorts are theoretically the same. In sequential programs, the *ab initio* learners move from classes designed for beginners in their first year and then, in second year, join continuing students' first year classes. In these types of programs, *ab initio* learners exit their program at a lower level than continuing students. Converging programs are most common in Russell Group and some Go8 universities, but are not exclusive to them, while sequential programs are most common in CMU, ATN and RUN universities. This indicates that *ab initio* students leaving language majors in professionally oriented universities are likely to be leaving with lower levels of language attainment than those leaving academic universities.

In the UK, *ab initio* programs may be organized differently from continuing programs and initial language learning may be offered by Language Centres rather than academic departments. The separation of such language learning from academic departments appears to reflect a view of basic language learning as not being legitimate academic learning and being instead a form of basic skill development. Moreover, in academic departments, beginning learning is more likely to be assigned to teaching fellows rather than to teaching and research academics, further highlighting a perceived separation between basic learning and academic skill development, with teaching and research academics teaching in later years and teaching

literature, areas studies or other “content” subjects. The structural separation of ab initio and continuing programs into Language Centres and Departments does not seem to be a common practice in Australia and teaching only positions are much less common than in the UK, so the dynamics of dual pathway programs may be different.

## 5 Time Allocations for Language Study

A significant decision to be made in language teaching relates to how much instructional time will be made available to learners. The number of contact hours offered to students in tertiary programs is not simply a question of time on task for language learning but also influences things such as the pace of instruction and the content of learning. In both the UK and Australia, there are considerable differences in decision making about the allocation of time to language learning. Moreover, time allocations for ab initio and continuing programs may also vary.

The data relating to instructional time in ab initio and continuing programs in UK universities is presented in Table 3. In Table 3, the mode, that is the most

**Table 3** Time allocations in hours per week: UK universities

Ab initio language programs						
All UK universities						
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Mean	4.0		3.5		3.2	
Mode	4.0		3.0		3.0	
Range	2–10		2–8		2–9	
Russell Group						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	CMU		
Mean	4.5	3.8	3.5	2.2	2.3	2.3
Mode	4.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
Range	2–10	2–8	2–9	2–3	2–4	2–4
Continuing language programs						
All UK universities						
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Mean	3.2		3.2		2.9	
Mode	3.0		3.0		3.0	
Range	2–7		2–8		2–8	
Russell Group						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	CMU		
Mean	3.5	3.4	3.1	2.3	2.2	2.2
Mode	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Range	2–7	2–8	2–8	2–3	2–3	2–3

frequent value for time allocation, shows that *ab initio* students are likely to receive four hours of instruction per week in first year and that this decreases to three hours in later years. For continuing students, the mode is consistently three hours per week. However, this mode value hides a very wide variation in what universities actually offer. Weekly contact hours may vary from two hours per week to ten hours per week in *ab initio* programs and between two hours and 8 hours in continuing programs. There is a difference in time allocations between Russell Group and CMU universities, with the mode for both *ab initio* programs and continuing programs being consistently greater in Russell Group institutions. However, the range shows that the minimum time allocation in both groupings is the same, at two hours. Two-hour programs are, however, the norm in CMU universities, but are the exception in Russell Group universities. In fact, in the Russell Group two-hour programs for first and second year students are found in specialist universities only, showing again that such institutions may not see Modern Languages as central for their students' education.

The time allocations in UK universities are not always consistent within universities or within languages. At most universities different time allocations are made for different languages. In some cases, this may seem to be a pedagogically motivated decision—for example, if a language is linguistically distant from English, such as Chinese or Japanese, it is allocated more time than a linguistically close language like French or German. However, pedagogy often does not appear to be the basis on which decisions are made. For example, it is possible for similar, linguistically close languages, such as Italian and Spanish, to receive very different time allocations within the same university, and it may be Italian or Spanish that has the greater number of hours depending on the institution. In some cases, it appears that decisions about time allocations are made at departmental level, with all languages taught by one department having very similar time allocations but differing from other departments. In other cases, it appears that there is institutional consistency, especially in institutions where two contact hours is the norm. However, as such programs are often taught within Language Centres or generic departments of Modern Languages rather than departments dedicated to specific languages or groups of languages (e.g., departments of French Studies, Slavic Studies, etc.), this means that the possibility remains that in these cases decisions are still made at department level rather than being the result of university-level decision making.

Within languages, time allocations vary significantly between institutions. For example, the teaching of Chinese and Japanese varies across the full range of possible hours, with some institutions offering only the minimum of two hours per week and others offering eight, nine or ten hours. A similar pattern occurs, although with a smaller range for other languages, with two as a consistent minimum for all languages, with the maximum for languages such as French or Spanish ranging from four to six hours per week, depending on the program. This variability in time allocations would indicate that different programs may have very different exit levels and that a major in a language may be conceptualized very differently depending on the institution.

Continuing classes tend to have fewer hours than *ab initio* classes, although again this is not consistent. In *ab initio* programs designed to converge with continuing programs the time allocations for *ab initio* students are typically higher than for

continuing students, and sometimes are double or more, presumably to help ab initio learners to catch up with their continuing peers. However, in some cases, time allocations may be identical for each cohort.

The time allocations in the UK do not necessarily reflect the full student experience of language learning, as many language majors have a compulsory year abroad in a target language speaking country between second and third year. There are also some programs in Chinese and Japanese that require two compulsory years of study abroad. Programs that require a year abroad for language study are usually in degrees that have a named modern language specialization (e.g., BA French, BA Hispanic Studies, BA Modern Languages, etc.) and such programs are more common in Russell Group universities. Programs in which languages study is a second major, minor or elective in a professionally oriented degree are less likely to have a compulsory year abroad or may require study to focus on the professional field rather than language in year abroad programs. This means that students exiting from an academic language program at a Russell Group university may not only have received a greater time allocation to their language study while at the university, but have also studied in-country. In contrast, those studying in a professional degree at a CMU university may have had fewer contact hours and fewer opportunities for in-country study.

**Table 4** Time allocations in hours per week: Australian universities

Ab initio language programs									
All Australian universities									
	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Mean	4.0			3.6			3.3		
Mode	4.0			3.0			3.0		
Range	2–8			2–8			1–8		
	Go8			ATN			RUN		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Mean	4.2	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.7	2.8
Mode	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
Range	3–8	3–8	3–8	3–5	3–5	3–5	2–5	2–5	1–4
Continuing language programs									
All Australian universities									
	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Mean	3.6			3.3			2.8		
Mode	3.0			3.0			3.0		
Range	2–8			2–8			1–8		
	Go8			CMU			RUN		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Mean	3.7	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.4	2.4	3.5	2.8	2.1
Mode	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
Range	3–8	3–8	2–8	3–5	3–4	2–3	2–5	1–4	2–3

The weekly time allocations for Australian universities are shown in Table 4. In Australia the modes for ab initio and continuing programs look similar to those in UK universities and the range of hours is also similar, indicating that the same discrepancies in provision that exist in the UK are also present in Australia. The Go8 tends to allocate the most time to language study, although there is little difference between Go8 and ATN and some RUN universities. RUN universities do, however, have the fewest contact hours. A notable difference is that two-hour programs seem to be less common in Australia than they are in the UK and are found mainly in RUN universities or in the final year of continuing programs. There is a single instance of a final year program offering only one contact hour in the RUN group, which is lower than anything in the UK. Australia also shows a similar pattern on intra-institutional variation in language offerings, with different languages at the same university having different contact hours. The issues of comparability in exit standards across programs identified for the UK would seem to be also an issue in Australia. In addition, study abroad is usually optional for Australian language students and this would add further variation to exit levels, even within the same institution.

In both the UK and Australia there is very considerable variation in how much time is given to students for language learning and thus different institutions may offer very different language programs to their students. Universities' language policies therefore appear to be inconsistent in how they construct opportunities for language learning. In most cases, it would seem that decisions about time allocations have been left to local teaching areas but this does not mean that such areas always have equal freedom to decide what they will offer. Universities' funding arrangements often exert a powerful effect on what language departments can deliver.

## 6 Issues for Modern Language Programs

The discussion of language provision above shows that universities in the UK and Australia show similarities, but also differences, in their language education practices and policies.

The most striking similarity in universities' policies is the variability of languages offered, of time allocations and of exit standards, indicating that there is little that universities have in common when deciding how to teach Modern Languages. This would suggest a lack of a shared sense of the value and place of languages within higher education. In both countries, however, there seems to be a convergence in time allocations around three hours per week, which reflects time allocations for other curriculum areas which use a lecture plus tutorial/seminar approach of mixed large and small group teaching. This convergence would seem to reflect a lack of recognition of the distinctiveness of language learning and an attempt to fit language learning into a standardized university structure. However, this has not been universally adopted as a norm and some institutions show evidence

of very different models of provision that are more adapted to the particular needs of language learning. The prevalence of two hour per week programs in the UK and in some Australian institutions is particularly significant given the prevailing three-hour norm in most discipline areas. Where languages are given less time than other curriculum areas, this would indicate a lack of valuing of language education and language abilities in general terms, or a view that languages are less significant as a part of education, and thus in terms of the futures of graduates, than other areas. The relationship between professional universities and lower levels of provision of languages would suggest that languages are not seen as necessary for professional work by many universities.

There is evidence in the UK and, to a lesser extent in Australia, that languages are seen as academic subjects and as suited for the education of elites, as they are concentrated in elite, research intensive universities in both countries and are more marginal in professional universities. The practices of universities in both countries seem to reflect a view of Modern Languages as “academic” rather than “useful”. Languages are less likely to be taught in professionally oriented universities (CMU, ATN, RUN) than in academically oriented universities (Russell Group, Go8) and comparatively few professionally oriented programs include extended language study. This is shown most clearly by the lack of opportunities for language study, the small number of languages on offer, the significant presence of only restricted programs and limited contact hours in CMU universities and to a lesser extent in ATN and RUN universities. However, this is less evident in Australia where differences in provision of languages are less marked, given that most institutions offer at least some possibilities for language study and are more likely to offer majors than restricted programs of minors and electives.

There are other factors, such as the participation rates for Modern Language study at different institutions and the possibilities for combining language majors with other specializations, that would also indicate how universities value language study, but which have not been part of this study. One possibility for giving value to Modern Languages for students who are not language specialists lies in the option of combined degrees (Australia) or dual major degrees (UK), but these are often more available at academically oriented universities and are rarely the usual model for professional education. A small number of UK universities with a professional focus encourage non-award language learning as an additional activity, and in a few cases make non-award language courses taught through Language Centres available to students without charge. This would seem to indicate that these universities do see value in language learning, but the positioning of languages outside university education proper and in non-academic university structures casts languages as peripheral to the main focus of higher education.

The evidence that universities in both countries see Modern Languages as less useful for their graduates is perhaps surprising given that in both countries there are discourses about the utility of languages especially for business, and even a level of concern for lack of language abilities among professionals (Garner 2010; Lanvers and Coleman 2017; Munro 2016). This is especially the case in the UK. Universities’ language policies do not reflect these concerns and reveal monolingual mindset or

habitus (Clyne 2008; Gogolin 1994, 1997) when thinking about their graduates' futures, and a linguistic complacency in the utility of English for international communication.

## 7 Conclusion

While much remains to be explored, universities' language policies for Modern Languages in Australia and the UK appear to be the result of ad hoc decisions made at different levels of the university. The only truly university-level decision would appear to be the decision not to offer languages at all. The choice of languages, the sorts of programs offered, time allocations, etc., do not seem to be the result of coordinated evidence-based decision making in universities. The large variability of language programs in both countries shows that there is a lack of coordinated thinking at institutional level about Modern Languages and little in the way of an overall educational rationale. Universities' policies do not seem to be supportive of the idea that language knowledge is a basic need for twenty-first century students. At the same time, universities highlight the significance of internationalization in their research and teaching and also in the futures they present for their graduates. Preparing for a globalized world has become a standard discourse in higher education. While universities in English-speaking countries are very likely to have explicitly articulated internationalization policies, they are much less likely to have language education policies to guide decision making. Instead, university language policies appear essentially unplanned; they result from the decisions made that shape practice and are revealed only through those practices. Arguably these decisions are more likely to be made in terms of budgets, perceptions of market demand and the neoliberal agenda and are reactive rather than proactive engagements with Modern Languages and their role in contemporary education.

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# Cross-Institutional Study for Languages: A Case Study in Ad Hoc Planning



Yuko Kinoshita

**Abstract** Higher education institutions often claim that their decision-making processes are driven by a concern for economic efficiency. This “efficiency” is often poorly defined. It has led some universities to reduce course offerings by sharing courses with neighbouring universities. Often, language courses have been chosen as the target. This chapter first presents a case study: data on the effects of replacing on-campus course delivery with cross-institutional arrangements, for Japanese language education between two universities in Canberra—the University of Canberra and the Australian National University. It then discusses what the resulting reduced number of language learners might mean, and the possible social costs of this change.

**Keywords** Higher education · Language courses · On-campus delivery · Cross-institutional delivery · Japanese · University of Canberra · Australian National University

## 1 Introduction

In Australia, changes over time in both government policy and cultural sentiment have influenced modern languages education. Australian public sentiment towards foreignness has varied from antagonism to ideological celebrations of multiculturalism and everything in between. Since the late 1980s, it has largely settled into what Lo Bianco calls “economically motivated Asianism” (Djité 2011; Lo Bianco 2004; Martín 2005).

A political focus on Asian languages has led to various national policy initiatives, such as the “National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools” program (NALSAS) in the 1990s, and the “National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program” (NALSSP) in 2009 (Department of Education 2009). The

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“Australia in the Asian Century White Paper” published in 2012, under a Labor government, specifically focused on the necessity of language education, proposing ambitious goals:

All students will have continuous access to a priority Asian language—Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian and Japanese (170).

Our leaders will be more Asia literate, with one-third of board members of Australia’s top 200 publicly listed companies and Commonwealth bodies having deep experience in and knowledge of Asia (179).

Subsequently, a Liberal-National Coalition government distanced itself from the White Paper, but it proposed equally ambitious goals: it determined that, within a decade, 40% per cent of Year 12 students would be studying a foreign language. It introduced its own suite of initiatives, such as the “Early Learning Languages Australia” program (ELLA). ELLA was positioned as a “key part of the Australian Government’s commitment to reviving language study” (Department of Education and Training 2016b, p. 3), and provided participating preschools with specially developed tablet-based language learning applications initially for five languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Indonesian, and Japanese. German, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese were subsequently added, so that ELLA now offers language learning applications for 13 languages (Department of Education and Skills Development 2020). The trial started in 2015, with 41 preschools participating across the country, and it steadily expanded. In the ACT, for instance, participating schools grew from one in the first year to 15 in 2017 (ACT Government Education Directorate 2017), and 80 in 2019 (Department of Education and Skills Development 2020).

In 2013, at the tertiary level, \$100 million over 5 years was committed to the New Colombo Plan aiming to boost the number of young Australians undertaking university study and internship in Asian countries (The Coalition 2013a, b). In 2018, as in previous years, the Australian Government funded tertiary foreign language study generously relative to other areas. Per enrolment, language courses are allocated 2.18 times the funding that is provided for Humanities courses. When this funding is combined with the student-paid fee, language subjects bring a university 1.56 times the revenue per student that Humanities subjects receive (Department of Education and Training 2015, 2016a, 2017).

There is some evidence of growing interest in foreign languages among tertiary students. Hajek (2014) reports substantial growth of tertiary language enrolments between 2002 and 2011. The University of Melbourne and the University of Western Australia experienced a surge in language enrolments after they changed their degree structures, which opened up language learning opportunities to more students than before (Brown and Caruso 2016; Lane 2012). This suggests that more students are interested in taking up language studies, should their degree structures allow it. In other tertiary education institutions, however, foreign language studies still appear to be treated as something of an optional extra. As they are also perceived to be costly, they are abandoned in the face of institution-wide financial

difficulties. Financial pressure on Australian universities—from reductions in federal funding—has put many language programs in a precarious position. Some courses have been closed altogether, some have had staff reductions or downgrades. Recent newsletters from LCNAU (2018, 13 June; 2018, 28 June) reported further closures: of German and Mandarin programs at the University of Southern Queensland and Italian at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

In response to concerns from students and communities, some universities have installed cross-institutional study agreements with neighbouring universities, as a substitute for on-campus course offerings. Theoretically, such arrangements should allow students to continue their language study—but do they really work? This paper presents time-series data on enrolments in the Japanese language cross-institutional arrangement between the University of Canberra (UC) and the Australian National University (ANU) and discusses the impact of this arrangement.

## **2 Background to the UC-ANU Cross-Institutional Arrangement**

Until 2013, UC had a Japanese language program, which delivered courses of language study at several levels. These courses could form a major in various degrees (although advanced level courses were closed as of Semester 1 2012, a decision characterized as a cost saving measure). The program was in the Faculty of Arts and Design, alongside programs in Spanish and Chinese.

On 22 December 2011, senior UC management notified affected staff of their intention to close the Japanese program, citing financial reasons. The Japanese language staff disputed the financial assessment presented by management, and conducted their own analyses based on revenue and cost data obtained from the University's central administration. Their analyses revealed that the original assessment misallocated some costs of hiring sessional staff to the program, when these were School or Faculty costs, such as Faculty-approved teaching relief for Japanese program staff teaching in non-Japanese language courses at the request of the School, filling administrative roles in convening the Bachelor of Arts, or taking long-service leave. Moreover, the level of government funding received for language courses was not reflected in the program's income. The staff analysis concluded that the Japanese program was not running at a deficit as had been claimed.

Faced with extensive resistance from students, staff, graduates, language educators, and community stakeholders, the closure proposal was retracted in May 2012, with plans for a review after 3 years. The deciding factor was the offer of significant funding support over 2012–2014 from the Japan Foundation—an institution for the international dissemination of Japanese culture under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry of Japan.

In May 2013, however, UC decided to close not only Japanese, but also the other two language programs: Chinese and Spanish. University spokespeople linked this

to the Federal Government's funding cuts to tertiary education that year. The closure was swift: language programs at UC ceased to be as of August 2013. This meant that some students lost their planned course structures in the middle of the academic year. The solution presented by UC management was cross-institutional study at the neighbouring university, ANU. They argued that this would be educationally positive in the long run, as ANU's breadth in foreign language programs provided students with more choices. While UC's then Vice-Chancellor Stephen Parker noted that the absence of an on-campus studying option could cause some inconvenience to students (Lane 2013), Faculty management affirmed that students committed enough to attain worthwhile language skills would be able to manage the cross-institutional arrangements. Languages staff argued that the logistic difficulties would be inhibiting, but neither side could accurately predict the effects of this change.

### 3 Pre-closure State of the UC Japanese Program

Until 2011, UC's Japanese program offered five courses at different levels each semester: three levels covering introductory to intermediate levels, an advanced level course (which was different in each alternate year), as well as Special Studies for individual projects. Under this structure, students with varying prior learning could complete a Japanese language major with six courses—typically one per semester over 3 years—all on campus. They were designed, taught and managed by 1.5 continuing staff along with sessional tutors.

Undergraduate enrolments in Japanese language had been steadily growing. In 2011, just before the initial proposal for the closure, the program had 264 enrolments, more than triple the 76 enrolments in 2004. In 2012, enrolments decreased from 264 to 219. This was mostly due to the closure of the advanced level courses, but also because the possibility of program closure was public knowledge at the time of 2012 enrolments. This may have dissuaded some students from starting Japanese studies at UC. Still, the 2012 enrolments in the beginners course (Japanese 1A) were only 8% down on that of the previous year (100 in 2011; 92 in 2012).

In 2013, the year of the closure, UC offered Japanese 1A in the Winter Semester, a short additional semester between the two main semesters. This attracted a further 20 enrolments, bringing the 2013 Japanese 1A enrolments to 106—more than in 2011.

Thus, despite the uncertainty of its future, the program was attracting new students. The data here suggest that, should the Japanese program have continued, it would likely have maintained similar student numbers, or continued to grow.

### 4 The Cross-Institutional Arrangement: How Did It Go?

UC management asserted that cross-institutional studies would not be an insurmountable burden for students, though less convenient. What was found in Kinoshita (2018) was, perhaps predictably, the opposite. Some key findings are summarized in this section, with additional enrolment data from 2017 and semester 1 2018.

UC management intended an immediate total closure of the program, but it had to step back partially, as this change impacted on students who needed to complete their language major to graduate that year. In order to facilitate completion, they offered two higher level Japanese units on the UC campus for Semester 2 2013, taught by sessional staff.

Figure 1 presents the trend in the number of UC students who studied Japanese language during the period 2004–2017. From this, we can see that the number of Japanese language learners at UC decreased significantly: the 2017 result is only 8.7% of that in 2012 and is 6.9% of the 2010 peak.

Figure 2 presents the number of UC students who commenced tertiary Japanese studies as part of their degrees under the UC–ANU cross-institutional arrangements. Figure 2 shows two groups of students: those who started their Japanese studies when UC still offered on-campus learning options, and the “true starters” who commenced when cross-institutional study at ANU was their only option. “S1” and “S2” indicate semester 1 and 2 respectively.

Prior to the closure, about 100 UC students commenced tertiary Japanese language studies each year (118 students in 2013). This decreased to eight in 2017, a 93.3% reduction in comparison to the 2013 figure. In semester 1 2018, only one UC

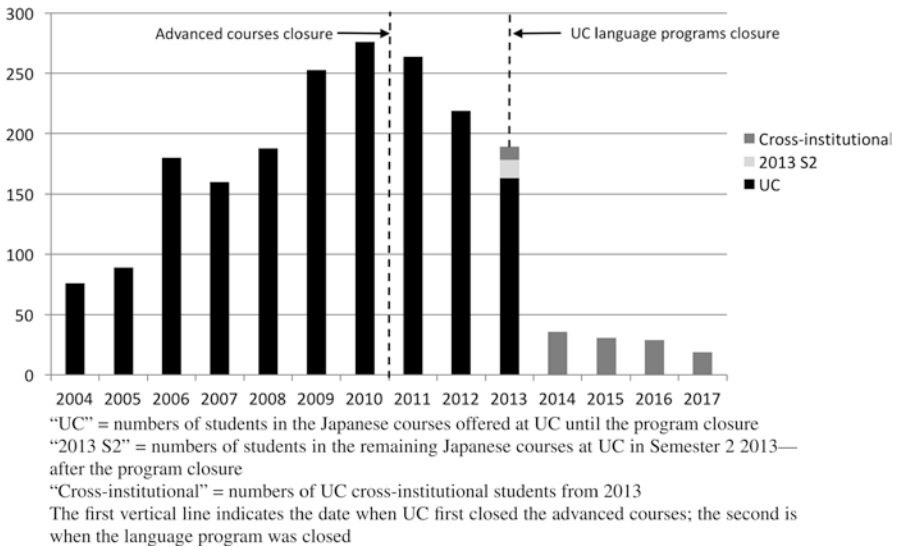


Fig. 1 Summary of the number of UC Japanese learners

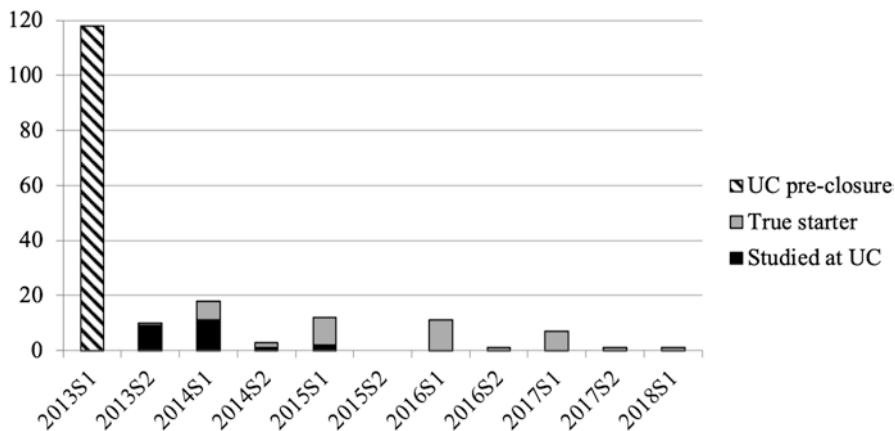


Fig. 2 UC students commencing Japanese language studies

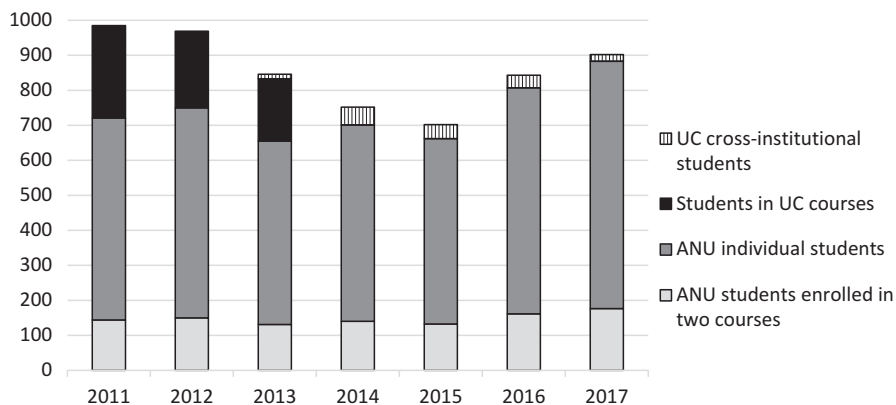
student commenced tertiary Japanese studies (nine other students continuing), which is less than 1% of 2013 numbers. This particular student was enrolled in the advanced level course at ANU. This means that no UC student embarked on studying Japanese as a beginner in 2018.

As of 2018, the UC Japan Club, which is a student club consisting of both local and Japanese overseas students, appears to be still very active, even hosting a regular student-led Japanese language and culture class.<sup>1</sup> This shows that interest in Japan and Japanese culture exists on the UC campus. The lack of an on-campus learning option clearly affected students' course choices.

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) discontinued its TAFE certificate language courses in 2011. Consequently, ANU is now the ACT region's only tertiary institution offering a Japanese language course. Thus, the combined UC and ANU enrolments provide an estimate of the number of Japanese language learners in the ACT tertiary education system. Figure 3 presents Japanese language enrolments at UC and ANU from 2011 to 2017: seven years that include pre- and post-closure of the UC Japanese program. Enrolments at UC, and UC cross-institutional enrolments, both reflect the number of individual students. The ANU enrolments are substantially larger than the number of individual learners, because the ANU Japanese program teaches written and spoken language separately and allows students to take multiple language courses in one semester. The 2016 Semester 1 enrolment record shows that the enrolment figure is roughly 21% greater than the number of individual students. In Fig. 3, we have included a 20% line for the ANU enrolments. The section above that line indicates the estimated individual students in ANU Japanese language courses.

<sup>1</sup>The UC Japan Club in 2018 had about 140 active members (220 financial), of whom 80% were students of non-Japanese background. They hosted a weekly language and culture class co-taught by Australian and Japanese students, as well as other activities (personal communication, 5 July 2018).





**Fig. 3** ANU Japanese language enrolments

Figure 3 shows a significant decrease in the number of tertiary Japanese learners in the ACT since the closure of the UC Japanese program. From 2011 to 2015, total Japanese language course enrolments in ACT tertiary education dropped by nearly 30%, from 985 to 702 enrolments. Assuming that the number of individual learners at ANU equates to 80% of the enrolment figure, the number of individual students is estimated to have declined from 841 to 561, a 33% reduction.

In 2016, Japanese language at ANU saw a 20% increase in enrolments (from 702 to 843), then a further 8% (to 913) in 2017. Semester 1 enrolments in 2018 saw a further 2.8% growth. The reason for this sudden growth is unclear, but the demise of UC language programs is unlikely to be a factor influencing growth, as there was no substantial growth of ANU enrolment for 2 years immediately after UC's language program closure. The most likely explanation is the changes in degree structure at ANU, which allowed students to take more elective courses. In comparison to this most recent figure, the reduction in ACT Japanese learners seems less severe: a 6.3% reduction in enrolments, which equates to 16% in estimated individuals. However, it must be noted that this is against a steady increase in Japanese language learners in ACT public schools over a decade: from 27.7% to 37.4% in the years 2007–2015, with a minor reduction of 1.6% in 2017 (for more detailed analyses and data, see Kinoshita 2018). More young people are experiencing Japanese languages studies at pre-tertiary level, but their opportunity to extend their learning at the tertiary level in the ACT is now limited.

## 5 Cross-Institutional Study: Doomed to Failure?

Replacing the on-campus courses with cross-institutional study arrangements dramatically decreased the number of the Japanese language learners at UC. So, should we expect every cross-institutional study arrangement to fail in a similar way?

Cross-institutional collaboration in language teaching has been trialled in various models, with varying degrees of success (Dunne and Pavlyshyn 2012; Levy and Steel 2012; White and Baldauf 2006; Winter 2009). In fact, White and Baldauf's survey shows that more than half of Australian universities are engaged in collaborative language teaching in one form or another (White and Baldauf 2006, p. 21). However, successful implementation and maintenance of such collaboration requires a tremendous effort from all parties, the institutional will to establish and maintain healthy cross-institutional collaboration, and additional staffing expenses.

The analyses in Kinoshita (2018) revealed that the UC-ANU arrangement was a particularly poorly implemented case. The careful consultation and preparation seen in other cases, such as the Brisbane Universities Language Alliance (BULA) (Levy and Steel 2012), was completely absent.

Almost every issue identified in previous studies, such as in White and Baldauf (2006), was observed in this case. UC students who wished to study a foreign language cross-institutionally received very little information and administrative support from their home institution, and the history of similar cases shows there was no financial incentive on UC's part to do this. As Dunne and Pavlyshyn note, the viability of cross-institutional collaboration is heavily affected by its financial consequences: the institution which is losing enrolments, and hence funding, to a cross-town rival is reluctant to promote the arrangement among their students (2012, p. 14). Moreover, from the students' perspective, the obstacles to enrolling cross-institutionally are significant: UC and ANU have very different semester schedules and fee structures, and there are no academic staff at UC to assist students with administrative and academic concerns with their language studies.

Furthermore, recent higher education policy changes are likely to discourage ANU from accepting additional students in the future. Funding from the Commonwealth Grant Scheme for 2018–2019 is capped at the 2017 level (Department of Education and Training 2018), so additional students could be costly to ANU.

What does this mean in the greater context? Although the ANU–UC case is a particularly poor example of cross-institutional study implementation, the difficulties in establishing a suitable framework for implementation and administration have caused the demise of many collaborative teaching initiatives, as reported by Winter (2009, p. v). The issues observed at ANU–UC are found across various institutions and forms of collaborative arrangements. Even in cases implemented with much more care—such as BULA—language staff report an overall decline in the number of language learners. These data, combined with the severity of the impact observed in the current case, lead me to conclude that a cross-institutional study arrangement is unlikely to maintain a similar level of student enrolment to the on-campus study arrangement.

## 6 Loss of Language Students: What Are the Social Costs?

This case study has shown that removing the on-campus learning option significantly reduced the number of tertiary Japanese language learners in the ACT region, but what are the effects of this in educational, social and economic terms?

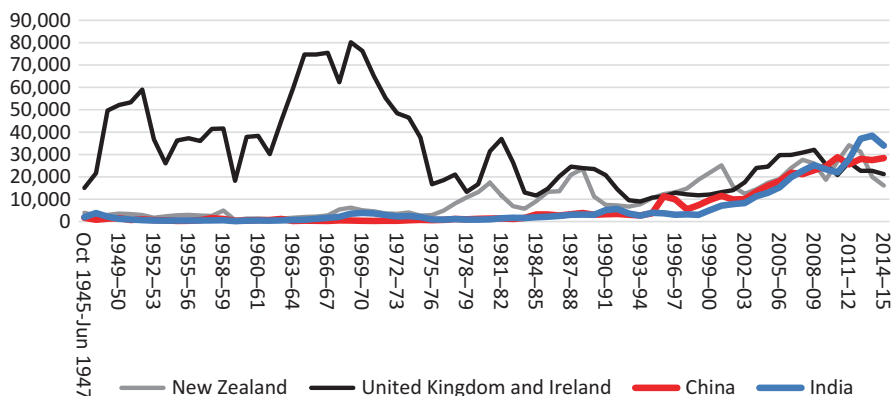
The answer depends on how we see the function of foreign language studies in higher education. From past policies, it seems that both major political parties have recognized that the lack of foreign language expertise can negatively impact on the national economy. The current Australian Government says supporting higher education “is important as the sector makes a fundamental contribution to the future of Australia and our intellectual, economic, cultural and social development.” It affirms that the higher education sector:

- educates our future workforce
- develops our future leaders
- provides jobs for Australians
- facilitates cultural and trade links with other countries
- plays a key role in the growing knowledge and innovation-based economy of Australia. (Department of Education and Training 2018)

If we take an instrumental “Asianist” point of view and believe that tertiary language education mainly contributes to facilitating future links with other countries, what happened in the ACT may not be a grave concern. Each year, only a few students attain work-ready language competency from the typical three years of an undergraduate language major. This being so, the effect of the closure of the UC Japanese program would just be the loss of a few fluent Japanese speakers a year. Kinoshita observed that, of the small number of students enrolling in this cross-institutional system, a relatively high proportion completed their language major (2018, pp. 6–7). One could thus argue that committed students who achieved high language competency could do so cross-institutionally. The impact of the closure of the UC Japanese Program could therefore be regarded as negligible. If it saved money, the closure may then be a rational and cost-effective decision.

This picture changes completely, however, if we see the role of tertiary language education as a platform for the development of intercultural and interpersonal skills. The need for such skills is not limited to the elite who engage in global business; it is a much more widely needed quality in our demographically diverse society.

On globalization and resulting societal changes, Lo Bianco notes that many societies, which once built their national identities through the use of a national language, now face a significant number of linguistically and culturally diverse “others” (2014, p. 322). This is certainly the case for Australia. The proportion of overseas-born residents grew to 28% of the population in 2015 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016). The 2016 Australian Census reports that 52.7% of the Australian population has at least one overseas-born parent: a direct connection to another country and culture (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017).



**Fig. 4** Historical migration record for the current top four sources of newly arriving migrants to Australia (Department of Immigration and Border protection 2016)

The birth countries of newly arriving migrants to Australia have changed too. Figure 4 shows the migration record from 1947–2015 from China, India, UK and New Zealand, the current top four. In 2010, China overtook the UK for the first time (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2016). In 2015, India and China were the greatest sources of new arrivals (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015). Of the 6,710,910 overseas-born residents, about 67% are not of Anglo-Celtic heritage; nearly one in five (19%) of the total Australian population is from a non-Anglo-Celtic background (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2016). The direction of change is clear. Australian society now finds itself in a situation where it must fully recognize the current composition of its population. It cannot turn a blind eye to those large subsections of people who do not fit into the Anglo-Celtic cultural and linguistic mould of yesteryear.

However, the Anglo-Celtic monolingual mindset seems to be still strongly ingrained in our society (Clyne 1991). During the 2018 football World Cup, a female sports commentator received severe online abuse for pronouncing players' names as in their home countries (e.g., SBS presenter Lucy Zelić hits back at abuse for World Cup pronunciation 2018). While other factors such as sexism are likely to have played a role in this incident, it revealed that a part of Australian society believes foreign-sounding names should be anglicized. This clearly presents a problem: social cohesion in a society where more than a quarter of the population is overseas-born cannot be achieved without significant government intervention.

Historical demographic changes cannot be unwound, and the data indicate that the change will continue, perhaps at an increasing rate. Attempts to adhere to an outmoded form of monoculturalism would be futile and socially costly. Higher education, tasked by the government to educate “our future workforce”, and to develop “our future leaders”, has a significant role in helping to embrace this reality and to prepare for further change. Language studies can make a unique contribution to this cause.

As well as training for language skills and imparting cultural knowledge, language studies can serve as a platform for experiential learning to enhance intercultural and linguistic sensitivity. In a controlled and safe environment, students experience the ability to express themselves fully in the classroom; they can express their frustration, fear, and stress, as well as the joy of achieving successful communication and defying difficulties. With considered guidance, these critical emotional experiences can stay with them as a reference point in communicating with people from different backgrounds and help them to develop successful intercultural communication techniques. Such skills—founded on imagination, sensitivity and empathy—are vital for operating effectively in a culturally diverse workforce. Indeed, Yates (2011) provides an interesting example of how experience assists in developing communicative sensitivity. In her interviews with new migrants, one of the interviewees reports that her own experiences—of struggling as an English language learner—enabled her to communicate much better in English with clients from non-English speaking backgrounds than her native-speaker peers did. The language classroom can provide a parallel experience to this.

These effects of meaningful language studies—deep, long lasting intellectual development, including intercultural competence—bring great benefits to the society where these students live. This is regardless of their final attainment in language competency. Reflections from language program graduates seem to concur in this. Kinoshita and Zhang (2014) analysed 33 letters sent to the UC Council in April 2012 in support of the UC Japanese program. They found that many graduates from the Japanese program clearly identified and appreciated the non-linguistic outcomes of their language education. The graduates named the development of personal character as the benefit of their Japanese study more frequently than the acquisition of linguistic skills (29% and 24% respectively), and 14% of them mentioned the opportunity for personal growth. These excerpts are representative of those views:

The most important thing I gained [...] was a perspective other than my own. To learn any language is to learn another mode, another way of thinking, it allows one to express themselves in a way they may not previously have been able to [...] (Letter 24)

I believe that studying a second language greatly benefits not only the students but society as a whole. It promotes tolerance, understanding and greatly improves student's understanding of their own language. (Letter 30) (Kinoshita and Zhang 2014, p. 99)

The point made in the second example is noteworthy: language studies have a positive social impact beyond individual students, by changing their attitude towards others. Developing English proficiency is generally regarded as a migrant's own responsibility, but listeners with intercultural sensitivity can alleviate some of their burden and assist their social participation and integration. One of the major hindrances to the development of English language skills for many newly arrived migrants is the lack of meaningful social interactions with the English-speaking community. Consequently, many end up feeling isolated, and struggle to develop a sense of belonging, even despite inclusion in the workforce (Yates 2011).

English is a lingua franca in our society, but the cultural values each speaker brings in are far from uniform. Cultural competence is not just for international

relationships; it is also critical even when we are communicating in English with other residents of Australia, be it for maintaining an effective workforce or for social cohesion.

This leads us to the importance of engaging more students in university language courses. The obvious first step is to make foreign language studies easily accessible. Through their surveys of undergraduate students, Kinoshita and Zhang (2014) found that students are often unaware of the depth of intellectual and personal development that they may achieve through foreign language studies, even though those qualities are the ones that many graduates appreciate some years later. Reduced access means only the committed will take up language studies. I argue that this is a socially and economically costly situation. Making foreign language studies easily accessible—something that students in any field can choose as part of their university studies—will foster young people who can lead Australia out of an increasingly unrealistic monocultural worldview and contribute to developing a mature and culturally strong society.

## 7 Conclusion

This study presented data on the impact of substituting cross-institutional arrangements for on-campus language studies and discussed societal implications.

The numbers of tertiary Japanese language learners in the ACT decreased significantly after the UC Japanese program was replaced with a cross-institutional arrangement. This decrease was against a background of growing popularity of the Japanese language in the pre-tertiary ACT school system, where Japanese is the most widely studied language.

Although this cross-institutional arrangement was implemented particularly poorly, many studies have shown that even well-designed arrangements are difficult to sustain successfully. Other institutions attempting similar arrangements are likely to experience a substantial decrease in language learners in their region.

Delivered well, foreign language study has significant educational benefits regardless of the final language proficiency that students might achieve. It can better prepare individuals for a changing world and contribute to the social cohesion of our increasingly diverse society. Thus, I argue that this loss of foreign language learners comes with a significant social cost. While a committed few may persist with cross-institutional studies, many will miss out on effective pathways for developing much needed intercultural competence. We need to facilitate students taking up language studies. Closing language programs, and introducing logistical obstacles through cross-campus arrangements, may have an appearance of fiscal efficiency, but is potentially damaging.

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# Making the Case for Languages in Postgraduate Study



Natalie Edwards and Christopher Hogarth

**Abstract** This chapter discusses recent changes in the philosophy and practice of postgraduate training in Australian universities and explores how language programs can respond to these. It first surveys the changing field of postgraduate education, pointing to the current philosophy of doctoral training that aims to produce independent researchers who are trained in both academic and transferable skills. It then discusses three areas in which language departments can advocate for their importance to postgraduate education. First, it discusses ways to attract students by co-supervising in aligned areas and by contributing to undergraduate courses beyond languages. Second, it explores the contributions language programs can make to students' transferable skills training. Third, it suggests that language departments are uniquely placed to emphasize the relevance and applicability of their research to a variety of academic and non-academic contexts in a period when the national Engagement and Impact Assessment (EIA) looms large.

**Keywords** Postgraduate training · Languages education · Transferable skills · Co-supervision · Engagement and impact · Interdisciplinarity

## 1 Introduction

What is the place of languages in postgraduate research programs today? In recent years, the number of postgraduate students enrolled in language programs in Australia, both in Masters by Research and Doctorates, has declined. Concurrently, the number of academic positions available in languages has also declined, thus

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offering less of an incentive to students to engage in postgraduate work with a view to becoming an academic. Moreover, this phenomenon is discernible throughout the Anglophone world. Research carried out by the Modern Languages Association (MLA) in the United States shows fewer academic positions advertised each year in English and Modern Languages and an increase in the number of contract, fixed-term and part-time positions (Modern Languages Association 2014, p. 5). On this basis, the MLA suggests significant changes to doctoral programs in order to make them more attractive to students and to ensure that doctoral students are provided with adequate training to prepare them for a variety of careers. In this paper, we reflect upon the current situation of postgraduate by research programs in Australia. Contextualizing the Australian situation within global developments in higher education, this paper aims to suggest pathways for increasing the participation of languages in postgraduate programs. It first examines the changing shape of doctoral education in Australia, in tandem with developments in the international context. It makes specific reference to the Review of Australia's Research Training System by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA 2016). It then discusses specific case studies of postgraduate projects that aim to increase the place of languages within Australian research training programs. It finally advances recommendations for positioning languages within this changing landscape of postgraduate training.

## 2 From “The Thesis” to “Research Training”

Postgraduate education has undergone significant changes in the last 20 years, in Australia and elsewhere. Up until the 1990s, a doctorate was based upon expert knowledge in a specific field and was evaluated on the basis of the doctoral thesis alone. The doctorate was considered to be the cornerstone of the training to become an academic and, while not all doctoral students eventually became academics, the writing of the thesis was their main objective. As Alistair McCulloch and Michelle Picard write:

[T]he main output of the PhD was almost universally seen as a thesis in which the original contribution to knowledge was embodied. By [...] 2014 [...], the primary output was the PhD graduate, the trained researcher in whom the qualities of doctorateness were embodied. The move had been from a “doctorate” to a “doctor” (McCulloch and Picard 2015, p. 3).

The new emphasis upon the outcome of postgraduate study as a highly trained independent researcher rather than a body of work has had important implications for the shape of the postgraduate program. While researchers are still strongly committed to the thesis, this thesis now takes different forms. Twenty years ago, researchers in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) would have had a broadly similar idea of what a thesis in their disciplines looked like, and this would not have differed considerably from theses written in other discipline areas. Now, students are encouraged to select a thesis format that is more closely aligned with their

individual professional goals. Their thesis may therefore be a cluster of published articles, a mixture of published articles and unpublished chapters, an extended professional report or a creative work (such as creative writing, an art exhibition, a musical performance or a documentary film) coupled with a theoretical exegesis. What used to be termed “a thesis” has come to be named “a conventional thesis” or “a traditional thesis” as students and supervisors are given more autonomy in selecting the type of thesis that most closely fulfils the aim of producing an independent researcher—a doctor, not a doctorate.

Another consequence of this major development in the philosophy of postgraduate education is that universities are increasingly altering the learning activities students carry out. The ACOLA Report recommended two specific and interlinking ideas: first, that students are explicitly informed of career options, particularly within academia, at the outset of the postgraduate programs, and second, that transferable skills training becomes embedded within research training (ACOLA 2016, pp. xi, xiii). Since the Australian government adopted all of the recommendations put forward in the Report, all universities are obliged to introduce such training into their postgraduate programs. A similar situation occurred in the United Kingdom, following interventions such as the Robinson Report, which advocated for more creativity and career preparation across education. The “New Route PhD” is now offered in several discipline areas and typically blends 2 years of coursework with 2 years of thesis writing. The “Integrated PhD”, which takes a more structured approach to professional and subject training over 3 years, followed by extended research in the fourth year, began in the UK and is now being developed in Australian universities. Where postgraduate student learning in the HASS disciplines previously took place primarily in libraries, seminar rooms, individual offices, archives and/or the field of study, universities now also insist upon fostering a blend of skills and knowledge throughout the PhD. Postgraduate learning now takes place in workshops, interactive sessions on leadership, communication and transferable skills, online learning environments, international exchanges and in industry placements. Crucially, these learning activities do not replace the traditional activities but are presented additionally to them, meaning that students have to reach the same academic goals while also engaging in multifarious activities. The fact that completion targets have become increasingly scrutinized adds further pressure to their learning environment.

Alongside this change in the philosophy of postgraduate education, two other major factors have considerably altered the shape of postgraduate programs in Australia. These changes have occurred across disciplines and are thus an important aspect of postgraduate education. The first of these is “massification”. Data included in the ACOLA Report demonstrate this; in 1988, just under 2000 students commenced postgraduate courses in Australia, whereas in 2014, this number was nearly 12,000 (ACOLA 2016, p. 2). Australia’s HDR training system is now producing over 8000 new PhDs and 1500 Masters each year (p. 2). There are several consequences of this increase. Most evident perhaps is that there are more students completing their PhDs than there are jobs available. The ACOLA Report

noted that “the data shows that HDR graduates do not simply flow into academic careers, and instead find employment in a range of different professional careers, including research and non-research careers” (p. 11). This suggests that the postgraduate degree is now used as training for a variety of fields of employment (p. 11). In addition, obtaining a PhD is not as unusual as it quite recently was. This contributes to what is termed the “credential creep”, where more people have more qualifications so that the Bachelor degree is often insufficient training in many fields.<sup>1</sup>

Second, there is now far more diversity amongst candidates. In response to fluctuations in the economy and job market, it has become increasingly popular to return to education in order to undertake a postgraduate qualification. Universities have simultaneously developed policies to widen participation in the wake of interventions such as the Bradley Report (2008), which highlighted the need for greater diversity across fields and levels of education. As Alistair McCulloch and Liz Thomas argue, this impetus has gained ground across the sector due to the “desire of each university to attract the best possible candidates, and the recognition that widening participation activities can enable them to reach a previously untapped and potentially excellent pool of research students” (McCulloch and Thomas 2013, p. 216). The result of such policies and initiatives in Australia is that two-thirds of our postgraduate students are over 30 and 27% are over 40 years old (ACOLA 2016, p. 4). Later-life PhDs have become far more common (ACOLA 2016, p. 5). Universities aiming to increase their domestic student load often start by targeting their Honours students but, in reality, only 20% of our current postgraduate students across Australia come directly from Honours programs (ACOLA 2016, p. 20). Instead, the majority come from full-time professional positions, followed by part-time positions (p. 20). University recruiting and marketing departments sell a very restricted story of postgraduate education, supported by photographs of groups of young people engaged in intellectual discussions or groups of young students in laboratory coats huddling around high-tech machinery and marvelling at their discoveries. It is debatable whether these kinds of images ever reflected our typical cohort of students, but it is quite clear from the statistics quoted here that they do not at this moment. As our candidates change, we need to think about their motivations; some are intending to pursue an academic career, whether they realize how likely they are to succeed or not, and many are not. As supervisors, many of us feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to give professional advice beyond academia. Rather than lamenting a lost past, we aim here to probe opportunities for growth in postgraduate research in languages.

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<sup>1</sup>For more on the credential creep, see for example, Emmaline Bexley (2016).

### 3 Examples of Engagement

The question facing languages departments in this changing environment is thus how we can most effectively leverage the opportunities afforded by these changes to reassert our relevance. Based upon our positions at two universities—one in a Group of Eight and the other a member of the Australian Technology Network—we have experimented with several different approaches. We start by looking specifically at three factors: interdisciplinary research and collaborative supervision (across Schools, Faculties and Universities on a global scale); the place of language training in the doctorate (both in the writing of the thesis and of the oral examination, which the 2016 ACOLA Report set as a requirement in Australia within the next few years); the notion that Modern Languages research is a cutting-edge methodology in and of itself.

## 4 Strategies

### 4.1 *Strategy One: Supervising the “Studies”*

Our first example is based upon the fact that, as scholars of French *Studies*, our expertise is necessarily interdisciplinary. Both of us work in the field of Literary Studies, Field of Research Code 2005 in the Australian system. Most of us who carry out research from within language departments engage in interdisciplinarity because we work in one or several “studies”: literary studies, film studies, gender studies, historical studies and others. While staff in language departments teach all levels of the language, our own doctoral work and subsequent research concern aspects of cultural or linguistic studies. While there are few postgraduate students in language departments, there are increasing numbers in the “studies” areas within which we research. In the case of popular areas such as literary studies, there are often high numbers of postgraduate students and insufficient staff in English departments to supervise them adequately. It is now mandatory in most Australian universities for a postgraduate student to be supervised by two supervisors: a main supervisor and a secondary supervisor. This model presents an opportunity to those of us who carry out research in “studies” areas. We as researchers in language departments can position ourselves as secondary supervisors who can add specific skills and knowledge to a supervisory team: theoretical apparatus, methodological knowledge, linguistic skills and an awareness of scholarly debates in these areas in other cultures, for example. Gaining access to postgraduate students in these areas is a helpful way of increasing our involvement in supervisory teams and of increasing the exposure of the extensive research carried out in language departments.

Such an effort presents two problems, however, and neither is simple to surmount. First is the difficulty of communicating our research to colleagues in these “studies” departments. Colleagues in English, History or Media departments, for

example, might not be aware of our research since it is published in different outlets and promoted through different conferences. In Australia, many of our academic conferences are language-specific, stemming from the fact that we have a number of language-specific professional associations, such as the Australian Society for French Studies, the Australasian Centre for Italian Studies and the German Studies Association of Australia. Many of the journals in which we publish, both in Australia and overseas, are also language-specific, such as the *Australian Journal of French Studies*, *Japanese Studies*, *Limbus* and the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*. While there are initiatives that bring languages together—the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU) is of course the leader in this regard—there are few opportunities to bring researchers in languages in contact with each other and, most importantly for this argument, with researchers in other disciplines. This situation contrasts sharply with that of the United States, where the Modern Language Association (MLA) encompasses literary studies and languages, including less commonly taught languages. The Australasian Universities Modern Language Association, now known as the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association (AULLA), is a smaller organization that does not have the same status as the MLA. It is therefore difficult to disseminate our work to our Anglophone colleagues and this situation is often compounded by the fact that our research can be published in languages other than English. While we frequently borrow from theoretical texts used in English and Anglophone literatures, our colleagues in those departments often borrow less frequently from texts published in other languages. Aside from texts by major theorists who are widely translated, such as Roland Barthes or Michel Foucault, theoretical frameworks used by scholars of literary studies are predominantly created in English. Moreover, since they may not be familiar with our work, colleagues in other departments may be unconvinced by the robustness of the theoretical and methodological frameworks we employ. Such a position can result in ignorance about our scholarship and cast doubt upon our suitability to supervise in these areas.

The second obstacle to supervising in other departments is overcoming the resistance to collaboration that we sometimes face. Sometimes this resistance is intellectual, to which we allude above; colleagues may be unconvinced of the materials we study, the methodological frameworks we employ or the theoretical premises that underpin our work. Sometimes this resistance is economic. In the current climate of fiscal conservatism and heightened budgetary concerns across the sector, colleagues in the HASS disciplines are rightly eager to protect their areas. The numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in given programs are watched closely by university administrators, so colleagues are keen to demonstrate robust numbers in order to justify their areas' continued existence. The prospect of dividing postgraduate students between two areas, essentially splitting students between disciplines, may be greeted unfavourably. It has been our experience that colleagues in some of these areas frequently complain about how many postgraduate students they are supervising, but when we offer to shoulder some of the burden by contributing to the supervisory teams, resistance immediately arises. In many

universities, this resistance is related to the fact that languages do not reside in the same administrative units as, for example, English or History. This creates issues surrounding the transferral of funds, especially completion funds. Few universities have processes to handle such situations and many academics do not know how to broach them.

The strategies that we have developed to overcome this nexus of ignorance and resistance consist of time, patience and persistence. We have both volunteered to give presentations to colleagues in other departments during their departmental seminars. We have contributed to grant proposals made by colleagues in these departments. We have joined reading groups in these areas and suggested common readings that are relevant to all of us. We have sought the advice of those colleagues when preparing publications. A crucial strategy that we have used is to become slowly involved in teaching undergraduates from other departments. This has ranged from giving guest lectures or seminars to teaching whole undergraduate courses. This firstly shows to our colleagues that we have the expertise required and are prepared to go to the effort of contributing it to benefit students beyond our own traditional teaching areas. This also helps us to broaden our contact with undergraduate students and teach them about our research. One of us is fortunate to be positioned in a Faculty that has a “Bachelor of Arts Advanced” qualification, which is targeted at high-achieving students and which aims to create a pathway into postgraduate study. Making connections with undergraduate and Honours students who might pursue postgraduate study under our supervision can contribute to creating a pipeline of postgraduate students in languages.

A necessary element of this strategy is developing excellence in supervision and communicating this to students and colleagues. Both of us have worked hard to gain reputations as effective supervisors who support their students and co-supervisors. We have carried out research into postgraduate pedagogy and align our activities with best practices in the field, such as those outlined by the Australian Council of Graduate Research (formerly the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies). We ensure, for example, that we are readily available to students and maintain close contact with them. We organize supervisory teams carefully and agree upon the involvement and expectations of all members of the team at the outset. We give rigorous and dependable advice and feedback and we are knowledgeable of postgraduate policies in our institutions. In particular, we have volunteered for leadership positions in postgraduate education, such as Postgraduate Coordinator and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, which has enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the area and to gain visibility as highly effective supervisors. It has taken us several years to accomplish but, from the position of staff members in French departments whose research is in literary studies and whose postgraduate numbers have been low, we have now broadened our engagement to the extent that we have been primary or secondary supervisors in gender studies, literary studies, creative writing, linguistics, memory studies and film studies. Concurrently, the number of postgraduates in our own departments has begun to increase.

#### ***4.2 Strategy Two: Positioning Languages as Research Training***

Our second strategy also stems from forging alliances with other areas of our universities. In this case, the alliances that we have established are not with academic colleagues in our Schools/Faculties but with offices and professional staff in post-graduate administration. In line with the major change in the philosophy of post-graduate education outlined above, the ACOLA Report recommended that universities establish a program of careers and transferable skills training for post-graduate students. As Australian universities have all worked to develop their own programs in response to this obligation, resistance has emerged from some areas. The new requirements for postgraduate students have caused consternation among supervisors who are concerned that the rigour of the doctorate would be compromised by spreading students' activities too thinly and that the timeliness of their completions would be affected by the introduction of further obligations. At one of our universities, the training program is voluntary, and students can choose to opt in to the whole program or to attend individual sessions. At the other, the program is obligatory and, while students are accorded the flexibility to select training opportunities that are most relevant to them, they are obliged to complete 120 hours of training before submitting their doctoral thesis. While we are sympathetic to concerns raised by some colleagues, we are more concerned by our responsibility to the students whom we are training, very few of whom will find academic positions. We also view an opportunity to assert the value and importance of languages in forging a generation of highly skilled researchers who are fully equipped for twenty-first century professional endeavours.

The simplest way of positioning languages to take advantage of these new requirements is to arrange for postgraduate students to audit language courses. At one of our universities, in which students must complete 120 hours of transferable skills training, there is a rule that they can count no more than 30 hours to a single activity. We have therefore negotiated for students who audit a language course to obtain 30 hours of credit towards their transferable skills training. While we assume students will audit first-year language courses, all levels are available to them. Our language courses consist of more than 30 hours of language teaching over the course of a full semester, so the arrangement is that students must attend at least 30 hours of the course in order to obtain the credit towards their training. They are welcome to attend further hours if they wish. They do not complete assignments or take part in assessment activities so present no burden to the instructors; all the instructor is required to do is to sign a form stating the student has attended. Since these courses already exist and are being taught regularly, this necessitates no extracurricular innovation or development on our part. This initiative also creates an awareness of our course offerings across the University and brings us into contact with postgraduate students and supervisors in other disciplines. The process of organizing this arrangement was straightforward. We argued that languages are a focus of our current state government's education policy and that language courses comprise both knowledge (of cultures and of linguistic structures)



and skills (of communication and intercultural competence) and, as such, can appropriately be termed “transferable skills”. This was readily accepted.

Our next initiative involves introducing a new type of language course into the postgraduate arena. This is a work in progress that we hope to bring to fruition in the coming months. We completed our own doctoral training in the United States, where postgraduates in HASS disciplines undertake a longer program, in which they are obliged to complete 2–3 years of coursework and pass three or more sets of examinations before embarking upon the thesis. In many universities, one of the core requirements of their 2–3 years of preliminary training across HASS disciplines is to prove their reading knowledge of a language. The philosophy behind this is that not all knowledge is produced in English, so students need to be able to read in at least one other language in order to be rigorous scholars. Such courses have existed in Australia; the Horwood Language Centre at the University of Melbourne, for example, used to offer language training for students and academics, but now focuses on English for international students. As advanced doctoral students, we taught the course entitled “French for Reading Knowledge” to students in other areas, most commonly Comparative Literature, Philosophy, African Studies, Music and Art History. Due to the prevalence of these courses in the US, there are several textbooks available specifically for building reading skills. Our course concentrated on recognizing structures, building a subject-specific vocabulary, using cognates to derive meaning, and avoiding misunderstanding through false cognates. We have been asked to consider the possibility of offering such a course by one of our universities in Australia and are currently exploring this opportunity. The course would count towards the required hours of transferable skills training. This initiative would highlight that knowledge of a language is a valuable skill for contemporary researchers and would position language departments as important providers of research training modules.

Finally, language departments are ideally positioned to assist with forging and building on international partnerships in postgraduate education. Australian universities are currently very eager to internationalize their curricula and to establish closer links with overseas institutions. Again, this presents an opportunity to language departments. Many of our universities have existing collaborations with overseas partners through study abroad offices. In addition to these agreements, many of us have our own partnerships through our research activities. The simplest of these is perhaps the French system of the *cotutelle*, in which a student enrolls in a French university and an overseas university simultaneously, is supervised by a supervisor in both institutions and obtains a PhD from both. While we have found some universities to be unwilling to negotiate on the different requirements between our institutions, other universities have readily accepted to collaborate. The advent of new approaches to doctoral study such as the Industry PhD looks set to increase opportunities in this regard. Such international collaborations may not increase the number of postgraduate students in language programs but they will help to assert the importance of languages to research training and position language teachers as participants in the training program. Overall, while the three initiatives that we have outlined in this section—enabling students to audit language courses, offering reading courses to students and forging overseas collaborations—do not increase the

number of postgraduate students in languages, they place languages as important and relevant to postgraduate education in the global economy. The new philosophy of postgraduate education, which aims to produce independent researchers—the doctor rather than the doctorate—presents an opportunity for language departments to position themselves as important contributors to the broader notion of “research training”.

### **4.3 Strategy Three: Repositioning Modern Languages Research**

Following the first section in which we explored strategic partnerships with other academic areas and the second section in which we discussed ways to insert languages into the new requirements for research training, this section examines how we can reposition our own research to increase our involvement in postgraduate education—in order potentially both to increase our numbers of postgraduate students and to raise universities’ understanding of the relevance of languages to postgraduate education. As we discussed in the first section, colleagues in other academic departments, even those closely aligned with our disciplines, frequently have little understanding of our research. What we suggest here is not that we change our research in any way: neither its object of study, nor the theories or methodologies we employ. The current emphasis in Australia upon research income as the major factor determining the quality of research is deeply disturbing to us and we are concerned about the impact of this upon research in the humanities in particular. What we are suggesting is therefore not a radical alteration in our research but a change in how we communicate it.

Our thinking on this topic is based upon a recent development in the United Kingdom that has far-reaching implications for our research and the research of our postgraduate students. The Arts and Humanities Research Council, the UK equivalent of the Australian Research Council, funded a major initiative entitled “Translating Cultures” in 2012. This is a “theme” rather than a “project”; the Translating Cultures *theme* has an advisory board that awards research funding and fellowships competitively to projects that meet its criteria. Led by James Barrow Professor Charles Forsdick at the University of Liverpool, the Translating Cultures theme is justified thus:

In a world seen to be increasingly characterized by transnational and globalized connections, the need for understanding and communication within, between, and across diverse cultures is stronger than ever. The Translating Cultures theme addresses this need by studying the role of translation, understood in its broadest sense, in the transmission, interpretation, transformation and sharing of languages, values, beliefs, histories and narratives (Arts and Humanities Research Council 2012).

This initiative clearly positions languages as useful to global concerns and applicable to a variety of social contexts. The notion of translation is used in two ways: both literally, in the sense of carrying out research in the field of translation studies,

and metaphorically, in the sense of researching the ways in which cultures, ideas and information are translated to other audiences. By focusing on translation as the pivotal concept, this initiative states that our work is important and relevant. Importantly, the research they fund belongs to traditional disciplines, such as literary studies, film, media and linguistics. In other words, their research—into topics such as mobility in Italian cultures, linguistic transformation in urban areas and representations of refugee identity—corresponds to research we have always carried out in language departments. By drawing the threads of our research together, emphasizing its global and transnational aspects and focusing on its applicability to social concerns, this initiative presents the research that we do very differently. Given that Australia is currently forging its own Engagement and Impact agenda, in which universities are obliged to demonstrate the relevance of their research to audiences beyond academia, this kind of initiative could be an important contribution to the research in languages. We believe that this could in particular galvanize our postgraduate research. As discussed above, Australia is currently in the process of reassessing its postgraduate education and creating new skills-based components, of refashioning its relevance to contemporary social issues and debates in the public domain through Engagement and Impact, and of developing a suite of professionally focused postgraduate programs (such as the Industry PhD, the Creative Practice PhD, etc.). At this juncture, it is opportune for language departments to communicate to potential students the relevance of their research and its links with other academic and non-academic fields. This could position languages as a particularly innovative areas of research in which postgraduate students will be rigorously trained and will acquire skills and knowledge that are applicable to many more fields than research carried out in many academic areas, and in topics of impact, of social concern and of global debate.

## 5 Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has thus advanced three areas in which language departments can work strategically to increase their role in postgraduate education. By aligning ourselves with colleagues in other departments who carry out research in the same field—literary studies, gender studies, media studies, for example—we can impact upon postgraduate supervision and perhaps increase the number of students in language departments. By collaborating with administrative offices to position languages as a highly valuable element of transferable skills training, we can assert the importance of languages to postgraduate education. By communicating the relevance and impact of our research, we can create postgraduate projects that are applicable to concerns within academe and beyond it. There is, of course, an ethical question over whether we should increase the number of postgraduate students in our disciplines. While research expertise in languages and cultures is highly valuable, there are realities to consider when encouraging postgraduate study. The low number of academic positions and the casualization of our profession are foremost in this regard.

While a doctorate in HASS disciplines can lead to a variety of careers, as the new programs in transferable skills training should help to demonstrate, it is relatively new, at least in Australia, to use doctoral training as a pathway to a career outside academe. Nevertheless, as we have argued throughout this chapter, we believe that language departments can use the changing shape of postgraduate education to our advantage. A thread that runs throughout this chapter is a strategic resistance to disciplinarity. Disciplines bring researchers together for an array of reasons, which cover intellectual, methodological, epistemological and regulatory concerns. While disciplinary boundaries offer certain advantages, they may also hamper research and research training. What we ultimately suggest in this chapter is that research in languages is necessarily transdisciplinary and that this is a very strong argument in favour of postgraduate study in our field. Language departments are uniquely positioned to contribute to skills training, to knowledge acquisition and to impactful research and could therefore play a significant role in the innovation of research training in contemporary Australia.

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# Three Provocations About Retention and Attrition and Their Policy Implications



**Matt Absalom**

**Abstract** One of the recurring debates in relation to languages and cultures education in Australia concerns the issue of retention and attrition. The clarion call seems to have been continuous for the last 30 years or so. I want to offer three provocations around this issue:

1. We think it's our fault but maybe it isn't—research shows us that at each point of transition students will choose to change languages, regardless of their experience. A concomitant issue is that at university level some students have already decided how much of a language they are prepared to study (often due to administrative/structural constraints of their degree or for other personal reasons—cf. the phenomenon of the language tourist).
2. The curriculum wars—my recent experience of working with the Australian Curriculum: Languages has highlighted a fundamental philosophical divergence between how curriculum is conceptualized in schools education and at tertiary level. My question is whether this difference (which I will outline) is leading to attrition (or retention).
3. Gender and identity—while languages classes at all levels of schooling are typically dominated by females, and females make up a larger proportion of the language teaching corps in schools, at university level things can be somewhat different. I would suggest that there are some intriguing questions waiting to be teased out in relation to how students identify with staff in terms of gender and identity at tertiary level and whether this has an impact on retention (or attrition).

For each of these provocations, I will present some initial research and discussion.

**Keywords** Languages and cultures education · Attrition · Retention · Curriculum · Gender · Identity

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## 1 Introduction

A cursory survey of discussion about languages programs in education over the last 30 or so years would reveal a situation of constant crisis in the English-speaking world. In 1980, Paul Simon's book *The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis* tried to map this out, looking at 12 different issues:

1. the clash between American monolingualism/monoculturalism and cultural and linguistic pluralism;
2. shifts in world economics which bring new markets and the need for language capacity;
3. issues of national security;
4. language and culture and suspicion of "the other";
5. the state of language instruction in schools;
6. the variation in entry requirements and language programs at tertiary level;
7. the quality of language teaching at all levels;
8. different models of language teaching and learning;
9. examples of leadership in the language teaching field;
10. trends in the job market involving languages;
11. federal support for languages education;
12. ways to support languages in the wider community.

This catalogue could have been published yesterday, as the issues canvassed remain essentially identical to those which are presented in relation to problems in retention today. In 2007, the Group of Eight published its *Languages in Crisis—A Rescue Plan for Australia* which laid the groundwork for a national coordinated approach to stemming the bleeding. The plan notes that "[i]n 1997 there were 66 languages offered at Australian universities. Ten years later, just 29 survive" (Group of Eight 2007, p. 4). This is a loss of over 50% of programs in a short span of time. In 2018, I celebrated 20 years working in university language programs and I have noticed that alongside this crisis discourse there is another narrative from those who work in languages at university which typically constructs us—or, rather, our programs, subjects, course offerings, etc.—as the ones chiefly responsible for attrition. In this speculative paper, I want to offer three provocations which shift the focus away from this circular and ineffectual blame game towards a more sophisticated, layered idea of what other factors might drive attrition and retention. These provocations are chiefly directed at the profession itself in (what I hope is) a rousing call to appraise our programs and performance critically instead of simply falling back on hackneyed, routinely trotted out scenarios. It is also an invitation to consider how languages education exists across the years of schooling and a suggestion that at university level we need to perhaps revisit this with a view to collaborative efforts that lead to stronger outcomes.

## 2 We Think It's Our Fault But Maybe It Isn't

One thing that we know for sure, and which is consistently borne out in studies of all types, is that “all languages are enrolment shedders” (Lo Bianco 2009, p. 50). Essentially, at each juncture point in education—between primary and secondary, between secondary and tertiary, and, particularly, at the compulsory/non-compulsory transition point—rates of attrition are higher. Some studies have emphasized a constellation of factors affecting retention, factors which revolve around issues such as teacher and teaching quality, aspects of motivation, etc. Notably, there is crucially a strong realization that structural factors (rather than judgments of quality) have an equal, if not greater, effect on retention. A number of years ago, in a small study of university students' experiences of (dis)continuation of languages during their secondary education, I reported that one of the “predominant negative factors students described was related to the inflexibility of school structures to accommodate their needs or desires in relation to languages” (Absalom 2011, p. 19). The reverse case is also true that when structural innovation is accommodated this can have a positive effect on retention and up-take of languages. Brown and Caruso provide “substantial evidence that levels of language are in fact linked to hitherto overlooked issues of access and degree structure”, noting that “language enrolments are directly related to degree structure and flexibility, rather than to other factors” (Brown and Caruso 2016, p. 454). With this in mind, I designed a small questionnaire to explore students' intentions in relation to continuation in Italian after a mid-year intensive subject in 2017, the results of which I will now discuss.

### 2.1 *To Continue or Not to Continue? That Is the Question*

In the mid-year break in 2017, approximately 110 students initially enrolled in a 3-week intensive version of Italian 1, with a final number of around 90 students. This version of the semester-long subject provides students with the same access to continuation of Italian in Semester 2 should they wish to go on with their Italian studies. Using SurveyMonkey,<sup>1</sup> I constructed a questionnaire with 16 questions which canvassed a range of issues around continuation of Italian. 61 students responded to the questionnaire which is a response rate of two-thirds. The responses were overwhelmingly clear. Notably, a majority of students were either unsure or definite about continuation (Fig. 1).

If we compare responses to the question “Why are you doing Italian 1 (Mid-Year Intensive), 2017?” and “If you aren't sure about continuing with Italian or definitely not continuing with Italian, please explain why not”, students' reasons for this are transparent (Figs. 2 and 3). The overwhelming reason expressed by students for

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<sup>1</sup>Available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com>

Q14 At this stage, are you considering enrolling in Italian 2?

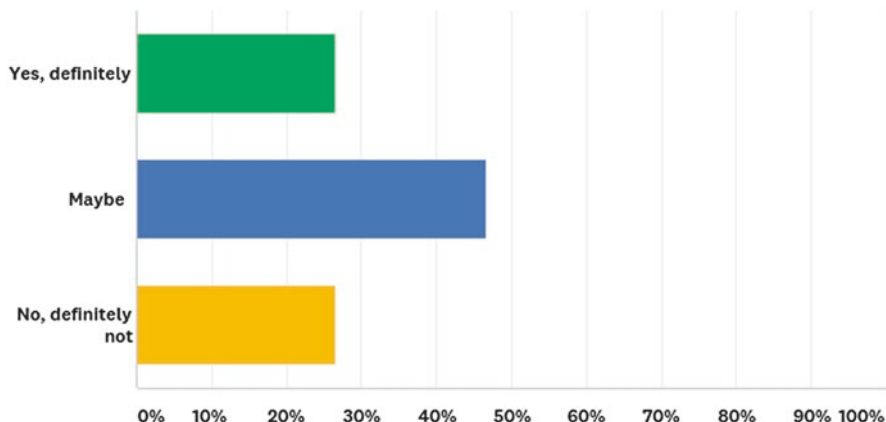


Fig. 1 Continuation or not?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I love learning languages	55.00%
I had a spot to fill in my study plan and an intensive is perfect for this	48.33%
I like the idea of getting a whole semester of credit in 3 weeks	43.33%
I've always wanted to learn Italian	41.67%
I didn't like my other breadth subjects and wanted to try something different	23.33%
Italian is a language which I need for my studies/work	13.33%
My background is Italian	8.33%
None of the above	1.67%

Fig. 2 Responses to “Why are you doing Italian 1 (Mid-Year Intensive), 2017?”

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I can't fit Italian 2 in my study plan	60.47%
I only ever wanted to do Italian 1	4.65%
I'm not sure that I'm going to do well in Italian 1	13.95%
I'm not enjoying Italian 1	0.00%
I want to try different breadth options	11.63%
Other (please specify)	Responses 9.30%

Fig. 3 Responses to “If you aren’t sure about continuing with Italian or definitely not continuing with Italian, please explain why not”



doing the Italian intensive was their love of languages but almost 50% of respondents also indicated a structural motivation for their choice.

The decisive reason for discontinuation was thus structural—60% of those who were not continuing attributed this to the impossibility of fitting Italian 2 into their study plan. Around 5% indicate that they had already decided to only complete one semester of Italian. The University's curriculum model (another structural factor) allows for students from other faculties to select languages as a breadth subject. However, the possibility of doing a range of breadth subjects was behind the decision of almost 12% of respondents to choose something different from Italian. Notable, as well as very satisfying, is the constation that not one student indicated that dissatisfaction with the subject was the motivation for discontinuation.

My opening salvo was that those of us who work in languages and cultures in universities often attribute attrition to something we are getting wrong, which creates feelings of dissatisfaction in students who then decide to drop languages. I would like to suggest that this is an extension of what Claire Kramsch has described as imposture in relation to how language learners construct themselves.

The term imposture presupposes a fixed norm of legitimacy against which individuals measure themselves or are measured by others—the sanction of the public or an internalized idealized norm repeatedly imposed by the community, the market, the publishing industry, or the media. (Kramsch 2012, p. 489)

The type of norm that we (un)consciously measure ourselves against is some notion that students progress through other subjects from the beginning to the end of their degrees with no glitches and with regular progression. This is heightened by the fact that there are rarely conversations around attrition in other subject areas. While there are discussions of issues such as the lack of girls doing science, the underpinning discourse is not one of crisis—this could be because the implication is that there are many boys doing science so it is not a question of numbers but of gender balance. My provocation is for us (and those who have direct impacts on university language programs) to see attrition, not as an emotional or identity question, but as the result of structural inadequacies in our system (ranging from timetabling, to degree structure, to flexibility of offerings, etc.) and that these are the factors we need to focus on in order to facilitate better retention.

### 3 The Curriculum Wars

Perhaps the bellicose metaphor is a little strong but what I want to represent with this second provocation is that there is a strong disjunction in the conception of curriculum in the passage from secondary to tertiary languages study in Australia. In fact, not unlike the issue of shedding of enrolments which we can observe in the passage of students between different levels of schooling, there are some deep philosophical and practical distinctions in the teaching and learning of languages. This is evident between the end of primary school and the beginning of secondary school,

between the end of Year 10 and the beginning of Year 11 (the beginning of the various senior secondary certificates of education around the country), and then between the end of school and university. Kathryn Hill (2010) outlines what happens in relation to classroom-based assessment in the shift between primary and secondary languages education, which provides good insight into the differentiated approaches to curriculum. She notes that one of the clearest indications of this difference is seen in the way competence is conceptualized: “[s]pecifically, competence in the Year 7 classroom appeared to entail *mastery* of a relatively narrow range of linguistic input compared to Year 6 where there appeared to be a greater focus on exposing students to rich cultural and linguistic input (without necessarily requiring mastery of it)” (Hill 2010, p. 12, original emphasis). I would suggest that a similar curricular clash occurs between Year 10 and Year 11 where students go from a more wide-ranging program to a narrower focus often based on preparing students for the final Year 12 exams (at least, in Victoria). This is then the opposite when students move from Year 12 to university. We can see this shift in focus by comparing some statements about language programs from curriculum documents (Table 1).

I am using these curriculum documents as emblematic of the differences at these levels of education. While it is clearly the case that the “Australian Curriculum: Languages” has not experienced uniform acceptance or implementation around the country, I believe it represents well a way of thinking and talking about languages education which contrasts with previous ways of thinking and talking about languages education. The most obvious difference between school language programs and university level programs is the emphasis on working with language through texts—if these lists are like the ingredients on a food packet, we can presume that those with the highest concentration come first in the list. In the University of Melbourne subject description there is a very obvious focus on equipping students to navigate the languages world through text and associated activities such as research. While the descriptions of school languages programs emphasize interaction and communication, the presence of this is balanced in the university subject description by references to “literary, linguistic and cultural aspects of Italian-speaking communities”. This subtle allusion to literature is telling as it reveals the university’s continuing focus on aspects of language learning which have a downgraded place in much school-based language teaching and learning.

Another aspect worth considering is the approach to curriculum/subject planning. In the context of school education, language programs at secondary level must respond to curriculum documents which aim at providing a consistency regardless of school context. University programs, I would suggest, on the other hand, are much less constrained and decisions about curriculum can often reside with single individuals. While there are attempts to manage this through activities like curriculum reforms, reviews of degree structure, alignment of program and degree learning objectives, etc., I propose that because many languages staff do not come from an explicit teaching and learning background, but are rather disciplinary experts, the approach to curriculum design and its implications can be idiosyncratic. This is not necessarily a bad thing as it allows for research-based teaching and provides room for university teachers to teach to their passion, which is potentially more inspiring

**Table 1** Comparing curriculum documents

<b>Australian Curriculum: Languages</b>
The Australian Curriculum: Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure students:
Communicate in the target language
Understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
Understand themselves as communicators
These three aims are interrelated and provide the basis for the two organising strands: Communicating and understanding. The three aims are common to all languages. ( <a href="https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/aims/">https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/aims/</a> )
In the Australian curriculum, general capabilities encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will enable students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century.
There are seven general capabilities:
Literacy
Numeracy
Information and communication technology (ICT) capability
Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding
( <a href="https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/general-capabilities/?searchTerm=general+capabilities#dimension-content">https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/general-capabilities/?searchTerm=general+capabilities#dimension-content</a> )
The Australian Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students by delivering a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum that builds on the educational goals of the Melbourne Declaration. The Melbourne Declaration identified three key areas that need to be addressed for the benefit of individuals and Australia as a whole. In the Australian Curriculum, these have become priorities that give students the tools and language to engage with and better understand their world at a range of levels. The priorities provide national, regional and global dimensions which will enrich the curriculum through development of considered and focused content that fits naturally within learning areas. They enable the delivery of learning area content at the same time as developing knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia and/or Sustainability. Incorporation of the priorities will encourage conversations between students, teachers and the wider community.
( <a href="https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/?searchTerm=Cross-curriculum+priorities#dimension-content">https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/?searchTerm=Cross-curriculum+priorities#dimension-content</a> )
<b>VCE Italian</b>
This study enables students to:
Communicate with others in Italian in interpersonal, interpretive and presentational contexts
Understand the relationship between language and culture
Compare cultures and languages and enhance intercultural awareness
Understand and appreciate the cultural contexts in which Italian is spoken
Learn about language as a system and themselves as language learners
Make connections between different languages, knowledge and ways of thinking

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Become part of multilingual communities by applying language learning to social and leisure activities, life-long learning and the world of work.
(VCAA, 6)
<b>First-year Italian</b>
<i>Intended learning outcomes</i>
On successful completion of this subject, students should:
Be able to interpret and analyse a variety of texts and genres, both written and spoken, of a moderate level of complexity;
Be able to use appropriate linguistic structures and lexical resources, including specialised terminology relating to specific literary, linguistic and cultural aspects of Italian-speaking communities, to communicate in Italian both in writing and speaking;
Have gained an introduction to some aspects of the core areas of Italian studies, with specific focus on each through dedicated learning activities;
Be able to apply research methods appropriately to task;
Be able to demonstrate an appreciation of the diversity of Italian language and culture;
Be able to actively compare and contrast linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between Italian language and culture and other languages and cultures;
Through a range of tasks and class experiences, be able to apply a variety of learning techniques to further consolidate knowledge, understanding and ability in relation to Italian language and culture;
Have consolidated and extended linguistic repertoire and vocabulary.
<i>Generic skills</i>
At the completion of this subject, students should:
Have developed an ability to communicate knowledge intelligibly and economically both in writing and orally through assessment (including technology-mediated activities), tutorial and online discussion and class presentations;
Have developed confidence in self-expression through participation in the subject at different levels and assessable presentations;
Have developed a range of IT literacy skills through online multimedia activities;
Have developed a team spirit and collaborative approach to learning through group work;
Be able to demonstrate time management and planning skills through completion of assessment and other required in-class activities;
Have honed interactional and intercultural communication skills;
Have learnt basic research skills and the use of a variety of reference materials.
<a href="https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/ital10006">https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/ital10006</a>

than delivering a program devoid of personal investment and connection. Table 2 is an attempt to summarize the differences between approaches to curriculum in secondary school and university.

As Hill (2010) notes, there is a clear distinction between the types of assessment tasks and the criteria used to evaluate these between Year 6 and Year 7 (i.e., between primary and secondary education). A similar difference would be found between the expectations and tasks in Year 12 and those in university language programs. The other important shift is away from “hand-holding” or spoon-feeding approaches to teaching and learning in the final years of school to a style which requires much

**Table 2** Comparing secondary and tertiary curriculum processes

Secondary	Tertiary
Rapid and regular change	A slow-moving beast
Increasingly removed from conventional content-led curriculum	Continues to remain heavily content driven
Process or praxis-based models of curriculum	Often, text based with certain <i>traditional</i> notions prevailing (such as, the importance of literature and of particular canonical works)
Much stronger focus on learner-centredness or learner-driven curriculum	Beginning to incorporate some of the aspects of school approaches but modified for university context

more self-direction and taking of individual responsibility for students. Ramma et al. (2015), discussing a project which looked at science and technology across secondary and tertiary education, note that students

highlighted that the first year was truly challenging and shocking as they were not prepared to face such a drastic change. The interview also revealed that the transition was not as smooth as they would have expected. They mentioned that there is a world of difference between secondary and tertiary but admitted that if they had developed a critical mind during their secondary education, the transition would have been easier. They were expected to display a number of skills, such as creativity, independence or even innovation to be able to construct knowledge at tertiary level, and since they had not developed same at secondary level, it was a severe handicap to learn higher order concepts as a result (p. 12).

Taken together, all these divergences can create feelings of disorientation for students who often express this as a type of amorphous “big leap” between their final years of language study at school and their beginnings at university. My second provocation, therefore, is that this “curriculum war” could be responsible for the drop in numbers that we find in languages.

## 4 Gender and Identity

Anyone who works in languages after the compulsory years of education knows that both the student cohort and teaching corps are dominated by females. In the English speaking world there is a recent history of characterizing capacity in additional languages as an emasculating quality. Orwell (1941), for instance, in his essay “England Your England” famously wrote that “[n]early every Englishman of working-class origin considers it effeminate to pronounce a foreign word correctly” (III, para. 4). A large body of literature exists on gender effects in education which typically tends to focus on how male and female students respond. My provocation is slightly different and asks whether the gender identity of teaching staff has an effect on retention. It stems from the aforementioned constation of female predominance but also on my informal observation that many males involved in language teaching demonstrate a variety of masculinities. Of note, in academia there is

a higher proportion of gay and lesbian staff. Tilcsik, Anteby and Knight reveal that “[s]ystematic evidence from large-scale datasets [...] [shows] that both gay men and lesbians often work in gender-balanced occupations or occupations in which they are a gender minority” (2015, p. 450) and that “[g]ay men are more likely to be in female-majority occupations than are heterosexual men” (p. 446). This last statement squares well with my own casual observations. At my own institution in 2017, a majority of male tutors in Spanish were gay. In Italian studies, a similar situation was found. Notably, I would suggest that each language has a different type of gender ecology with some languages having a more stereotypically binary gender image. My question is whether there are fewer male students in certain languages because there are fewer males in teaching with whom they can identify. Or, conversely, do males continue in some languages due to the types of male teachers that they encounter? Furthermore, do languages attract LGBTQI individuals, particularly those identifying as male, because they identify more easily with a predominantly female workforce, as Tilcsik, Anteby and Knight suggest may be the case (2015)?

In order to explore these questions, I developed an initial research project with Kalissa Alexeyeff,<sup>2</sup> using a small anonymous questionnaire instrument of 23 questions built using SurveyMonkey which was sent to a range of first-year students at the University of Melbourne. The response rate was low with only 26 respondents, but certain comments did bring to light some useful information. In Table 3 I present some answers of interest.

While there is only a handful of comments which seem to support my notion that gender identity of teaching staff may affect students’ responses to language study at university, I feel that this indicates that there is potentially more beneath the surface. The whole issue of gender representation has not really been addressed in relation to languages study in educational contexts. For instance, many university-level textbooks present a very stereotypical binary representation of sexuality which would clearly be at odds with the reality of the classroom. One respondent in response to a question about gender-related issues during school languages programs stated: “I was disapproving of how heteronormative a ‘speed dating’ activity (intended for practising conversation skills) in my Italian class was”. This small observation speaks volumes about the uncritical way gender and stereotyped representations of grammar are tacitly promoted in languages education. This third provocation is an invitation to consider more carefully questions of gender at a number of levels in its possible relationship to retention and attrition.

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<sup>2</sup>Ethics ID: 1750450 at the University of Melbourne.

**Table 3** Selected responses**Q12 Have you encountered a wider range of gender identities in language students compared to other subjects? Please comment**

#15 Yes. I have encountered a number of trans students in my language classes compared to my core science classes where I am not aware of any non-binary gender students.

#16 Probably a more narrow range, having studied romance languages. French is definitely a lot more female dominated and the guys who do keep taking it have more feminine/metrosexual energies. In Spanish classes there was still a majority of girls but not as large, and there were plenty of guys taking it who would fit into a more “blokey” traditional man stereotype. In both languages there was a much more even gender split in lower level classes but a lot of the guys had dropped off by the end.

**Q14 Do you think the gender identity of teaching staff affects/has affected your motivation to continue studying languages? If so, how? Could you provide examples?**

#3 Yes, it has affected my motivation of studying in a positive way, I feel in a more acceptable environment and I like it!

**Q23 Do you have any further comments?**

#9 This seems like a really interesting study! It would be good to find a way to get more males to keep studying languages because you really notice the disparity once you get to higher level classes, but it’s such a rich and rewarding area.

#10 Upon reflection, I feel that the majority of teachers and students involved in language study are women. Also, studying certain languages in which I have to choose my own pronouns to use can be daunting, due to not wanting to stick out like a sore thumb (since my appearance does not necessarily match my gender identity).

## 5 Conclusion

In this speculative paper, I have put forward three provocations which attempt to reconfigure the typical discussions of attrition and retention away from the stale and, arguably, self-pitying blame game that takes up too much of our time and energy. The first provocation invites us to “take a chill pill” (as Kath from *Kath and Kim* would say)<sup>3</sup> since many students’ reasons for discontinuing their study of languages have nothing to do with us and are out of our control. The second provocation implies the need for either better conversations between university and school colleagues to address the jolting transition from school to university or requires those of us involved in teaching and learning languages at universities to concentrate more systematically on helping students to transition more smoothly. The third provocation asks us to consider issues around gender and the impact that this little considered aspect might have on retention and attrition. As languages educators in universities, this might seem like another set of items to add to our to do list, but I would suggest that there is merit in considering these notions. The first provocation is important for the mental wellbeing of staff and programs—if we understand that some drivers of attrition are outside our control, we can both advocate more positively, but also reduce the weight of accusations that we are not doing enough to maintain enrolments. The second provocation which revolves around notions of

<sup>3</sup>A popular television comedy series in Australia (2002–2007).

collaboration is something which could usefully be championed by the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU), in concert with other national peak representative bodies like the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLTA) or individual teachers' associations, as well as departments of education around the country. The final provocation sets out an innovative platform of research which I will start to pursue in the coming years and has the potential to revolutionize the way we perceive languages education in relation to identity.

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## Part V

# Languages in the Workspace

The value added to any core degree by studying a language has become much better understood within the Australian university system. And yet language study as an end in itself remains undervalued, despite its capacity to equip students with one of the key graduate attributes of many Australian universities, namely intercultural competency. One avenue being explored to develop the uptake of language study is the introduction of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) into tertiary language programs. By promoting the skills developed by language learning, such as expertise in intercultural communication and the ability to perform in socially and culturally diverse contexts, language scholars are seeking not only to prepare students for opportunities in the global workplace but also to heighten the awareness of the benefits of language study within the university and the community.

Anderson, Are and Benbow discuss two programs based on work-integrated language learning that have been developed in Spanish and German at the University of Melbourne. Through contacts established with local communities and cultural institutions, these two programs enable undergraduate students either to take language placements, or to engage in “simulated, practice-based learning”, both of which heighten their awareness of, and responsiveness to, cultural difference. While advanced language students are usually seen as ideally placed to undertake WIL in linguistically and culturally diverse environments, the authors also demonstrate the benefits of including beginners and intermediate-level students in these programs and making intercultural competence a target from the very beginning of language study.

At Flinders University in South Australia, a language placement program—*Language in Action*—provides opportunities for advanced-level language students across five languages to study their chosen language in a local community setting. Advanced-level language students are seen to be well placed in this context to use their skills as autonomous learners and to show resilience in the face of new linguistic and cultural challenges. Indeed, for Bouvet, Diaz, Cosmini, Palaktsoglou, Vanzo and von der Borch, the program’s greatest benefits derive as much from the linguistic and social aspects of the work experience that it offers students as from the work experience per se. Like Anderson, Are and Benbow, they also see their WIL

programs as likely to encourage students to undertake further language study and continue to maintain and develop cultural connectivity.

The third chapter by Briguglio and Porta outlines a course which they developed and taught within the Business School at Curtin University. This course was delivered as an elective, combining elements of business, culture and language, in this case Italian. Although the preferred model for such a course would have included in-country study, the authors were nonetheless pleased to note that some students indeed took up this option at a later stage, but also that student feedback to the course was entirely positive. They felt that they had achieved their key objective of instilling an intercultural awareness in their students that would better prepare them for working in a global business environment.

In different ways, but through similar learning outcomes in terms of intercultural competence, the three chapters highlight the importance of learning language in context and demonstrate the multifarious benefits to be gained in linking language study either with business study, or with language-rich placements undertaken in local community and industry workplaces.

# Languages at Work: Defining the Place of Work-Integrated Learning in Language Studies



Lara Anderson, Kay Are, and Heather Merle Benbow

**Abstract** This chapter makes an argument for the place of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in tertiary language studies, with specific reference to the Spanish and German programs at the University of Melbourne. Incorporating WIL into our curricula has enabled us to connect students with local communities and cultural institutions, as well as provide them with work-relevant skills, in particular intercultural competence. Providing students with opportunities to develop work-relevant skills has seen us focus our energies not just on the more advanced-level language subjects where students are clearly suited to placements and internships, but also on beginner- and intermediate-level language subjects. An advantage of this whole-of-curriculum approach is that students understand the contemporary relevance of language study from the outset of their degree. Language study is often seen as something that adds value to another core degree and, as we incorporate WIL into our curriculum, it is our hope that we are able to articulate more clearly the value of language study to our diverse cohort of students.

**Keywords** Work-integrated learning · Intercultural competence · Work-relevant skills · Tertiary language studies · Spanish studies · German studies

## 1 Introduction

This chapter explores the inclusion of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) elements in undergraduate language studies, reflecting on the successes and challenges met in two language curricula (Spanish and German) at the University of Melbourne. Undergraduate language programs at the University of Melbourne have experienced

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strong growth since the introduction of the “Melbourne Model”, which allows Bachelor students to take “breadth” subjects outside the faculty in which they are studying. Moreover, the Diploma in Languages, a concurrent diploma that can be taken in conjunction with any Bachelor degree, has been very popular. This has resulted in large student numbers at the ab initio and intermediate language levels, a large proportion of whom are studying a degree other than the Bachelor of Arts. At the same time, retention of students through to the major, and on to Honours and postgraduate study in languages, has been relatively weak. Thus, the discipline of Languages at Melbourne faces large groups of students from diverse disciplinary and learning backgrounds, whose undergraduate language study will remain at or below B1 level of the European framework. A challenge for our programs is to offer a meaningful experience of language learning to all students regardless of their ultimate language proficiency.

We argue that including WIL elements in language study can play an important part in ensuring that students’ experience of language learning has the greatest possible utility and benefit, regardless of their proficiency level. An emphasis on work-relevant skills has given us the opportunity to articulate what it is about language study in particular that provides students with valuable workplace skills. In addition to the obvious skills in the target language, intercultural competence (IC) is an important concept in our work with students from the outset of their language study. Research into the value of IC for employability indicates that while IC tends to be seen as a benefit, “courses that focus on intercultural communication are often regarded as academically weak” (Busch 2009, p. 432). The current view of intercultural competence as ideally something that enhances students’ employability—while not being the central focus of their studies—sits well with our aim of developing IC alongside language skills. There are broader benefits to the inclusion of WIL elements in language study as well: existing scholarship points to greater retention rates and lower levels of anxiety when students can perceive the relevance of their tertiary studies to the workplace landscape into which they will emerge on graduation (Fostering student wellbeing 2016).

Our WIL initiatives prioritize IC, a skill set highly valued in the global professional context. Furthermore, the WIL activities we devised to sponsor IC were guided by the principles of what is known as “connectedness learning”, a holistic pedagogy that supports students to draw on personal interests in order to develop intrinsic motivation to learn, leading to outcomes that are not only more deeply learned but also more meaningful to lived experience (Bridgstock and Tippett 2019). Below, we give an account of the outcomes of a cross-disciplinary collaboration that brought Spanish, German and Curriculum Design into conversation to develop and evaluate WIL for Languages. Our account canvasses issues of industry partnership, collaborative curriculum design, simulated practice-based learning, student wellbeing and teaching-research synergies.

## 2 Work-Integrated Learning in Languages: Making a Case

We use WIL in this article as an umbrella term to describe learning activities of two kinds: those that form “an intentional aspect of a university curriculum whereby the learning is *situated* within the act of working” (Cooper et al. 2010, p. 1) and, equally, non-placement forms of WIL such as industry-connected projects, problem-based learning activities, simulated workplace environments and assessment devices that simulate workplace expectations and procedures (Kaider et al. 2017, pp. 154–155). In other words, activities that place students outside the university and within workplaces as well as university classroom activities that rehearse workplace skills. WIL has gained momentum as a post-secondary pedagogical approach over the past decade, partly as a response, in the Australian context, to a national policy and funding environment for which graduate employability and graduate outcomes have become key indicators of institutional excellence (Cooper et al. 2010; Tomlinson 2012; Kaider et al. 2017). This context is congruent with the post-secondary space internationally, the character and financing of which have evolved since the late twentieth century under the influence both of increased labour market uncertainty (Tomlinson 2012), and of a more enterprising, casualized and globally mobile work force for whom training institutions and labour markets alike can function as elements within a self-devised, flexible “career ecosystem” (Baruch 2015). Universities have responded to this economic climate in two ways. First, by formulating sets of desirable “graduate attributes”, the attainment of which might assure students’ work-readiness (Barrie 2006; Bridgstock 2016); and second, by explicitly teaching “employability skills”—such as interpersonal communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative, planning, self-management, learning capacity and digital literacy (Kaider et al. 2017)—as a means to cultivate the desirable attributes (Bridgstock 2016).

Some have questioned the value of fostering or even defining generic workplace skills (Barrie 2006; Bridgstock 2016); for one, Ruth Bridgstock (2016) is sceptical of the idea that these skills can ever truly be “generic”, taught as they are through discipline-specific critical lenses and methodologies (p. 340). As Bridgstock also notes, generic skills on their own will not translate readily into the workplaces of the future, already so emphatically underwritten by the quick-shifting nature of digital life (2016, p. 341). Rather, these skills must be accompanied by an effort to bring students to recognize the transferability of their disciplinary skills across workplaces, between industries and over time, as the nature of employment goes on changing into the future (Bridgstock 2016, p. 341; see also Oliver 2015). Imparting a sense of the relevance of one’s academic learning to a projected world of work evidentially supports student mental wellbeing, too—which is, in turn, demonstrably a significant concern among the undergraduate community. On, respectively, the Canadian and Australian cases, see McBeath et al. (2017) and Larcombe et al. (2016). The rise in levels of clinical distress among students at Australian universities is undoubtedly exacerbated—if not in many cases catalyzed—by the very labour market fragility outlined above (McBeath et al. 2017). This supports a case for adopting WIL measures that develop students’ awareness of the particular

work-ready skills they are obtaining as they study. This is because of the strong link evidenced between a student's mental health and the perception of the relevance of their university study to other life contexts, among which work is a major category (Larcombe et al. 2016; *Fostering student wellbeing* 2016; McBeath et al. 2017). Thus, as a pedagogy, WIL offers a salve equally to the intensified predicament around employability and the mental ill-health crisis that the emerging literature starkly documents (*Fostering student wellbeing* 2016). If disciplines can, first, identify the work-ready skills they might excel at imparting and, second, nominate the WIL activities most apt for building these skills, a sense of connection between disciplinary learning and work futures stands to benefit students—both in psychological and employability terms.

In this study, we bring this prospect to the discipline of Languages, and to this end identify intercultural competency as an attribute Languages are well placed to develop in students. We have chosen to focus on IC primarily because in many regions, including Canada (McRae and Ramji 2017), the UK and Australia (Jones and Killick 2013), the contemporary post-secondary student body is a microcosm that reflects the internationalizing effect of the economic climate outlined above (Jones and Killick 2013): in concert with international market mobility, the domestic student population is globally connected and heterogeneous culturally and nationally, while international student populations from linguistically diverse regions have increased in reaction to tightened state funding (Baruch 2015). In addition, if what Tomlinson describes as “the massification of the higher education system” has helped disintegrate the traditionally linear relationship between one's training and one's employment, it has also led to a diversification away from a middle-class, culturally homogeneous student community (2012, p. 25). The influence of this changing demographic is evident in the growing importance placed by tertiary institutions on “internationalising the curriculum” (Jones and Killick 2013; McRae and Ramji 2017). As universities look to expand their curricular connections to incorporate global knowledges, the importance of fostering students' language skills in aid of profiting from these connections becomes more salient.

Yet, language skills prepare students for fluid movement between global knowledge economies and labour markets only to the extent that these simultaneously impart IC. As Van Gyn et al. (2009, p. 25) observe, genuine curriculum internationalization challenges academics to

extend our actions far beyond concerns of course content to include pedagogies that promote cross-cultural understanding and facilitate the development of the knowledge, skills and values that will enable students, both domestic and international, to successfully engage with others in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world (quoted in Jones and Killick 2013, p. 168).

McRae and Ramji (2017) define IC as resting on successful training in cultural intelligence, a construct used to explain “how people vary in their ability both to cope with diversity and to function in cross-cultural settings” (p. 132). A high level of cultural intelligence will yield high IC. As we demonstrate below, the WIL activities embedded in our case studies—one Spanish and one German unit of study at the lower proficiency end of the curriculum—use WIL elements to focus on developing

students' cultural intelligence in support of building their IC. In this way, students become aware of the benefits of their language study in terms of workplace skills such as IC, rather than purely in terms of language acquisition.

Before outlining the successes and challenges met in the case-study subjects designed and coordinated by two of the authors (Anderson and Benbow), it is worth noting finally that our in-house curriculum designer (Are) brought to WIL activities the principles of “connectedness” pedagogy, an approach that seeks to address the diversity of students' motivations for language study and the diversity of their disciplinary background. At many levels of Languages, we now have a large group of students from outside the Bachelor of Arts and our curriculum needs to encompass this breadth. Connectedness pedagogy takes a holistic measure of students, understanding them to exist at the nexus of multiple academic, industrial and civic communities, and to have interests that tie these spheres together (Ito et al. 2013; Bridgstock 2018; Bridgstock and Tippett 2019; Goodwin et al. 2019). Students' participation and/or aspiration to participate in multiple non-academic communities at any one time is viewed as a benefit for, rather than a distraction from, learning, and it is accepted that these communities are increasingly inextricable from one another, given the digitally networked environments in which they operate. The connectedness approach holds that learning can be made more meaningful, and thus more effective, if educational programs provide “supports and mechanisms for building environments that connect learning across the spheres of interests, peer culture and academic life” (Ito et al. 2013, p. 5). Approaches of this kind only become more important in the Australian tertiary context in view of our previous discussion of student mental health.

Importantly, connectedness learning is said to occur when a curriculum can grant students the opportunity to engage with “real world” professional contexts, methods and technologies, connect to communities, collaboratively solve problems and work with authentic industry partners who have been carefully selected for them (Learning and teaching 2016, p. 1). These elements were present in the WIL components of our Spanish and German curricula. Below we outline the ways we deployed WIL elements for the purpose of developing students' IC, using connectedness learning as an underlying approach. The two subjects approach this challenge in very different ways; what they have in common, however, is a focus on the lower-proficiency end of the curriculum and the related need to address a diverse student cohort with a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

### **3 Connecting Beginner Spanish Students to Key Institutions and Local Communities**

With enrolments of around 370 students in Spanish 1 and around 270 for Spanish 2, Beginners Spanish is one of the School of Languages and Linguistics' biggest undergraduate subjects. The cohort is diverse with about two-thirds of our students coming from other Faculties and studying Spanish as part of the breadth component

of their degree. Many of these students only study Spanish for one or two semesters and it is important to make their short time with us as meaningful as possible. Articulating learning outcomes in terms of IC and collaborative learning rather than just fluency or proficiency in Spanish has been productive in this sense. Another key feature of our student cohort is the high number of international students, with anywhere between 10% and 20% coming from other countries, especially from Asia. We have attempted to address the specific needs of these students in designing our curriculum by connecting them with key Melbourne institutions as well as providing them with the necessary IC for diverse workplaces both here in Australia and in their home countries.

Our renewed Beginners Spanish curriculum has allowed us to introduce project components in Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 where students are provided with opportunities to develop work-relevant skills, including the different forms of cultural intelligence which McRae and Ramji argue leads to IC (2017, p. 132). As part of the project component of Spanish 1, all students visit the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) where they learn about Hispanic Art from the in-house Art Educator and from our advanced-level Spanish students. As part of their own course work, our advanced students collaborate with the NGV's Education team to design a program tailored to our beginner students. They also act as teachers or guides for the Spanish 1 students during their gallery visit and help them to curate an online exhibition incorporating their NGV learning. Seeing advanced-level students use their Spanish skills in the areas of art education and language teaching is motivating for students and hopefully encourages them to view the value of advanced-level language and cultural study. The visit to the NGV is also important for the international students in that it gives them access to an iconic Melbourne cultural institution. The time spent at the NGV provides international students with a sense of belonging and connectivity to their host city while also providing them with opportunities to develop the capability to be effective in an international art gallery setting.

The role art galleries can play in a work-relevant curriculum has been the focus of some scholarship on WIL. Indeed, according to one scholar, trips to art galleries can happen alongside "service learning" or WIL, as art gallery visits offer some of the same benefits as "service learning" (Ortuño 1994). Students are exposed to a subject from a multidisciplinary approach that provides them with opportunities to develop the lateral and critical thinking skills highly valued by the workplace. The ability to interpret and respond to visual culture in a sophisticated manner is also essential in many workplaces. Class visits are important in this regard because they help to make art more accessible. Students are introduced to the art gallery in an informal manner. Art is not just important within cultural organizations, it is also "purchased by corporations, not only as financial investment but to legitimize their industry and their work as part of high culture and achievement" (Freedman 2003, p. 86). Employees are required to talk about the art that is purchased, as it is often part of corporate branding. Finally, for many students who travel, study or work overseas, a trip to an art gallery is an experience to model what will likely be many museum experiences abroad.



Our renewed Beginners Spanish 2 curriculum has allowed us to introduce a project component to the curriculum which involves students interviewing members of the local Hispanic community, while also developing and reflecting on the notion of IC. As part of *Proyecto Comunidad* (a dedicated cultural component of class time, which takes 30 min per week), students develop intercultural and linguistic skills by preparing to interview a member of Melbourne's Hispanic community. As well as locating an interviewee, students are required to write interview questions in the target language, carry out a face-to-face interview, write a biographical text on their interviewee and do an oral group presentation about the cross-cultural experiences and challenges inherent to this project work. The discussion of meta-cognition by McRae and Ramji is of particular relevance to the students' growing awareness throughout the semester of what it means to "engage in cross-cultural interactions" (2017, p. 132). Equally important is the notion of "adaptive behaviours", as in the lead up to the interview students receive feedback on their draft interview questions that encourages them to "adapt their behaviour in an effort to communicate effectively" (2017, p. 132). In preparation for their interview, students watch videos on conducting oral interviews, while completing an online training module on improving communication in cross-cultural relations.

Students are also provided with academic articles in English on IC, attitudes towards the culturally different, global competency and intercultural sensitivity. These readings ask them to reflect on how people might understand each other when they do not share a common cultural experience. With many of the interviewees coming from Latin America, we also ask students to be mindful about not making broad-brush statements about Hispanic culture or capitulating to stereotypes about Latin Americans. According to Elspeth Broady (2004), one of the main problems of teaching cultural knowledge is that it is often static, stereotypical and reduced (p. 68). By way of contrast, cultural awareness "is an approach to culture which emphasizes not information about a culture but skills in exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness" (Broady 2004, p. 69). With its focus on developing cultural awareness, our curriculum asks students to transcend stereotyping images of Hispanic culture and think more about their interviewee as a person rather than as a representative of an entire cultural group.

During the class time dedicated to *Proyecto Comunidad*, students reflect with other students, either in Spanish or in English, on this more theoretical or conceptual material, thinking explicitly about how it might connect to the interview they conduct. After watching, for example, an extract on cross-cultural sensitivity, they discuss "which of the issues highlighted in this video they think will be important during their interview" ("Beginners Spanish 2" course guide). Some of the students comment about their subject position within a dominant culture and how they will need to be extra careful not to make statements that could be seen as value judgments about another person's culture. This reflection occurs also during the group presentation, in which students are asked to outline their "views on cross-cultural communication and whether or not these views have changed since the beginning of the semester" ("Beginners Spanish 2" course guide). They comment, for instance, on how much more conscious they are of how culture manifests in the most

unexpected of places (own survey). Body language, facial expressions, the notion of personal space are all, they explain, manifestations of culture and can vary from one group of people to another. While in one culture standing faraway might be viewed positively as respecting somebody's personal space, in another it could be seen negatively as being standoffish or distant. The end of semester presentations point to the fact that students have come to value IC for what it has taught them about respecting cultural difference and about not trading in cultural stereotypes. Moreover, during the question time at the end of the presentation, a number of students comment on how during the semester they have developed skills that will hopefully help them to productively navigate cultural difference in the future.

#### 4 German Cultural Studies and the Cultural Industries

While workplace-relevant skills, including group work, translation and workplace simulation, are a part of numerous German subjects at the University of Melbourne, WIL elements have been systematically and explicitly incorporated into the subject German Cultural Studies A. This is a subject that is compulsory for German students who begin their German studies ab initio if they wish to complete a German major. Therefore, the subject includes students who will likely obtain a lower proficiency level, due to having commenced language studies at undergraduate level, rather than at school, but who nonetheless have prioritized German within their degree or are completing the Diploma in Languages. Reflecting this, a majority (55%) of students stated in 2017 that prior to undertaking this subject, they already considered German might be a factor in their future work. This majority increased substantially after taking the subject (83%) according to an informal survey conducted at the end of the subject (own survey).<sup>1</sup>

The focus in this subject is not primarily on language acquisition, as it sits beside the sequenced language subjects. Students undertaking the subject usually have A1- to B1-level German. Reflecting the aforementioned low major completion rates from ab initio German, the subject had an enrolment of 15 students in 2017. The subject has, in the past, touched on major themes in German culture in the modern era. Re-casting the subject to incorporate strong elements of “non-placement WIL” (Kaider et al. 2017, p. 50) meant focusing on two core cultural themes from German studies. These were the German concept of culture (*Kultur*) and German

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<sup>1</sup>The anonymous online survey was answered by 9 of 15 students and included the following questions: Prior to undertaking this subject, had you ever considered that your German learning might contribute to your career choice?; During the subject you studied and visited two organizations that deal with German culture in Australia (Goethe Institut and SBS). What did you find useful/informative/relevant about these visits?; You also had the opportunity to conduct a career interview. How, if at all, did this help you to think about your own future career path?; Can you imagine your German skills being relevant or useful in your future career?; Would you like to see more or less work-relevant content in your German subjects?; Do you have any other comments about the work-related content in this subject?. Survey date: 23/10/2017, University of Melbourne.

cinema. Each of the topics was taught over 6 weeks and allowed for an engagement with significant periods in German history, including the Enlightenment, unification, the World Wars, the Weimar Republic and the Cold War. Set texts were in German, with some secondary literature in English. Class discussions were held in a mixture of German and English.

The topics allowed us to engage with two significant cultural institutions in Melbourne: the German cultural institute, the Goethe Institut, and the multicultural broadcaster, SBS. Students visited each of these institutions after researching their role and history and were able to engage in German with staff at both. These site visits offered students a highly authentic and moderately proximate experience (Kaider et al. 2017, p. 54) of two workplaces that use German language on a daily basis and for whom IC is core business. While knowledge of a foreign language necessarily imparts a certain level of intercultural competence, the comment of one student demonstrates how authentic experience of a workplace can lead to deeper understanding: “It was [...] cool to see the multiculturalism of the organisations—like, I think I recall [an employee] at Goethe was Polish? And obviously SBS has people of all language backgrounds” (“German Cultural Studies A” survey).

The research into the roles and backgrounds of the two organizations was enhanced in the case of SBS by “authentic” assessments that “emulate professional practice” (Kaider et al. 2017, p. 51). Specifically, as part of their assessment for the subject, students wrote English subtitles for a German film and dubbed into English a short section of film. These are industry-authentic methods and technologies requiring intercultural competence *and* a sophisticated understanding of German language and culture. The film chosen was itself embedded in the two main topics of the subject. *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1976) is based on an eighteenth-century novella by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The film is a Cold War production of the East German DEFA studio. In studying this film, students become aware of the role of culture in international diplomacy and the contested place of culture in the Germanies of the Cold War. The “simulated, practice-based learning” (Higgs et al. 2013, p. 9) involved in subtitling and dubbing a section of this film directly reflects work undertaken at SBS, albeit at the Sydney site, rather than in Melbourne. Students were, however, able to take part in a live interview in German as part of their SBS visit (non-assessed). A number of students, having experienced the workplace culture, were motivated to consider applying for internships with SBS in the future.

Another WIL element included in the subject for the first time this year was a career interview conducted with a German-speaking employee. This item of assessment allowed teaching staff to connect students with a German-speaking employee in an industry of particular relevance to the student. While staff at both the Goethe Institut and SBS took part in such interviews, other students were matched with employees in various areas at the university and beyond. Kaider et al. have noted that “jobs of the future are changing more rapidly and unpredictably than they have in the past” (2017, p. 50). One student undertaking this subject found the career interview particularly helpful for understanding this challenge: “It definitely helped in terms of not seeing my career as just a linear progression from uni to only one

specific job and nothing else. Was a strong reminder to keep my mind open to change.” (own survey) For another student, the chance to speak to a “woman working in a STEM related field [...] really offered a lot of insights for my future plan” (“German Cultural Studies A” survey). For another student, the career interview helped them to reflect on the transnationality of careers: “I don’t think I had considered it feasible that I could work in Germany, but given that the person I interviewed is German and working in Australia, why couldn’t I do the inverse?” (“German Cultural Studies A” survey).

The WIL components of this subject gave students an authentic and proximate experience of two organizations that work in intercultural contexts; it enabled them to undertake “simulated, practice-based learning” (Higgs et al. 2013, p. 9); it addressed the heterogeneity of the cohort by customizing the career interview to their disciplinary background; it allowed them to reflect on the relevance of intercultural competence and transnationality for their careers and to understand the volatility and unpredictability of career paths today. It was able to produce these experiences and outcomes while still undertaking the “core business” of content teaching in German on the themes of German culture and German film. The subject employed a “connectedness learning” approach by curating connections to authentic industry-based German-speaking employees (for the career interview); providing the opportunity to use “real-world” technologies (dubbing and subtitling); and encouraging students to collaboratively solve problems (dubbing and subtitling) (Learning and teaching 2016, p. 1).

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued for the place of WIL in tertiary language studies with specific reference to the Spanish and German programs at the University of Melbourne. Moving beyond an exclusive focus on target-language proficiency in our core language and culture subjects has allowed us to connect students with local communities and key institutions, as well as provide them with workplace-relevant skills that can be drawn on in a variety of contexts and professional settings. One of the main work-relevant skills we have introduced into our renewed curricula is intercultural competence, defined as a set of “skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural settings” (McKinnon 2013, p. 1). Making intercultural competence an explicit learning outcome of our curriculum from the outset has made it possible to have a meaningful impact on students who only study with us for one or two semesters.

Providing students with maximum opportunities to develop this invaluable professional and interpersonal skill set has seen us focus our energies not just on the more advanced-level language subjects where students are clearly suited to placements and internships but also on beginner-level subjects. If one of the aims in our more advanced-level subjects is to send our students out to work for relevant cultural and industry organizations, then our entry-level subjects must prepare them to

function effectively in such a high-level intercultural professional setting. Our examples evince the importance of making work-relevant skills a significant part of the curriculum at all levels of language study. Indeed, it is only through training in intercultural competence and connectivity with key institutions and local communities in our beginner-level subjects that we are able to prepare students for placements and project work. An advantage also of starting early with WIL is that students understand the unique relevance of language study from the outset of their degree, which hopefully will translate into higher numbers of students completing majors and post-graduate study in languages. Language study is often seen as something that adds value to another core degree. As more of us incorporate workplace-relevant skills into our curriculum, it is our hope that we are able to articulate clearly the value of language study for its own sake.

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# Learning Language “In Action”: Creating a Work Placement Program in Languages



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**Abstract** This chapter reports on the “Language in Action” project, a program implemented at Flinders University, which provides placement opportunities for language students in local community settings where the languages they study are spoken. This unique program, based on experiential learning, has recently been refocused in terms of its educational objectives. Our reflection has led to the rationalization of the core principles underpinning the program and to the design of a dedicated “Language in Action” website created to provide information for students, placement providers, and staff administering the program, as well as for any language educator interested in the idea of language placements. In this chapter, we outline the institutional context and rationale for the “Language in Action” program and present the educational principles underpinning it. We subsequently provide information about the program’s implementation, and discuss the benefits students report from their placement experiences. Finally, we present the main features of the program’s dedicated website.

**Keywords** Language placement · Flinders University · Social good · Deep approach pedagogy · Experiential learning · Intercultural citizenship

## 1 Introduction

This chapter reports on a community engagement program for language students offered at Flinders University. For a few years now, the “Language in Action” program, which is integrated into the Bachelor of Languages, has provided placement

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opportunities for students of French, Indonesian, Italian, Modern Greek, and Spanish<sup>1</sup> in a range of community settings such as aged-care agencies and cultural associations. The program has been very well received by the students and by the associations which have provided placements.

From an educational perspective, “Language in Action” provides experiential learning. In particular, it is inspired by the “deep approach to world language education” (Tochon 2014), an approach that places students in charge of their learning experience and promotes meaningful interactions with communities. Indeed, our program is designed to encourage students’ pursuit of positive social action in the community, by establishing connections with various migrant groups in a range of contexts, while improving their language and intercultural skills in settings where the target language is routinely spoken.

This chapter describes an educational model for language placements in community settings and presents the rationale for the “Language in Action” program in light of the core educational principles we have established and that have guided our approach. In particular, we will focus on the academic characteristics of the program, including the portfolio that students are expected to complete for assessment. We will discuss the program’s implementation, the benefits for students, and present a dedicated “Language in Action” website designed to facilitate and promote language placements.

## 2 Work-Integrated Learning

A core educational focus at Flinders University, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), is deeply embedded in the University’s 2025 Agenda which states that

[t]he Flinders Experience will provide work-integrated learning opportunities and a thriving international mobility program that will enhance personal enterprise and intercultural skills development, enriching the educational experience (Flinders University 2016).

Recognizing the benefits of integrating practical applications as part of learning, Flinders University has considered Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) as a strategic priority by incorporating various forms of WIL into the curriculum across most disciplines and degrees. Referred to in the policy as “any structured and purposefully designed learning and assessment activity in a course curriculum that integrates theory with the practice of work” (Flinders University 2019, p. 1), WIL aims to provide students with opportunities to apply the knowledge (theory) and practice (skills) they acquire at university in a variety of professional contexts. This intersection of knowledge and practice is well documented in the research literature (see, for example, Patrick et al. 2008; Cooper et al. 2010).

The most common form of WIL is work placement, which is usually undertaken at more advanced levels of the curriculum. Placements are extremely valuable to

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<sup>1</sup>These languages are offered at Flinders University.



students as they are the most practical way to prepare them for the workforce. According to Gibson and Busby (2009), students gain new skills by gaining confidence and personal awareness, establish networks and develop an ethical understanding.

Engagement with industry partners and creating an impact through WIL is also supported by the University’s “Making a Difference” agenda. Students can apply their knowledge and expertise in areas that deliver practical workplace experience but also provide a benefit to their industry provider through delivering “social good” (Flinders University 2016), a notion that is essential in the context of the “Language in Action” program.

Flinders University’s push for WIL across degrees and the establishment of the Bachelor of Languages provided an excellent opportunity for the integration of placements into the language curriculum, from which they had been absent. However, it should be noted that although “Language in Action” qualifies as WIL for the purpose of the University, the language placement program’s primary objective is not necessarily to introduce students to professional participation. Indeed, the placements we offer are selected not so much for their work-experience benefits in the first instance, but rather for the linguistic and cultural exposure they offer, as well as for their potential humanistic and socializing opportunities. Consequently, as an educational practice, the “Language in Action” placement is located at the intersection of community learning, work experience, situated language learning, culturally and socially responsive education, and intercultural citizenship. WIL in general, and the concept of “language in action” in particular, are supported by Laurillard’s (2013) dynamic conception of the university curriculum which proposes a “conversational” model that operates at theoretical and experiential levels. The framework aims to promote the interplay between the conceptual and the practical, through which students engage in a process of action and reflection, and in which students are dynamically engaged in supporting community needs while meeting university requirements.

### 3 The Language in Action Program

The Bachelor of Languages at Flinders University<sup>2</sup> offers opportunities for in-country study in all the languages taught.<sup>3</sup> However, given the typically high cost of overseas programs, relatively few language students are in a position to study abroad. Consequently, “Language in Action”, a third-year unit of study, was designed to offer an alternative to in-country programs. As a placement program, it aims to expose students to a variety of local community settings such as aged-care

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<sup>2</sup>Although it should be noted that students enrolled in other degrees may have access to the topic under certain conditions.

<sup>3</sup>French, Indonesian, Italian, Modern Greek and Spanish.

facilities, cultural associations, social clubs, media outlets, businesses, public events, etc., where linguistic and intercultural engagements are possible. Students are required to spend a minimum of 35 hours on placement and submit a placement portfolio consisting of a reflective diary, a set of self-assessment and self-monitoring tasks, a research essay and an oral presentation to peers. Language placements are optional and interested students are subjected to a vetting process before they can qualify for one. Details about the program will be provided in the “Language in Action in practice” section below.

### ***3.1 A Conception of Language Learning “In Action”***

Our concept of “Language in Action” draws inspiration from Tochon’s (2014) “deep approach to world languages and cultures”. The “deep approach” is a holistic view of language learning that provides access to deep and meaningful content across disciplines while allowing a personalized and guided approach to learning. Tochon argues that meaningful language learning is essentially grounded in action and that students’ learning is shaped by interacting with their environment. The experiential learning of the “deep approach” engages students on emotional, physical and intellectual levels (Xiao 2015). According to Tochon (2014), an interactional and cross-disciplinary language “apprenticeship” leads to deeper language and cultural appreciation and promotes greater sensitivity to our social environment. This inquiry-based approach to learning prepares students for real-world interactions while still providing opportunities for higher-level critical thinking and deep analysis of language and cultural norms.

Furthermore, our placement pedagogy is informed by the notion of “intercultural citizenship”, as recently refined by Byram et al. (2017). “Intercultural citizenship” brings together language education (transnational dimension) and the community (civic dimension) with the view of developing in students a “cosmopolitan” perspective that goes beyond national borders (Porto et al. 2017). The concept of citizenship is essential to our conceptualization of “language in action”. It is compatible with Laurillard’s (2013) notion of community engagement and Tochon’s (2014) development of learners’ sensitivity to the environment and society, both of which cast students in the role of agents of change.

Our approach is also guided by Seligman’s research into positive psychology that promotes the importance of human relationships, a sense of connection with one’s community, compassion, and meaning in life (Seligman 2011). Weinstein and Ryan (2010, p. 240) suggest that “[w]hen individuals volitionally help, they experience greater autonomy, relatedness, and competence; need satisfactions that in turn appear to enhance the helper’s sense of well-being.” The “Language in Action” perspective is influenced by Rebecca Oxford’s recent model of wellbeing applied to language learning, which aims to promote agency, motivation and perseverance among language learners (Oxford 2016). Finally, our approach acknowledges the work of Cordella and Huang (2015), Cordella (2016) and of other language

educators in Australia who have recognized and explored the potential for collaboration between language students and the community (Rolin-Ianziti and Boucquey 1992; Visocnik Murray and Laura 2002; Kennedy and Miceli 2017).<sup>4</sup>

Broadly speaking, “Language in Action” contributes to students’ wellbeing by encouraging meaningful interactions through social, linguistic and cultural encounters with migrant groups. It capitalizes on the benefits of students’ volunteering and altruistic behaviour as a source of positive emotions from which meaningful and rewarding language experiences emerge. Importantly, it also aims to develop a sense of intercultural citizenship which broadens their world view.

The following eight statements, derived from the pedagogical perspectives we have outlined above, have served as guiding principles framing the “Language in Action” project.

1. **Language education is grounded in cross-disciplinarity, interculturality, social action and wellbeing.** It serves a higher purpose than just learning a language. In the case of “Language in Action”, students investigate topics grounded in social and intercultural settings. Besides language learning, the aim of the placement is “to do good” in the community and to influence society positively (Weinstein and Ryan 2010; Tochon 2014).
2. **Language education promotes intercultural citizenship.** It goes beyond the acquisition of “intercultural skills” developed within the confines of the classroom. The combination of language education and civic action in intercultural spaces supports broad multicultural perspectives, intercultural stances and worldviews, and includes active participation in the community through which students may initiate or support change (Byram et al. 2017).
3. **Knowledge is situated and co-constructed.** In the context of “Language in Action”, students are guided by their lecturers and their supervisors on placement. Students’ learning is situation-dependent and managed on a case-by-case basis. Students co-construct and share knowledge while gaining valuable field experience (Laurillard 2013), which they can in turn share with other students.
4. **Educational activities are negotiated.** Learning is individualized and sustained by personal interest and self-motivation (Tochon 2014). Students identify and propose their topic of investigation, which emerges during the placement, through observation and discussion in the field. This topic forms the basis of the “Language in Action” research assignment which is negotiated with the academic supervisor.
5. **Teaching is about empowering students** to explore, be active, and learn from opportunities. The teacher is a guide and mentor who provides the educational context, the learning tools and resources that will allow students to expand their knowledge and skills. The placements “benefit from the students’ intrinsic motivational impulse” (Tochon 2013, p. 57). Students are given the opportunity to set and achieve their own personal goals, whilst meeting the learning outcomes and acquiring the graduate qualities set by Flinders University.

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<sup>4</sup>Refer to Bouvet et al. (2017) for details.

6. **Students demonstrate their capacity to interpret their placement environment by investigating it.** “Language in Action” students are required to: analyse a pertinent community-related issue by writing about it; present their findings to a student audience; interact with community members by speaking with them in the target language; and reflect on their experience in terms of linguistic and cultural development and personal growth through the portfolio.
7. **Language education offers opportunities for students to build resilience and perseverance** in their language use by placing them in environments that provide opportunities to engage in real-life activities in the target language. On placement, students encounter challenges that must be met using their own resources (Oxford 2016), as would be the case in in-country interactions.
8. **Language education must promote language sustainability.** Learning “in action” is essential to the development of durable, long-term knowledge, skills and habits that will persist long after formal language learning at university has ended. As argued by Tochon (2014), language learning is a life-long project. Real-world opportunities for interactions are more likely to sustain motivation for language learning into the future.

### 3.2 “*Language in Action*” in Practice

The constitution of the network of community partners required to accommodate “Language in Action” students’ placements was initially facilitated by Volunteering SA&NT, the leading volunteering organization in South Australia. Initially, we collaborated with the aged-care sector where students of Italian and Modern Greek participated in the daily activities of organizations such as the Associazione Nazionale Famiglie degli Emigrati (Italian) and the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Incorporated (Greek).<sup>5</sup> These placements involved conversing with elderly migrants, taking them shopping or for walks, serving meals, playing games such as bingo or card games, cinema and art gallery visits, and even scrapbooking activities.

As our network of providers expanded, we began to offer placements to students of French, Indonesian, Italian, Modern Greek and Spanish, in a broader range of sectors. In addition to aged-care settings, students have been involved with cultural, community and media organizations, and ethnic schools, where they have helped organize and run educational activities, community events and festivals. For example, French students at the Alliance Française have assisted with French classes for children, while Spanish students have taken part in radio broadcasts. Indonesian students have worked with Indopeduli Adelaide, an association that assists Indonesians who come to Australia to undergo cranio-facial surgery. Enrolment in

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<sup>5</sup>A list of partners may be found here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191121084646/http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/language-in-action/for-placement-providers/partners.cfm>

“Language in Action” is approved by the topic coordinator. It is critical that students seek permission to enrol in the program well ahead of the start of the semester, as negotiations with providers, the drafting of the agreement and the pre-placement learning module can take several weeks. Students who express interest in “Language in Action” are interviewed by the program coordinator who assesses their language, communication and cultural skills, as well as their motivation and overall fitness for placement. They are also briefed on placement opportunities and on the assessment requirements.

While to date the placements have been largely problem free, students who undertake placements in health-related environments might find aspects of their experience confronting. Therefore, in addition to considering language skills, it is important to select students who have the maturity and life experience that will allow them to manage well in health-related contexts. Despite potential risks, we believe that interactions with the elderly in the context of aged-care and the rich experiences in language, culture and interpersonal connection that ensue, outweigh any concerns.

As the placements provide students with opportunities to practise their language skills through face-to-face interactions in their target language with native speakers, communication at a reasonably advanced level of proficiency is essential. To ensure that prospective students will be able to cope linguistically, we contact their language lecturers to obtain an evaluation of their skills, in addition to checking their academic transcripts. Once the program coordinator is satisfied that all the conditions of fitness for placement are met, the students are approved for enrolment.

The program does not require students to identify placement opportunities, as our current pool of placements is large enough to cater for the number of applicants. However, we make sure that from the outset, selected students are involved in the placement negotiations. As soon as a student is matched with a potential placement, we ask the student to make contact with the placement provider by phone or in person to discuss the placement conditions before the agreement is signed between the two parties. Placement providers are generally flexible in terms of scheduling the 35 hours. Time on placement can be stretched over a semester (three hours per week), half a semester (six hours per week), or be concentrated over a period of 1–2 weeks during the mid-semester breaks. Once both the placement provider and the student are satisfied, a formal agreement which sets out the responsibilities and obligations of the University, the placement provider, and the student, is made. Usually, the placement provider requires students to undergo an induction at the workplace. Students who are placed in aged-care or in schools are asked to produce a Department of Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) screening check or a Police Check before they begin.

### 3.3 Assessment

The assessment model for “Language in Action” is underpinned by the principles enunciated in the conceptual section of this article. It aims to evaluate the students’ languages skills, their intercultural competence, their personal development, their capacity to identify and research a topic relevant to the placement, and their capacity to reflect on the experience. Assessment aims to encourage personal interest and self-motivation and, as such, it must provide opportunities for students to carry out investigations across a diverse range of areas of personal and/or academic interest. It is important to note that the learning experience may vary substantially between placement environments and, as a consequence, the knowledge and skills developed may be different. Assessment is therefore negotiated in relation to the specificities of each placement. The students are made aware of this from the outset and are guided by their academic and placement supervisors in the development of their topic of investigation. Some recent examples of “Language in Action” research topics include reporting on the challenges faced by wheelchair users in Indonesia, profiling the communities of Spanish native speakers in South Australia, personal experiences of migration, traditions, culture and identity shifts, socio-cultural integration, intergenerational relationships and more.

The assessment for “Language in Action” is flexible enough to take into account the contexts of the placements and is developed relative to opportunities. It provides an occasion for the identification and analysis of a pertinent community-related topic, which is not only useful for the students’ own analytical and research skill development, but may also be beneficial to the placement provider. For example, an education student was placed with an ethnic school and conducted a survey among students and parents about the nature of a number of class activities. The survey was included in the student’s own assessment portfolio and provided feedback to the school which, in turn, contributed to subsequent class planning. By observing and engaging with the placement environment, by analysing and reporting their observations in an objective and critical way, students have the potential to make a contribution to their placement provider that extends beyond the time of their placement.

Finally, the “Language in Action” assessment provides an opportunity for reflection on the placement experience. It recognizes the challenges that placements may present to students and provides opportunities for them to showcase the strategies they used to overcome their difficulties. It therefore differs in nature and intention from the typical type of assessment students are subjected to in the language class. In placement situations, assignments are designed with the aim of collecting evidence of students’ learning and skills rather than simply judging students’ knowledge/skills (Burke 2010).

The “Language in Action” assessment consists of an end-of-placement portfolio comprised of four parts:

- A reflective diary that documents the student’s activities on placement, kept in the target language (*language development, reflection*);

- A completed set of three questionnaires designed to allow the student to assess their own language and intercultural progress (*language development, intercultural development, reflection*);
- An oral presentation to fellow students in the target language (*language development, reflection, sharing*);
- A research essay or an investigative report in English or in the target language (*analytical, critical, research skill development, independent learning*).

The inclusion of a diary and self-assessment questionnaires makes it a form of embedded assessment (William 2010). This underscores the aim of “Language in Action” to develop language learners’ self-awareness, self-reflection and empowerment.

### ***3.4 Student Evaluation of the Program***

Upon completion of their placements, students are invited to take part in interviews on a voluntary basis, in order to evaluate their experience of “Language in Action”. The interviews take place after their grades have been published to avoid the risk of possible perceived coercion. They take the form of a 30-minute conversation, based on a semi-structured questionnaire, during which the student is asked to provide information about their motivation for enrolling in the course, describe what they have done on placement, and outline the perceived benefits drawn from the placement in terms of linguistic, cultural and personal gains. The interviews are recorded and transcribed, then analysed qualitatively to identify common themes emerging from the data.<sup>6</sup>

Results from these interviews indicate that students are initially attracted to “Language in Action” because they consider it to be an excellent opportunity to practise their linguistic and cultural skills in the target language in a natural environment. They are also keen to engage with the community, either because they already have personal links with it or because they see the potential for making durable connections. Upon completion of their placements, most of the participants believe that their language proficiency has improved, especially in relation to their oral and aural skills. This is usually corroborated by the quality of their performance in their end-of-semester oral presentations. In addition to the linguistic and cultural benefits provided by the placements, some students state that their placement experience gave them a sense of engagement with, and belonging to, the community. In most cases, they have established personal connections which they strive to maintain after the placement. Some students state that completing “Language in Action” is much more than passing a unit of study. It is also about contributing to a community where the language they studied in a classroom is used. Developing awareness of one’s ability to contribute to a community group in this way can foster

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<sup>6</sup>Ethics approval is sought prior to interviewing students.

self-confidence, a sense of purpose, and motivation that will help students enhance their foreign language proficiency in the long term through ongoing community engagement.

Finally, through their placements, students are able to adopt positive attitudes that help them deal with the challenges they meet. Learning language “in action” involves dynamic situations where the linguistic, the cultural and the social present themselves to the students in unscripted ways, forcing them to adopt problem-solving stances to overcome challenges.

### 3.5 Website

As part of the “Language in Action” program, we have developed a dedicated website which is described below.<sup>7</sup> Our objective has been to offer a comprehensive information hub for students, placement providers and staff administering the placements. On a conceptual level, the website provides a platform for presenting the rationale, objectives, benefits and outcomes of language placement to students, educators and placement providers. The originality of the website resides in the fact that it allows students to see how unique and personalized their language learning journey can be, not only in terms selecting a placement, but also in terms of negotiating their assessment and in terms of their language/cultural development. It also provides the project’s educational rationale to educators interested in the “language in action” concept. On a practical level, the website provides a wealth of information targeted to students, placement providers, administrative staff and educators.

The starting point of a dedicated website was the need to publicize language placements to our students more effectively and provide them with the information they require to help them understand the program before enrolling in it. Moreover, we wanted to inform potential partners of the availability of language placements, as well as promote the benefits of placements for their organizations, and outline the procedural steps to follow for organizing and managing placements. Finally, in designing the website, our aim was to share our experience and publicize our “Language in Action” program beyond Flinders University to the wider educational community, as a possible model that could be adapted by educators interested in setting up their own language placement program in community contexts.

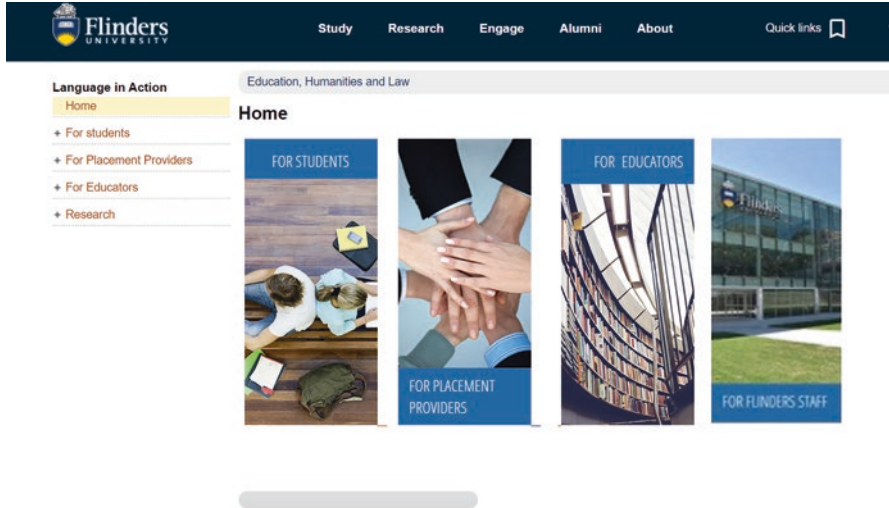
The website features a quadruple interface, each one catering for one group of stakeholders (students, placement providers, educators, and Flinders University staff) (Fig. 1). Although contents sometimes overlap across sections, each section displays specific information targeted at the relevant group.

The **Student** section (Fig. 2) gives prominence to explaining the nature, timing and duration of the placements, as well as to providing tools for students to assess

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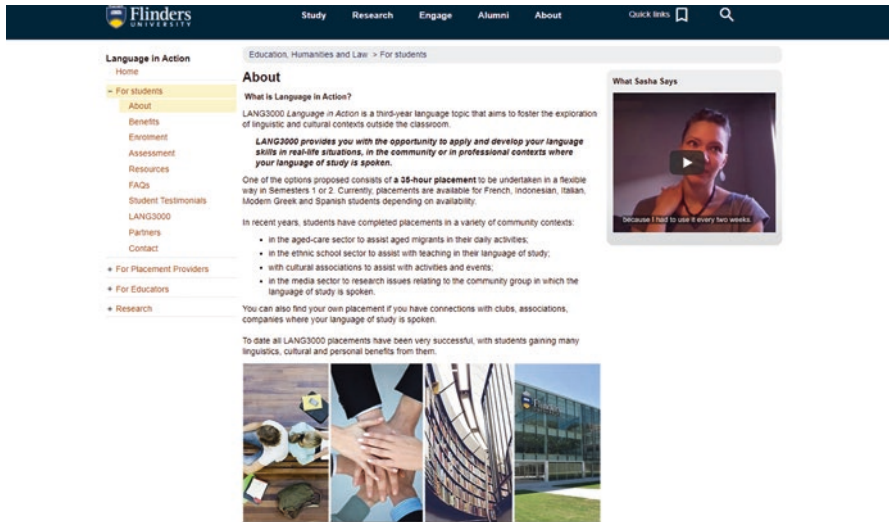
<sup>7</sup>The “Language in Action” website is available at: [https://web.archive.org/web/20191121084931/http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/language-in-action/language-in-action\\_home.cfm](https://web.archive.org/web/20191121084931/http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/language-in-action/language-in-action_home.cfm)





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Fig. 1 Home page



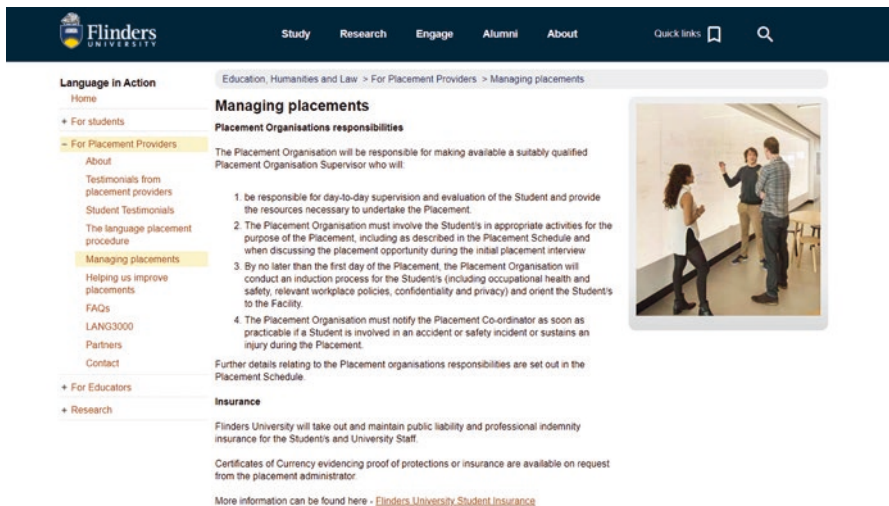
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Fig. 2 Main page of Student Section

their own suitability for a language placement. The selection, enrolment, and placement processes can be daunting for students. Therefore, the Student section of the website aims to streamline these processes and assist students in complying with all pre-placement requirements in a timely manner. This section features carefully scripted instructions combined with images, embedded online tools and videos of students recounting their placement experience. This section of the website offers a detailed explanation of the assessment components to clarify what is expected from students well before the start of placements, both academically and in terms of their commitment to their placement experience.

The **Placement Provider** section (Fig. 3) contains an adapted description of the placement process that is relevant for the host organizations. It includes details about how partners can benefit from participating in the project, and how to manage students. It also provides information about the provider’s responsibilities towards students and the university. This section features an expression of interest form and a number of links that provide direct contact with university staff, all of which aim to make early communication with relevant university staff as swift and simple as possible.

The **Educator** section (Fig. 4) features the pedagogical rationale and the principles underpinning the program. It details the stages of the placement process, lists our partner organizations and describes the assessment in light of the project’s pedagogical principles. It is also linked to a **Research** page which provides information about the “Language in Action” project and links to publications associated with it.



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Fig. 3 Page from Placement Provider section

The screenshot shows the Flinders University website. The top navigation bar includes 'Study', 'Research', 'Engage', 'Alumni', and 'About'. A search bar and 'Quick links' are also present. The main content area is titled 'Pedagogical principles of the language placement' and is part of a breadcrumb trail: 'Education, Humanities and Law > For Educators > Pedagogical principles of the language placement'. On the left, a sidebar menu lists various sections under 'Language in Action', with 'Pedagogical principles of the language placement' selected. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Pedagogical principles of the language placement', 'Language in Action guiding principles', and 'Documents'. The 'Pedagogical principles' section describes the program's rationale, inspired by Tochon (2014), and its focus on social and intercultural settings. The 'Guiding principles' section lists four key principles: 1. Language education is grounded in cross-disciplinary, interculturality, social action & being; 2. Language education promotes intercultural citizenship; 3. Knowledge is situated and co-constructed; 4. Educational activities are negotiated. The 'Documents' section lists three PDF files: 'Tochon (PDF 79KB)', 'Tochon (PDF 156KB)', and 'Wellbeing and doing good (PDF 795KB)'.

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**Fig. 4** Page from Educator Section

The **Staff** section gives an overview of the program as well as the management tools required to administer the placements to ensure continuity of administrative knowledge in case of staff turnover. The staff section is linked to the Flinders University Policy and Procedures for WIL.

## 4 Conclusion

The “Language in Action” project seeks to capitalize on the opportunities for university students to be exposed to their target language in local communities. In this chapter, we have indicated that these opportunities are available across a range of sectors which offer health, educational or cultural services to migrant communities in the Adelaide region. We have negotiated partnerships with a number of community-based associations to implement a placement program which is pedagogically justified by current research on the benefits of learning language “in action”. We have adopted a set of educational principles focused on the values of experiential learning, which has allowed us to frame the “Language in Action” project and design a dedicated website that supports and promotes it.

Giving language students the opportunity to undertake placements at an advanced stage of their study is valuable from several perspectives. In addition to the linguistic and cultural gains expected from sustained exposure to the target language, placements allow students to take charge of their own learning. They also foster

resilience in dealing with unexpected linguistic and cultural challenges. Furthermore, they promote opportunities for altruistic experiences likely to have a positive impact on the environments in which they take place. The practical experience gained in “Language in Action” is likely to motivate students to pursue further studies in the language while sustaining their engagement with the community. The “Language in Action” placements thus support the notion of language “apprenticeship” put forward by Tochon’s (2014) “deep approach” pedagogy, as presented above. Such practical experience complements classroom-based learning and constitutes a natural outcome for it that is easily integrated into the language curriculum.

Our aim now is to develop the number and range of placements available to students through exploring opportunities for industry placements which we have not investigated so far. We hope that our framework for placements, supported by our dedicated website, will not only provide relevant information and support for all stakeholders involved in the program, but will also serve as a possible model to inspire other language educators to establish their own placement programs.

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# Developing Global Graduate Capabilities: Integrating Business, Language and Culture in an Interdisciplinary Space



Carmela Briguglio and Fernando Porta

**Abstract** A new undergraduate unit of study, “Doing Business with Europe” (DBWE), was developed in an Australian Business School as an elective combining three elements: business, culture and language. The aim was for students to develop intercultural competencies for a global business context, and also to introduce them to cultural and linguistic aspects of the focus European country/countries. The inclusion of a linguistic element into a business unit is unusual in business courses in Australia and there was some concern that it might not appeal to students. In our experience, this was not the case: students enjoyed the unusual language taster component in a business unit. The unit was developed and taught by two lecturers in the Business School, both with a background in language teaching and education. Essential dilemmas facing staff developing and teaching the unit included: selection of the business/political content to be addressed; how to divide the content between the three elements of the unit; what achievement expectations could be placed on students; how to develop and assess global intercultural skills; and curriculum and organizational issues in the university context. Another interesting aspect in relation to curriculum development is that the unit involved team teaching and thus provided an ideal situation for ongoing reflection and continuous improvement. This chapter discusses the above issues and shows how student achievement in the various elements was fostered, captured and assessed.

**Keywords** Intercultural competency · Europe · Business · Italian · Language education · Language teaching · Curriculum development

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## 1 Introduction

In recent years, many universities across the world have espoused the need to develop graduate attributes which will equip students with the capabilities they require to work effectively in global workplaces of the twenty-first century (Deardoff 2006; Dimitrov et al. 2014). Indeed Krajewski (2011, p. 137) states:

In times of accelerating globalisation, intercultural competence emerges as one of the most desirable capabilities for those who are likely to work in international environments.

Among the most sought after attributes are communication skills (Graduate Careers Australia 2014), including intercultural communication skills and intercultural sensitivity. Leask (2009, 2013) points to intercultural awareness as a central outcome of an internationalized tertiary curriculum. It was considered by the authors that one of the most effective ways of developing intercultural awareness was to give students intercultural experiences which would enhance their knowledge and understanding of cultural matters, as well as providing them with some tangible skills in the area.

There is much discussion around how these attributes can be developed. In a European context it is perhaps easier to make a convincing case that the study of languages leads almost inevitably to intercultural understanding and to the development of intercultural communication skills. In Australia, although intercultural communication skills are espoused as desirable graduate attributes, the reality belies any deep-seated commitment to language studies (Liddicoat et al. 2003; Mayfield 2017). There is also, perhaps, an underlying belief that since English is the national language in Australia, and English is the global language, less effort needs to be made (Clyne 2005; Briguglio 2005). Nevertheless, universities are certainly keen to publicize that they do promote such skills in their graduates, with claims and aims such as the following on University webpages:

- Curtin University—Graduates will “demonstrate intercultural awareness and understanding” (2018);
- University of Melbourne—“Melbourne graduates are aware of the social and cultural diversity in communities and can work collaboratively with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (2018);
- University of Adelaide—Graduates will demonstrate “intercultural and ethical competency” (2018);
- University of NSW—Graduates will be “global citizens who are culturally adept and capable of respecting diversity and acting in a socially just and responsible way” (2018).

Although all of the stated graduate attributes above refer to similar concepts, the use of different terms does reflect the fact that: “there is no common language or set of concepts that are broadly accepted or shared by academics [...] within or across institutions regarding globalisation and international education” (Edelstein 2014). Nevertheless, it was felt by the two lecturers involved in this case study that a unit

such as “Doing Business with Europe” (DBWE) would provide the ideal channel for the development of intercultural skills. The fact that the unit was located in a Business faculty meant that it would inevitably have a business focus. However it was intended that the unit would be available as an elective across the University and would embrace broad elements of language and culture.

Indeed, it was considered that the particular curriculum challenge in achieving the learning objectives lay in blending the three elements of business, the European context and the cultural/linguistic elements of the focus country. Normally, this would involve some working across disciplines, which is not always easy in a university context. However, because the two academics involved in developing and teaching the unit both had language, education and curriculum expertise and, at the same time, extensive experience in working in the relevant Business School, it was considered that we could, to some extent, avoid some of the common difficulties experienced in working across disciplines, which often see themselves as representing distinct professional and emotional “worlds” (Henkel 2000; Ryan and Neumann 2013).

This chapter will examine some of the issues at the intersection of interdisciplinary, curriculum and contextual factors encountered in implementing this new unit, and will offer some recommendations to others willing to explore the interdisciplinary space. Working successfully in an interdisciplinary context is often lauded as a good thing in educational circles, reflecting the fact that in today’s world, knowledge and understanding are thought to be promoted by combining elements from different disciplines, rather than by working in “silos”, and that multi-faceted solutions are required to solve complex problems (Frost and Jean 2003). However, as will be indicated (in Sect. 4, Delivery and Implementation Issues), colleagues from disciplines other than Humanities, where languages are usually located, may still be suspicious about allowing language and culture into their discipline “space”, or accepting that languages could be easily blended into their discipline context. In some cases, too, there are course constraints and there could be staff reluctance for taught load to go outside a particular School.

## 2 Background

Curriculum development is often a long drawn out process that involves many stakeholders. In its broadest sense, curriculum goes much further than the syllabus content described in a written document such as a Unit Outline, and includes the informal and formal elements in the teaching and learning processes that contribute to a successful student learning experience. Often the development of curriculum can resemble an action learning project with learning and teaching activities planned, tried, adapted, revised and continually refined (Dick 2002). Our own experience was that this unit took some 12 months to develop and go through the University’s approval systems before it was delivered over a semester. An interesting aspect and additional benefit of our experience was that the unit was co-designed



and team-taught. There were therefore many opportunities for joint planning, discussion, experimentation and reflection, all elements that we know contribute to reflective practice and indeed excellent teaching and learning (Brookfield 2017). The development, implementation and evaluation of this unit was therefore ongoing and continued beyond the first implementation.

## ***2.1 The Seed of an Idea***

Informal meetings between the Italian Consul and staff in the University Business School led to discussion about the possibility of introducing some Italian business element into the Bachelor of Commerce degree. The two staff members involved (both very familiar with Italian language and culture) decided to test the waters by offering an optional, not-for-credit module of some seven sessions on “Doing Business with Italy” to interested students in a Global MBA program. The response was positive and student interest was high, as evidenced by the fact that we managed to retain a core group of students who attended regularly, in spite of attendance not carrying any credit. Interest was also expressed by the group to engage in a study tour to Italy at the end of the module. It was therefore decided to proceed with designing a unit that might serve as an elective to introduce a European element into courses in the Business School that are, largely by choice, Asia-focused since the University aims to be an educational leader in the South-East Asian region. Although at first we had thought that the focus country should be Italy, it was decided, after discussion with the Head of the School of Management, that a broader European focus would give us more flexibility. It was therefore decided to design a unit of study where the focus European country or indeed groups of countries could change every time the unit was offered. An introductory element of the unit would present Europe and the European Union and the place of the focus country/countries within that context. Another significant component would comprise more recent socio-cultural aspects related to the focus country, as well as a language taster of the relevant language. This content would be presented within a broad business framework. It made sense, the first time the unit was offered, to begin with Italy as the focus country (since we had already developed a range of interesting materials from our earlier “Doing Business with Italy” test module) and later move to other European countries.

## ***2.2 Curriculum Considerations***

The fact that the unit would be cross-disciplinary, in the sense of offering some language and culture study (in Australia usually located in the Humanities), as well as socio-political and business content, was exciting, and an innovation in our institution. In a sense we had an open book, although the unit had to be formally approved by the University Courses Committee before it could be offered as credit-bearing.

Its location in the School of Management seemed appropriate, as did the decision to present it as a second year level elective unit which could be taken by students from the different faculties across the University. Normally, at Curtin University, Business majors can include a language unit from the Faculty of Humanities as an elective. The unit under discussion, however, deliberately resides in the Business Faculty and emphasizes the fact that language and culture elements can be integrated into the content of all courses, as one possible way of developing global graduate capabilities, particularly those relating to intercultural knowledge and understanding. Although in more recent years there have been some quite significant attempts, particularly in schools, to promote language study, numbers of students engaging in the study of languages other than English, both at school and university levels, remain small (Mayfield 2017).

Thus, in designing a unit of study to promote intercultural skills, the inclusion of a language element was by no means a given and the University Courses Committee took some convincing before approving the unit. When it came to devising strategies for how this might be done, it should be noted that one of the team involved in developing and delivering this unit of study had recently been granted a fellowship to examine the embedding of language development across the curriculum, and hence interdisciplinary collaboration (Briguglio 2014). In our case, as indicated above, both academics had a background in language, education and business, thus in a sense interdisciplinarity was inbuilt in the teaching team, which probably avoided any territorial issues that might have arisen with colleagues specialized in the business disciplines. However, we were aware that in order to obtain the University Courses Committee approval, we would be asked to justify, in particular, the inclusion of a linguistic element in a business unit. This in fact proved to be the case, and we had to be very specific about the fact that the foreign language content would be at beginners level and fairly elementary. Indeed, it could not be otherwise considering the limited time that would be allocated to it.

### **3 Unit Content: The Tripartite Curriculum**

Before designing and finalizing the syllabus content of this unit, we had to be very clear about what we wanted students to acquire through this learning experience. Decisions around content included asking what sort of knowledge, understanding and skills would be useful for business students to acquire that would serve them well when doing business with another country. The title of the unit, “Doing Business with Europe” (DBWE), seemed appropriate and interesting enough, so was easily agreed to. The actual content to be included took more discussion and consideration. We were fairly sure that, above all, we were aiming to develop those much touted “intercultural global skills” (University of Adelaide 2018; University of Melbourne 2018), or, as Skrbis (2014) calls them, “cosmopolitan skills”, that are neither easy to acquire, nor easy to demonstrate and assess. We had only three hours per week of in-class time and we had to consider carefully how this should be

### A tripartite common core



**Fig. 1** A tripartite common core

allocated amongst the essential elements of the unit. We examined the content of other similar units from universities across the world that an online search provided, and which were not very numerous, in fact. After much discussion we decided that the content for DBWE, as illustrated in Fig. 1, should consist of an international/European element, a business element, and a socio-cultural element (including cultural and linguistic aspects of the target country).

### 3.1 *The Cultural and Linguistic Elements*

The cultural/linguistic context was the part of the syllabus that was more challenging and stimulating for the staff involved, given their academic background. These were also the aspects that would, to a great extent, impact on the success of the whole project. There was no need to resurrect the old but still valid tenets of the Sapir-Whorfian theory about the indissoluble ties of language and culture, yet we wanted to explore those same elements as constituting some kind of concentrated body of knowledge that distinguished the national/geographical identity of the chosen country (Italy). Our approach to the so-called “lingua-culture nexus” (Agar 1994), was strategic and functional so that the learners in our course could achieve not just an instrumental education into the “doing business” realm but also a socio-cultural and intercultural acquaintance with the notions presented in the unit (Mackerras 2007). Of course the lingua-culture nexus would later be extended to the realm of business and economics to make it more suitable for the business students of the University. Italy provided many cases and examples that we could rely on for our teaching. The most useful ones were those that provided an understanding of the distinctive features of contemporary Italian brands, firms, publicity and other business-related aspects. In other words, we pragmatically selected those particular

items that constituted a useful teaching field where socio-cultural norms, practices and discourses met the contemporary economic assets of Italy. This whole continuum of possible teaching cases would then be viewed and interpreted in the larger context of the European Economic Community as a whole. If the range of educational tasks we wanted to pursue seemed at this point too rich and complex, we were guided by some practical ideas about how to identify them, as elaborated below:

- Language and culture were to help to define the focus country. These aspects had to be effective in providing a clear and accessible understanding of the specificity of a given trait or aspect (social, economic, anthropological) that distinguished the chosen country from other countries (especially in the European context). In other words, language and culture were to be seen as constituting the social, economic and historical identity of the focus country.
- The linguistic and cultural elements had to be taught in the short time of a university semester (12 teaching weeks), hence there was always the risk of the over-simplification or stereotyping of more complex conceptual elements that we could not explain or present in full to the students. This risk had to be accepted and, later on, partially addressed through a research task to be undertaken by the students themselves for the final collaborative assignment of the unit. The final goal we hoped to achieve was a critical understanding by students of the lingua-culture notions studied during the term so that they could apply them autonomously in the written task and the oral presentation in class. Those cases represented successful examples taken from the Italian economy which students approached and analysed with the intellectual tools and skills we hoped to provide through our course.
- The project also included a very basic introduction to the language of the focus country. This component, together with the socio-economic and cultural items presented, would serve another purpose: that is, to enhance the intercultural competence of business students (both Australian and international), as well as providing students with a concrete taster experience which, as we saw, they thoroughly enjoyed. Our students were not to be seen as regular customers of one of a number of business Italian courses existing in other academic institutions. Rather, we hoped they would become motivated “heteroglossic language users” (Nolden and Kramersch 1996, p. 64), or even better, “intercultural speakers” or “intercultural mediators”, whose knowledge of another culture would make them more sensitive to issues around language competence and indeed intercultural competence (Byram 1997; Byram and Zarate 1997). Our notion of IC competence was a very instrumental one and the conversation items to be practised in class were those that would have allowed an initial and simplified comprehension of the necessary communicative processes that take place in a business context. Language was used as a motivational tool that could enlighten and feed the personal understanding of the socio-economic information presented in the course. If this kind of very basic linguistic pedagogy (mainly oral and conversational) seemed too simple, we had to remind ourselves of the time limitations, and that the taster was provided as an emotional link to Italian culture (Wierzbicka 1997).

### **3.2 *The Introductory Language Element***

The introductory language element was very much at a simple beginners level and was taught for approximately one hour at each session. It was understood that not too much could be expected from about ten hours in total (12 sessions in all, minus one for the test and one for the group presentation). However, the audio-visual task that students produced as part of the assessment proved that, firstly, students had a lot of fun with what they learned in Italian and, secondly, that, although at an elementary level, they were able to communicate quite successfully. The themes and topics that were addressed in the beginners language taster were fairly basic and related to learning to say a few things about yourself and what you do; asking others what they do and where they live; describing some of the things you like to eat, watch; basic information relating to places and business meetings, and so on. Although this sort of language element was (of necessity) fairly basic, it was important because it gave students an emotional link to Italian language and culture. This certainly is something fairly new for business courses in Australia, except, perhaps, for a minority of students who take language studies as electives or do a double business/language major. This emotional attraction to Italian language and culture, fostered by the beginners language sessions, spilled over into students wanting to go to Italy and thus beginning to talk to us as about the possibility of arranging a study tour. As it happens, the Business School in question has a strong link with an Italian University so that a tour was indeed arranged a year later, although only some of the students who had taken our unit were involved.

### **3.3 *The Business Component***

The business component of the syllabus was related to the lingua-culture nexus discussed above. It made sense, in fact, to present the learners with some lexical samples present in any economic transaction in Italian, or to listen to and repeat some verbal exchanges that were possible when buying and selling articles such as clothes, fruit or foods. Building a very basic vocabulary, practising essential exchanges of conversation, exercising the pronunciation of words linked to professional or industrial contexts: this was the fun, but also the motivating coda of each of our sessions (one hour at most). However, because “it is very often [the] very simple, formulaic language that is culturally loaded” (Crozet and Liddicoat 1997, p. 12), these same linguistic samples would be able to take our learners to other levels of macro-cultural understanding and awareness. The next stage aimed to provide some business input through the use of animated slides or short videos focusing on the wider Italian business context (Mughan 1998). This was provided through materials on the online learning system, but time restrictions prevented us from undertaking in-depth discussion in class. This integrated approach to language and business (culture) was not always easy to accomplish. When the Italian business

context required a much deeper understanding, our course would also provide brief but necessary insights into the economic and political history of Italy. For example, the Italian Consul provided students with an overview of contemporary Italy within the European Union which became an excellent introductory framework for the whole unit, as well as promoting real world/work integrated links for students.

In particular, the more informative sessions of the unit had to focus on aspects that, for example, presented the specificity of Italian industrial capitalism (family run and often medium and small business oriented), before and after the Second World War, which led to the economic consumerism of the 1960s and the radical changes in the globalized era of today. The business content of the unit had to be combined with our socio-cultural approach, so that samples from the traditionally high cultural canon of Italy (arts and the opera, for example) could be matched with other samples taken from a low popular canon (pop music and the cinema). The right selection of these particular cultural items would form a sort of catalogue that would enable us to appreciate and analyse the issues that were more strictly related to the world of business and industry. We wanted students to see the differences between, and peculiarities of, the various examples of industrial brands and logos that form the constellation of the modern Italian economy. The use of the internet would provide students with much of the necessary information for their critical understanding of all those marketing issues that contribute to the success of the so-called “made in Italy” brand in fields such as fashion, design and architecture. This would be the critical training for those same students who, organized in groups, would produce oral presentations and a written project report, where the Italian identity of famous brands and products had to be assessed and explained.

### ***3.4 The European Context***

The European context was initially considered a political and economic umbrella that could offer to Australian and international business students a useful insight into the specific features of an international and regional integration of states and markets. This presented an example offering the free circulation of goods and individuals, promoting a certain degree of financial and monetary unification and finally providing a wider international context for the target country. The understanding of the European Union was our final goal if the “doing” business component of the unit was to adopt a modern approach to the global economy. However, during the development of the syllabus, we gradually became convinced that no intercultural competence of any European country was possible if we did not explain the advantages of, and the recent obstacles to, the creation of a community of different states and peoples. We also became aware, when selecting the essential topics for our EU sessions, that this umbrella allowed us a kind of national/multicultural flexibility that would have made a difference when comparing our course to other internationally based academic units. That is, we could choose a different member country of the Community each semester, or we could combine some European countries because

they shared a certain degree of geo-cultural similarity: for example we could have presented together Italy, France and Spain as belonging to the Mediterranean family of Latin countries; or we could dedicate a semester to the countries of the Benelux group (Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands). The possibilities were many and the possibility to select one country or a group of countries would definitely impact on the notions and strategies to be adopted (in particular, they would reduce or increase the time devoted, for example, to the lingua-culture material). Nevertheless we were well aware of the pedagogical usefulness of the integrated approach we were trying to apply. Here was a university course in an Australian context that was attempting to blend a professional education in international business with a modern intercultural agenda: language and culture were finding a place in a non-humanistic academic space in a Faculty of Business.

### 3.5 *The Final Syllabus*

Therefore, taking into account the above considerations, and after all the necessary changes and adaptations, we came up with the following sequence of sessions (Table 1):

**Table 1** The final syllabus

Session	Lecture & seminar	Italian language component
1	Background to the European context (European Union) and Australia's relationship with Europe	Greetings & introductions
2	The European context and Italy's position within Europe	Address & telephone numbers
3	Modern Italy from WW2—society and culture	Saying what you do – working and/or studying
4	Overview of Italy today—facts and figures	Saying which languages you speak
5	Small and medium sized enterprises and business traditions in Italy	Where you live
6	Food, sport & tourism in Italy	Food & drink preferences
7	Italian language, culture and business Italian style	Describing self & others
8	Women in business	Talking about family
9	Marketing and advertising Italian products	Asking for directions & hotel bookings
10	Socializing Italian style	Appointments & business meetings
11	Presentation of team projects	
12	Presentation of team projects	

### 3.6 Assessment

Assessment of student achievement needed to relate specifically to the unit's stated learning outcomes, with Italy as the target country the first time the unit was offered. These were officially elaborated in the Unit Outline (MGMT 2013—Doing Business with Europe) as below:

On successful completion of this unit, students can:

1. Identify issues involved in doing business in/with Europe;
2. Acquire understanding of how the case country's position in Europe impacts business in/with that country;
3. Develop an understanding of how cultural and linguistic aspects of the case country influence business ethos and practice;
4. Communicate at an introductory level in the case country's language;
5. Develop and apply intercultural communication skills.

The limitations were that only three assessments per unit are allowed by the University and within that, we needed to capture the understandings and skills that we could hope to teach within the 12 session unit. We decided on the three following assessment tasks: a reflective journal, a brief language test, and a group project.

The reflective journal aimed to give students the opportunity to examine and reflect upon the influence of language and culture all around them in everyday life and/or in the media. After all, the University where this unit was taught is amongst the top five in Australia for diversity of student populations. Students were encouraged to find real life examples of linguistic and cultural nuances in life all around them.

The task consisted of written reflections (and could also include visual elements) concerning Europe and Italy, and including European and Italian influences in Australia. The reflections were to show that students were observing and thinking about the impact of cultural and linguistic aspects on behaviours and events that were happening around them, in the local news, or in the national or international media. Students were required to provide five entries. A framework for analysis was provided (Scanlon and Chernomas 1997). On the whole, students used examples from the media and only a few braver individuals used real life examples. In any case the reflections showed that students did think about linguistic and cultural implications that they may not normally have thought about or focused upon in daily life. So this activity did indeed contribute to making them more "reflective" about cultural aspects and their influence on the behaviour of individuals.

The language test consisted of two parts. One was a fairly simple multiple-choice test undertaken in class, with a focus on comprehension of oral elements of the language component of the unit as elaborated in the syllabus above. The second element consisted of students producing a brief video recording on their mobile phones of a dialogue that they had developed based on the beginner language structures they had learned. In small groups of three or four, students performed role plays and recorded brief interactional scenarios of around 2 or 3 min duration, and sent them to us as video files. The outcomes in this element of the assessment varied, but on the whole were creative and entertaining.



The group project was undertaken in small teams of three or four students. Although the teams could self-select, they had to strive to have members from different countries/ethnicities on the team. Students selected and analysed the operation of a large Italian company as their special project. Their findings were presented in a group presentation and then in a final written report. Students were given a framework for analysis which allowed them to examine, for example, how the company is structured; what makes it specifically Italian; what makes it international/global; which factors contribute to its success; what are the cultural features that contribute to its particular product or brand and how; what role Italian language and culture play in the company's operation, and so on. A list of suitable Italian companies was provided and students could select one of those, or another company, after consultation with the lecturer. The group presentations were very well written up and presented, and a couple were indeed outstanding and beyond our expectations, such was the enthusiasm with which students seemed to tackle them. As can be seen from the contents page of one of the projects in Fig. 2, students covered a large range of issues and certainly undertook a lot of research.

On the whole the three components of the assessment worked very well and we felt they achieved their purpose of assessing students' increased learning and understanding in this unit as expressed in the unit outcomes.

## 4 Delivery and Implementation Issues

A range of different issues arose as we developed and delivered this unit. As indicated earlier, because of the action-research nature of the development and implementation and because the whole project involved team teaching, we had ample opportunity to reflect and refine as we moved forward. The following were some major considerations that required particular attention.

### 4.1 *Stereotyping*

An important issue that needed to be considered during the project, both in the planning of the syllabus and the teaching/lecturing stages, was that of presenting topics that could easily fall into the category of cultural stereotyping and even of ethnocentrism. As already mentioned, the integration of cultural, linguistic and business elements was at risk of splintering due to the complexity of the notions involved. In order to exit from this pedagogical impasse we decided that the simplification and essential streamlining of concepts and discourses had to be accepted. Therefore, following the distinctions of Osland and Bird (2000), we included "high-level stereotypes", similar to the well-known socio-anthropological models of Hofstede (1996), Hofstede et al. (2010), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2002), and avoided the "low-level simplifications" that very often are to be found in the "doing

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9.7 Hispanic television personality Ingrid Hoffman promoting Barilla's products.

**Fig. 2** Table of Contents of group project

business" type literature that is also adopted in various business circles and national chambers of commerce. The latter present a kind of simplistic sense-making that avoids paradoxes and prefers dualism to multiplicity. Our approach to cultural stereotypes was based on the conviction that they had to be identified initially as "descriptive" and not strictly "evaluative" (Fang 2005). The evaluation, we felt, would be conducted by the students whose intercultural sensitivity we aimed to boost during our lessons. Italy would be presented as a dynamically composite nation, an active and founding member of the EU, a country whose cultural and linguistic richness was counter-balanced by its socio-economic contradictions (the North-South divide, the industrialization of the North, the gender gap, migrant and refugee communities in Italy and Europe, and so on).

The final stage of our project could ideally have included a study tour to Italy so that intercultural business encounters (Clausen 2007) could finally clarify and highlight to the students all the simplifications that were initially presented in the unit. The fact that the two teaching lecturers both had an Italian linguistic and cultural background was the kind of intercultural support (through “cultural mentors”) that could decode and translate the “sophisticated high-level stereotypes” identified in the syllabus (Osland and Bird 2000). The aim was that as our project moved forward into other semesters, the focus country would change, and we would also find the mentors for the chosen national culture, so that the language component of the course and the cultural aspects would be catered for by a native or near-native speaker.

## ***4.2 The Language Element***

Just at what level to pitch the beginners language element, what to include and how to select the content were issues that were initially discussed and planned for, but which also changed according to the success of the language sessions in class. It quickly became evident that students did indeed enjoy the taster and were not afraid to participate in role play and become involved. The language taster provided an enjoyable and more relaxed tangible element after the more abstract considerations of business in Italy/Europe and students took to it with gusto and enjoyment. Indeed the authors think there is room for including business language electives within Business Schools in Australia. As indicated earlier, some students do take double majors in business and language or take a language unit within a business degree. However, we are of the opinion that business and language units, such as DBWE, or those with an even greater concentration on language and culture with a business focus, would be popular with students, particularly if aligned with the possibility of a study tour.

## ***4.3 Team Teaching***

In our particular case the team teaching worked very well, perhaps largely due to the fact that both teachers had similar disciplinary backgrounds, which eliminated any concern about taking over someone else’s territory. Both lecturers also had similar cultural and teaching backgrounds that may have created an element of trust and respect for both parties, promoting questioning and reflection as we went. This enriched the team-teaching experience and allowed us to experiment with different approaches and activities.

However, we overlooked the fact that interdisciplinary collaboration also spans perceived territory of the different disciplines. Thus while the two people involved had no problem with joining elements from Humanities and Business, we perhaps did not give enough consideration to the fact that the location of the unit in the

School of Management could make other business colleagues suspicious of language and culture elements, in Australia normally considered Humanities territory. The Working in the Third Space (WITTS) model (Briguglio 2014) indicates the importance of considering contextual and staff professional characteristics in order to ensure successful interdisciplinary collaboration. Although we were confident of being able to span both Humanities and Business disciplines, we overlooked the fact that many of our colleagues were not able to do so, thus allowing for the possibility of our activity in this unit being viewed as different from, or outside, management territory. This meant that if either of us was not *in situ* for a period of time, other colleagues from the School of Management might not take ownership of the unit. Unfortunately, this is in fact what happened when the following semester the original staff were not able to be involved in its delivery, and the unit was simply not offered, even though it had been positively evaluated by students.

#### ***4.4 Branding, Publicizing and Gaining Support for the Unit***

A major issue for newly developed units of study that are electives (that is, not compulsory) is how to advertise them to students. In our case, we presumed that the unit, since it was available across the University, would be publicized centrally. Unfortunately we found out after implementation that the central Student Services area advertises whole courses, but not single units. The responsibility for the latter is usually within Schools, which promote their own offerings. This means that the people involved in developing the unit should have had more contact with other Faculties in order to ensure that the relevant information was received by students in a timely manner before they made their selections for units of study, especially electives. In our case also, as indicated above, no other staff from the School of Management, apart from the two staff originally involved in its design and delivery, had identified with the unit. So when the Head of School who had supported us to develop the unit left the School and neither of us was able to be involved in the delivery for second semester (and staffing arrangements in the School were not flexible enough to accommodate too many changes), the unit was simply not offered. For a new unit which had just gained traction in the first semester, this was a major blow and taught us not only how important the relevant advertising can be, but also how we needed to ensure more backing within the School and the involvement and support of other colleagues in order to ensure continuity.

## **5 Conclusion**

The experience of developing, delivering and evaluating this unit has been enriching and enjoyable for the staff involved. To be able to develop a curriculum project such as ours from beginning to end is very satisfying, especially for two academics with a background in language and education. We take several lessons with us and are

keen to share our reflections with colleagues who may wish to do something similar and explore the interdisciplinary space. To assist in this process, we have identified four points of particular note.

First, from an educational point of view, we were very pleased that students evaluated the unit positively. Indeed after taking the unit, some students urged us to organize a study tour to Italy because they had enjoyed the language and culture feel of the unit and were stimulated to continue their learning journey in this area.

Second, the fact that this was, from start to finish, a team-teaching exercise, has much to recommend it. Developing curriculum with a colleague or colleagues, rather than singly, leads inevitably to much more discussion, analysis and questioning. The talents and experience of both academics bring more to bear upon the task and make the process of development more enriching.

Third, in regard to administrative aspects, we know that designing a new unit from start to finish (that is, to formal approval from the institution to offer the unit) can take up to a year or even longer—administrative processes move slowly in universities. In our case, not including early discussion and talks with the Italian Consul and the Head of the School of Management, it took almost a year to develop the unit and see it through its various administrative phases. This sort of lead-up time is necessary in order to consult all the various stakeholders within a university structure. We have learned the importance of involving other colleagues from the same School or educational unit if we want to ensure support and continuity for the innovation. It is not enough for a Head of School to be supportive, because, as we learned, individuals can quickly move from one part of the organization to another (as happened in our case), thus leaving an interdisciplinary innovation such as ours exposed. On the other hand, if other colleagues are committed to the innovation and involved in its development and delivery, its continuity may be better ensured. Unfortunately, we learned a little too late that we should also perhaps have undertaken more consultation with colleagues in other Faculties apart from Business. This was particularly important for colleagues in the Humanities, who could have given us some support with promoting the unit to the student population.

Finally, since language study is in such a precarious position at the tertiary level in Australia, we think it is important to explore the possibility of linking languages to other discipline areas where there may be a chance of exploring their use, popularity and take-up by students. As indicated earlier, we were surprised by the level of interest shown by students in the language and culture elements in a context such as business, where they are not normally exposed to such aspects. Moreover, the exposure to the language taster tended to create a more tangible experience for students and they responded enthusiastically. Indeed we feel that teaching a unit such as “Doing Business with Europe” provided an enriching and enjoyable learning experience for all students. The possibility of linking such a unit to a study tour to Europe would take the whole experience to the next level and truly contribute to help preparing students to be global citizens.

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## Part VI

# Planning the Connected Classroom

Embracing technology is an imperative of the university workspace, but language scholars have been quick to take up the challenge, and to have understood its many benefits, such as the ready access to authentic language resources for both teacher and student. No longer seen as a mode of learning reserved for remote or distance education, online teaching offers a set of tools employed by teachers in a wide variety of contexts. Language courses in particular provide many examples of innovative practice.

This section presents the results from three projects conducted within the context of a university language program. Each chapter showcases a forward-looking model that is informed by recent research on the appropriate and effective use of available technologies for enhancing student learning. Each model is carefully designed to maintain student motivation and engagement, by way of facilitating rich, technology supported interactions in an online learning space.

Muranaka-Vuletich describes the findings of an investigation into the online delivery of Japanese 101, a beginners course offered at Western Sydney University. She outlines how the online version of the existing Japanese 101 course was developed, and discusses the benefits and disadvantages of offering the course online by comparing the pass rates of the online and on-campus student groups. This study advocates embedding regular ZOOM videoconference meetings within the online curriculum, for maximizing student learning outcomes, particularly with respect to pronunciation. However she expresses some hesitation about the limitations of technology.

Palaktoglou, Tsianikas, Litinas and Wright discuss the development and delivery of an online Modern Greek language program at Flinders University, which they present as a possible model for ensuring the maintenance of small language programs in Australian universities. They describe how the program was developed, following theory-informed educational design principles and best practice. Their survey results demonstrate that, if carefully designed and effectively delivered, online language learning can enrich the student learning experience through the creation of a supportive learning community.



De Toni, Verdina, Caruso and Kinder examine the adaptive and mobile learning experiences of students in Italian beginners classes at the University of Western Australia. Their study demonstrates how such tools are incorporated into their course design to enable automated and personalized language practice. Their results, from both qualitative and quantitative data, suggest that new technologies have a great capacity for enhancing the student learning experience.

Overall, the chapters in this section demonstrate the benefits of undertaking research and conducting classroom experiments in the use of technology in university language programs, despite some reservations about the gaps between on campus and online delivery and a call for further reflection on the present limitations of new technologies.

# Online Delivery of a Beginners Course in Japanese: Its Costs and Benefits



Hiromi Muranaka-Vuletich

**Abstract** Universities in Australia are rapidly moving toward the online delivery of courses, and language education is part of this trend. This chapter presents a study based on a newly developed, fully online Japanese language beginners unit—Japanese 101—at Western Sydney University. The online unit aims to deliver the same content as its on-campus equivalent. The unit covers the four essential skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and was designed in such a way that the course content could be taught via the Blackboard learning management system, supplemented by ZOOM videoconferencing. This chapter will firstly describe how the unit was re-developed in order to cater for its online delivery. It will then examine the assessment issues that are part of an ongoing improvement process. Some positive and negative aspects of online delivery will be discussed, in comparison with its on-campus equivalent. The students' achievements indicate that it is possible to learn the language online. However, the question remains as to whether or not online delivery is the best method for language courses in the context of a university language education.

**Keywords** Online delivery · Language courses · Japanese · Beginners unit · Blackboard · ZOOM · Videoconferencing · Assessment · University languages education

## 1 Introduction

The use of information technology has steadily increased in educational institutions (Hillman and Corkery 2010; Wu et al. 2016), driven by the demands for increased flexibility from both students and administration. Many Australian universities are moving toward online or blended learning, and language education is no exception.

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However, one important question arises: Is online learning effective in comparison to on-campus courses? Firstly, this chapter describes how an on-campus course was re-developed as an online course. Secondly, it discusses the assessment issues precipitated by online delivery. Finally, it assesses the positive and negative aspects of the online course in comparison to the original, ongoing on-campus course.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Effectiveness of Online Courses

Online courses seem to have some advantages and disadvantages, from both personal and institutional perspectives (De Paepe et al. 2018). Some online courses are hybrid courses where both online and traditional face-to-face classes are maintained, whilst others are fully online. Previous research has reported mixed results from both hybrid and fully online courses in terms of their effectiveness. Some studies suggest that online education is not as effective as traditional on-campus courses. For example, Figlio et al. (2013) compared online videotaped lectures and live lectures and found that videotaped lectures had a negative effect on some students. Interestingly, the study mode (online or on-campus) seems to have little or no predictive power in terms of grades or test scores (McPhee and Söderström 2012; Nguyen 2015; Schoenfeld-Tacher et al. 2001). Some previous studies (Colvin et al. 2014; Means et al. 2009; Neuhauser 2002) have shown that online student cohorts on average scored even slightly higher than those who were in the face-to-face course. However, it is evident that online delivery is better suited to some fields of study, but not all. For instance, courses using an interactive engagement pedagogy (Colvin et al. 2014) and applications of some learning strategies that work in a traditional face-to-face context (Broadbent and Poon 2015) do not always work in an online context.

Although student background may be considered an important factor for successful online education, not all studies have agreed with this claim. Figlio et al. (2013) have found that some factors contributed to unsuccessful outcomes in online learning, namely being Hispanic, male or a lower achieving student. As these variables may overlap with other issues such as socio-economic status, which may influence available study time, it would be too early to conclude that single factors are the cause of unsuccessful online learning. In the study conducted by Bowen et al. (2014), for example, none of the factors regarding students' personal, educational and financial background (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, parents' education and income, primary language spoken, prior knowledge test score, hours worked for pay, and college/university GPA) had any significant impact on their success through online learning in comparison to traditional on-campus courses.

A successful online education is determined by the presence in an online course of both synchronous and asynchronous experiences (McPhee and Söderström 2012), a combination which is possible even for fully online courses. This may be

why hybrid online courses tend to show equivalent results to on-campus courses and sometimes even outperform them (Bowen et al. 2014). The example from Bowen et al. was a hybrid course, which contained machine-guided instruction with one hour of weekly face-to-face instruction, while the comparative on-campus course had three hours of weekly face-to-face instruction. The hybrid course, which has only one hour of face-to-face contact managed to achieve results on par with the on-campus counterpart, and even one hour of synchronous experience may make a difference to student learning.

Some studies have pointed out efficiency issues with online studies. Bowen et al. (2014) have reported that the online students in a hybrid-format course spent 1.2 fewer hours in total time per week and still achieved comparable results to their on-campus counterparts. Another hybrid course has reported a similar outcome where: “the results also indicated students experienced a much more effective *and efficient* learning experience in that they showed equal or better learning gain in half the time” (Lovett et al. 2008, p. 14).

## 2.2 *Advantages and Disadvantages*

### 2.2.1 *Advantages*

Online studies have some advantages and disadvantages, although some factors are not clear cut. The two most commonly discussed advantages are: 1) promotion of learner autonomy; and, 2) flexibility.

Previous studies have suggested that online learning and digital technologies may promote learner autonomy (De Paepe et al. 2018; Lee 2014; Rogers and Wolff 2000). However, this depends on the type of task. For example, for beginner language students, online learning may be more appealing when it comes to tasks with teacher-guided questions, rather than free topic tasks with less teacher guidance (Lee 2016). Despite good potential for autonomous studies, Sun (2014) has reported that motivation and self-direction are hard to maintain, and students have reported that it is hard to keep up with the schedule and study regularly.

Flexibility is also expected for online learning, and this is one of the reasons for promoting it. Flexibility can be defined from the learners’, teachers’ and administrators’ point of view, but what determines successful learning from the students’ perspective is flexibility. Therefore, this section focuses solely on this issue. Sun et al. (2008) have studied the relationship between e-learning course flexibility and student satisfaction. As e-learning can be unconstrained by space, time and location, it can offer the opportunity to balance effectively students’ personal life and work commitments while they are studying. Student study pace is also more flexible in online courses (Rogers and Wolff 2000; Sun et al. 2008), all of which contributes to high levels of student satisfaction (De Paepe et al. 2018; Loewen et al. 2019; Sun et al. 2008).

### 2.2.2 Disadvantages

While online courses can be beneficial for students, there are also disadvantages which are commonly raised. Isolation from the instructor and other classmates is one of the most discussed problems of online learning (De Paepe et al. 2018; Koutsoupidou 2014). Isolation not only affects students' motivation to keep up with the schedule and study regularly (Sun 2014), but it also brings unavoidable inconvenience. In a classroom situation, students can receive immediate and personalized feedback from the instructor (De Paepe et al. 2018; Rogers and Wolff 2000), and they can also learn from other classmates through pair work (Rogers and Wolff 2000). Learning goes beyond the classroom and there is the possibility of collaboration beyond the classroom. A feeling of belonging is important, especially in language studies. Online students tend to miss these benefits. Sun (2014) reported that students found that the social aspects and the opportunity to study collaboratively are issues in online learning.

One solution to overcoming some of the issues caused by isolation is the introduction of videoconferencing as part of an online course. Videoconferencing tools can promote socializing, conversations among learners and teacher feedback (Hampel and Stickler 2012). The only problem is that the time allocated to videoconferencing may not be the same as in-class interactions. Therefore, how and for how long videoconferencing is used could be the key to whether these tools would be meaningful and useful within a course.

However, isolation itself may not be the most undesirable factor for some students. Students who would like to study online may have other issues, such as a lack of time due to paid work or their personal life. Some students may be happy to study alone and may not think that isolation is a disadvantage.

Finally, many previous studies have reported that the lack of technological support for students is an issue (Bell and MacDougall 2013; De Paepe et al. 2018). Technical difficulties and computer literacy may create learner anxiety, which may further affect task performance (Lee 2010), and therefore the students' retention rate and results. This issue of technological support is also a problem for teaching staff (Appana 2008; Bartley and Golek 2004) and cannot be ignored, as this will affect the course quality and students' performance.

## 3 How to Create an Online Course from an Existing On-Campus Course

### 3.1 Background

The online course discussed in this study was re-developed from the existing on-campus beginners-level course entitled Japanese 101 at Western Sydney University. This was done in response to, and as a result of, current trends and the demand for

flexible learning options by the university and students. During the period covered by this paper, the course had a total enrolment of 185, and was taught on three campuses, and in one class online. Online students represented only 11.9% of Japanese 101 students, i.e., 22 students.

The background of the online students varied, but they were generally non-major and non-sub-major students. Many of them intended to study Japanese as an elective unit, and some students were in their final year or final semester before graduation. Some students were already working full-time, and one was living outside Sydney. Therefore, they had no option other than to take an online unit in order to complete their degrees. One working student said she wanted to take this unit as it was online, and she was interested in learning Japanese, therefore she could “hit two birds with one stone”. One student had a childcare arrangement issue, and some had problems with clashes with other units.

### 3.2 *Structure*

The fundamental requirement for this online course was to have the same content as its on-campus equivalent. The on-campus course has four hours of face-to-face classes per week, which had to be effectively replicated in the online course. This led to the greatest challenge faced in the development process, which was how to reinforce speaking skills. As the students were not in an environment where other students were present, and they also heard less of the instructor’s Japanese in comparison to the classroom situation, it was necessary to introduce some additional speaking and listening opportunities.

Timely feedback is another aspect that is missing from the online course. This is related to another difficulty associated with current technology, namely testing the writing of Japanese characters. In a classroom, students are taught to write Japanese characters, and the instructor can go around the classroom and monitor students’ progress.

Other challenges are related to student attitudes. As reported in the literature (Sun 2014), the most difficult aspect of online learning is to keep students’ motivation high. Students must be able to keep up with the weekly content independently while the on-campus students only have to come to the class and work on the content introduced in the classroom. Online students may have the same content, but as the pace is left up to the student, it may take longer for the students to cover the same material. There is also no one to give extra examples when students have difficulty in understanding the subject matter. Therefore, it is important to provide some additional human interaction in order to detect difficulties that students may experience. Not all students are able to identify what aspects of the language they do not understand, and some help is needed in order for them to proceed to the next level.

The on-campus course has two hours in a large tutorial containing up to 70 students, and another two hours in a smaller tutorial (15–25 in each class). The four

skills (reading/writing/ listening/speaking) are covered, and assessments reflect the content of the classes. The online course was developed from the on-campus unit, by creating two modules per week, featuring the same content. Each module typically contains some reading/writing and speaking/listening exercises using the grammar and vocabulary introduced in the on-campus course. Additionally, a one-hour online videoconference/meeting was offered weekly, using the ZOOM videoconferencing application. The ZOOM meeting was intended to address a weakness of the online course in terms of the lack of student speaking time and was used to reinforce students' speaking skills. After an instructor-led discussion of some grammatical points or other language features, students were placed into separate online breakout rooms with one to three other students to practise the given speaking tasks. The purpose of the weekly ZOOM meeting was to conduct three types of activities: 1) review exercises; 2) course announcements; and, 3) assessments. The review exercises were much more intensive in comparison to the on-campus course due to the time limit (one hour per week). The announcements and assessments were the same as those on-campus except for a small number of online specific issues.

The ZOOM meeting plays a major role in the online course, as it creates a form of class solidarity, and students are less isolated in their studies. The instructor visits each breakout room during the speaking exercises and students not only practised their given tasks, but often started talking about the grammar that they did not understand. The breakout-room time gives students an opportunity to talk without the instructor, and when the instructor visits, they can ask further questions.

### 3.3 Study Materials

The on-campus course uses a textbook (*Minna no Nihongo: Beginner 1*), course notes (i.e., a workbook used to study the contents), as well as an online site created using the Blackboard learning system. The original online site for the on-campus cohort already consisted of information regarding the course as well as some online grammar and vocabulary exercises and tests. The main contents covered in this course were Lessons 1–7 of the textbook and basic Japanese characters, i.e., *hiragana* and *katakana*, but not *kanji*.

Both on-campus and online courses were categorized as the same course, thus one online platform had to be used to deliver the same content and assessment tasks. In order to deliver the content, each class module was prepared, with a summary of contents and some study points, which were divided into activities. Each activity started with a video explaining the contents, followed by a list of vocabulary and exercises. The exercises were based on the textbook and students were referred to the page number of the textbook and the course notes. All of the exercise answers were provided; sometimes with explanations. At this beginners level, not all answers required explanations (Fig. 1).

In order to supplement the lack of speaking and listening activities, each online activity was followed by exercises using audio files that were created for the online

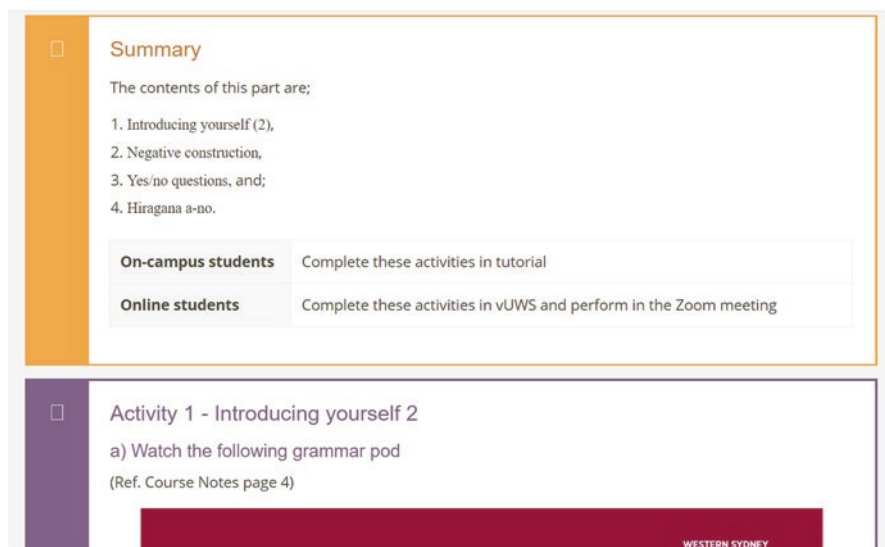


Fig. 1 An example of online material



Fig. 2 An example of online audio exercises

course (Fig. 2). All of these materials were also available to on-campus students, and were used as previews, reviews and as catch ups for missed classes.

All course content was delivered online for the online students. Aside from the 40% final examination, all assessments were delivered or submitted online, while for on-campus students only 15% of the assessment components were required to be completed online.



### 3.4 Targeted Students

As the university has six main campuses, and Japanese is offered on only three of them, one of the motivations for the online course was to offer the language across the entire university. This also helps to solve the problem of clashes with other units and makes it more available to working students. The online course was not intended to target students who were majoring or sub-majoring in Japanese, as these students have the unit offered on-campus. Students completing a major normally do not have clashes with other units as the timetable is designed to avoid clashes. However, some sub-major students and elective students may have clashes, but some of these were able to take the unit by attending two different campuses. Therefore, the main target was those students who were taking Japanese as a one-off elective and who may have been non-Humanities students. In fact, we started to have students who would not otherwise take this course, such as medical science students.

It was not intended to include people outside the university, as beginners Japanese language courses are common in Australia. This decision made it possible to have a set time for the weekly ZOOM meeting because time differences were not a consideration, which also made it possible to have an on-campus final examination. Because of the set schedule for the compulsory ZOOM meetings, some students could not take the course due to work commitments or a clash with other courses. However, some full-time working students managed to take an hour off during their work hours, and these committed students generally did well although their study time may have been limited.

## 4 Assessments

Assessments are one of the most challenging issues when re-developing an on-campus course as an online course. The ideal situation would be for the assessments to be identical except for the delivery mode. However, it was extremely difficult to test character writing skills online as they must be handwritten, and not everyone has a computer which allows direct handwriting input.

There are six assessment items in Japanese 101:

1. Online quizzes (15%);
2. Composition (15%);
3. *Hiragana/Katakana* Character test (10%);
4. Speaking Test (10%);
5. Listening Test (10%);
6. Final Exam (40%).

In-class assessments for the on-campus course are items 3–6 in the list above. The final exam, a traditional written assessment, was done on-campus for both the on-campus and online students. Therefore, the challenge is to convert the other three

in-class assessments to the online mode. For the purposes of discussing online issues, only the three assessment items will be investigated, namely, listening test, speaking test and *hiragana/katakana* character test. The on-campus version of the speaking and *hiragana/katakana* character tests were also modified in order to match the online version.

#### **4.1 *Listening Test***

The listening comprehension test was the assessment where the delivery of exactly the same contents was possible in both the online and on-campus courses. This is an assessment task which is about 20 minutes in length, and it tests students' understanding of the Japanese language solely through listening. The question formats included multiple choice and short answer questions in English in response to embedded Japanese audio files. One minor problem was that the Blackboard system does not allow the creation of a test section containing multiple questions to be answered after hearing an audio script. In the paper format for the on-campus students, it was obvious how many questions there are in one section; for example, "Section A contains three questions (A-1 to A-3)". However, as the online system only shows one question per section, the online students needed an extra explanation such as "Sections B and D contain multiple questions to be answered while listening to one script". Another problem is that the audio cannot be changed easily. This is not due to any technical limitation of the Blackboard system, but to the decision to use professional audio recordings created in a studio. In contrast, the test questions can be modified freely by teaching staff without professional assistance. As the audio recordings were of high clarity even in comparison to the on-campus course test, it was possible to conduct the listening comprehension test online without disadvantaging the online students.

#### **4.2 *Speaking Test***

Due to the introduction of the online course, the in-class speaking test had to be modified in order not to disadvantage the online students. It used to be a pair role play. However, this requires students to meet to practise their conversation for the test. As on-campus students can meet at least one or two days per week, they have an opportunity to practise regularly in pairs. Online students, however, come from different campuses and may be working full-time, and only meet up through ZOOM for one hour a week. They often do not have a chance to chat, instead practising the given tasks only during the ZOOM meeting. Therefore, it is very difficult for the online students to arrange pair practice times. Consequently, the speaking task was changed to a question-answer format between the instructor and student.

The speaking task attempts to create a Japanese speaking environment for the students, and, in the test, students are interviewed individually about themselves as well as some prescribed course content. As the interviewer is the Japanese instructor, it is easier for students to speak and answer in Japanese, rather than answering questions in Japanese when being asked by another beginner student. The interview contained about five questions and each question was designed to flow on in a natural order.

### 4.3 Hiragana/Katakana Character Test

The in-class *hiragana/katakana* test used to consist of three 10-minute tests of ten questions each. The first test assessed *hiragana* only, the second *katakana*, and the third and final assessed both *hiragana* and *katakana*.

For the online course, it was not considered necessary to include frequent short tests, as there was already one set of short online quizzes (seven 10-minute tests). Other tests could be conducted during the ZOOM meeting. Offering tests during the ZOOM meetings allowed us to assist students if there were any technical problems. We thus opted for one 20-minute test, which tested both *hiragana* and *katakana*, with 20 questions.

This test was the only one that required slightly different questions to be set for on-campus and online students. The previous test format had involved rewriting *Romaji* words in *hiragana/katakana* or vice versa. However, since typing and handwriting of unknown characters are two different skills, and handwriting skills cannot as yet be tested online, some of the questions had to be modified—for the online students, and for the in-class test as well. The changes introduced were as follows. Out of the 20 questions in the *hiragana/katakana* test, the ratio of reading and writing was 50/50 for the on-campus cohort. However, as a character writing test is not viable for the online course, the question format had to be changed to reading and typing Japanese characters. Questions which would provide exact answers by typing in *Romaji* were avoided and multiple-choice questions were also introduced for both the online and on-campus cohorts so that they could share a number of identical questions.

### 4.4 Cheating and Plagiarism Issues

Any assessments involving online or take-home assignments involve a higher risk of cheating or plagiarism as students are not physically in the same room as the instructor. As described above, the listening, speaking and *hiragana/katakana* tests were taken online by the online cohort and in-class by the on-campus cohort. To minimize the chance of cheating or plagiarism, the following measures were taken:

1. The *hiragana/katakana* test was created by using unfamiliar words in order to avoid answers being sourced from the course notes.
2. The *hiragana/katakana* test was created by posing questions that could not be answered correctly by simply typing in *Romaji* and having the computer generate the correct *hiragana/katakana*.
3. The speaking test had a number of potential questions available prior to the test to allow both cohorts of students to prepare, and the test was done alone with a teacher via ZOOM, which meant it would be difficult to look up the answer, as students needed to maintain eye contact with the instructor.
4. As the listening test allows only five seconds between two recorded questions, it is difficult to look up the answers from the textbook or the internet. Students must type the answers; it is thus less likely that they would be taking notes for the recorded questions.

No matter what measures we take, it is impossible to offer a 100% guarantee against cheating for an online course. Consequently, the final written examination was kept for both the on-campus and online students in order to test the overall understanding of the Japanese language. This final examination tests all the content and accounts for 40% of the total assessment. This would make it difficult for students to pass the unit unless they had a reasonable understanding of the course content.

## 5 Positive Aspects of Online Delivery

As the literature indicates, online delivery has both positive and negative aspects. The most positive aspect of online delivery that was confirmed in this study was flexibility—with place of study, time of study and study pace. Students can study anywhere they wish as long as they can gain access to the internet and a computer. Even the weekly ZOOM meeting and the assessments could be done no matter where the students were. One student took the speaking test while he was travelling overseas, and there were at least two students who were participating in the ZOOM meeting from their workplace during working hours. Due to this flexibility, many students from campuses where Japanese is not offered have now enrolled in this Japanese language course.

Similarly, time of study is also flexible. Students can study at any time, whether they are working or not. Therefore, it has resolved the issue of most clashes with other courses. Study pace is flexible as well. Students can study at a faster or slower pace than in class. If they do not understand the contents, they can repeat the module, as the study materials are set up for self-study. If they were unable to finish the contents on time, they could still catch up by themselves.

## **6 Negative Aspects of Online Delivery**

### ***6.1 The Student Perspective***

Although there are some positive aspects to online delivery, there are also negative aspects of online learning from both the learners' and instructors' perspectives. Firstly, as reported in the literature, this study confirms that isolation from the instructor and other classmates was by far the most problematic issue, and learning in isolation means it is not just the issue of motivation that negatively affects students' outcomes, but also the issue of learning quality. Being in a classroom provides students with various types of interactions between instructor and students, as well as between students. Students are learning the language through communication, which is harder to achieve through online delivery.

Moreover, online students are not monitored while they are learning and, as found in the literature, they do not receive immediate correction, which is done quite easily in a reasonably small class (e.g., up to 25 students). In a classroom situation, there are generally some pair and group speaking activities and many textbooks provide exercises in the pair conversation style. These pair/group activities are best practised in a classroom situation, as facing a screen is different from face-to-face communication. Therefore, even though students are encouraged to undertake pair activities in the ZOOM meetings, the lack of speaking practice becomes apparent after a few weeks—the pronunciation of online students is noticeably non-native-like and although they have extra audio files provided, their learning experience seems to be different from that which occurs in face-to-face classroom contexts.

Students learn the language together outside the classroom as well. On-campus students have a chance to study together after class, and ask each other questions during the break, for example. They often become close friends after learning the language in the same classroom for one semester, but online students do not have these experiences. The short weekly ZOOM meetings simply cannot give the same experience to the online students. Not many online students were willing to practise with other students outside the ZOOM meeting time either.

### ***6.2 Instructors' Perspective***

Online courses are costly. The initial set-up consumes a lot of resources, which includes not only the hardware and software required to prepare the course materials, but also the investment in course development time, which is also considerable.

There were also technical issues when establishing an online course from scratch. The university had a blended learning team who managed the platform for online courses. However, these platforms were created to operate Humanities courses, which require recorded lectures followed by common online tests/assignments that

are supported by the Blackboard system, with or without a ZOOM tutorial. However, beginners language courses are of a different nature. Their aim is to enable students to learn the language itself, which means that they must learn the sound system and communication skills through the online course. These skills are best acquired through practice, rather than a lecture. An online language course structure must therefore be different from a Humanities course.

The materials must reflect the aim to achieve the same goal as the on-campus course. The current Blackboard system can include audio materials which are good enough to enable students to practise the language and to be tested even in comparison to other commercial audio materials. However, the creation of some types of online materials is only possible with the support of specially trained technical officers.

Even after all the materials have been created, sustainability is always an issue. It is now difficult to change the course textbook as the online course is based on a particular textbook, and all the tests have been created based on the vocabulary and grammar introduced in the textbook. Although the language itself does not change dramatically in a few years, if, for example, a particular video or audio file needed to be replaced, this would require considerable planning and time.

The copyright issue is another matter to be considered. Before all the audio and video materials were made, the university's copyright officer had to ensure that no copyrights would be breached.

Inclusion of the ZOOM meeting requires additional skills for the instructor (e.g., ensuring that students' microphones were muted when they were not speaking) in order to run a successful tutorial. Contact hours may be reduced from four hours per week for an on-campus course to one hour for online, but the training time for staff running an effective ZOOM meeting would be substantial. In the current course, I was the person who designed and taught the course, but behind the successful ZOOM meetings, there were hours of attending additional workshops to upgrade my own skills.

Marking for an online course did not achieve particularly great time savings either. That the course is run online does not mean that all the marking is done automatically (e.g., for composition exercises). Besides, no matter how well we try to set up the online assessment tasks so that multiple answers can be prevented, there are always sections where we need to double check. For example, the system does not allow us to give half a mark for one answer, and also it detects an unnecessary space as part of the answer and considers it a wrong answer.

## **7 The Facts About Online Delivery: Results**

This section compares the results of online and on-campus students. The top students would be successful no matter whether they were online or on-campus, and some students would have done better online due to unavoidable absences from the classroom, but the results clearly show that the online students on average did not

do as well as on-campus students. Table 1 shows the average marks of each assessment task: the results only include students who attempted the assessment, and the total mark is from all the enrolled students.

The assessment tasks had exactly the same content, except for one assessment, but it was the on-campus students who clearly outperformed. The *hiragana/katakana* test was the only assessment that included some questions which were different for on-campus and online versions. It was expected that the online students would have better marks as the handwriting of Japanese characters had to be omitted from the online test. However, the equivalent test was difficult enough for some online students to fail the test. This is probably due to the lack of practice as most online students did not submit the weekly homework which was designed to supplement the lack of correction and feedback that on-campus students often have on the spot while they are in the classroom.

The online students' listening test results were the closest to the on-campus average. The online listening test was exactly the same as the on-campus test, except that the online students had to type the answers online. This should not make any difference as the test questions were either multiple choice or short answer questions in English. Another difference is sound quality. The audio recording that was used for the test was recorded in a studio and was of high quality. The online students could sit in a quiet room and use their headsets to create an ideal audio environment for the online test. On the other hand, the on-campus students had to sit in a classroom, and the lecturer was reading the questions out, rather than using recordings.

The overall average pass rate for both online and on-campus students was 77.8% with 13% of students failing after sitting for the final examination. The average pass rate for the on-campus course was 80.4%, while only 59.1% of online students passed. However, the higher failure rate of the online students seems to be a reflection of non-attendance at the weekly ZOOM meeting. Out of the 22 online students, 18 students sat for the final examination. Out of these 18 students, 5 failed and 13 passed and, interestingly, all the failed students were those who were not attending the ZOOM meetings regularly, while all the 13 students who passed the unit were regular attendees. The ZOOM meeting is only one hour a week, and theoretically speaking, students can study the contents by online self-study. However, the result clearly indicates the importance of having synchronous experiences in the online course (McPhee and Söderström 2012), which may also suggest students who attend those ZOOM meetings weekly have more motivation to be successful in their study (Fig. 3).

**Table 1** Comparison of average assignment marks for online and on-campus students (out of 100)

	Online quizzes	Hiragana/Katakana	Speaking test	Composition	Listening test	Final exam	Total
Online (n = 22)	63.2 (n = 21)	68 (n = 19)	53.2 (n = 17)	59.4 (n = 18)	67.4 (n = 19)	51.8 (n = 18)	49.1 (n = 22)
On-campus (n = 163)	72.2 (n = 159)	85.4 (n = 153)	68.3 (n = 152)	67.8 (n = 152)	72.5 (n = 150)	69.3 (n = 150)	66.6 (n = 163)
Difference	9.0	17.4	15.1	8.4	5.1	17.5	17.5

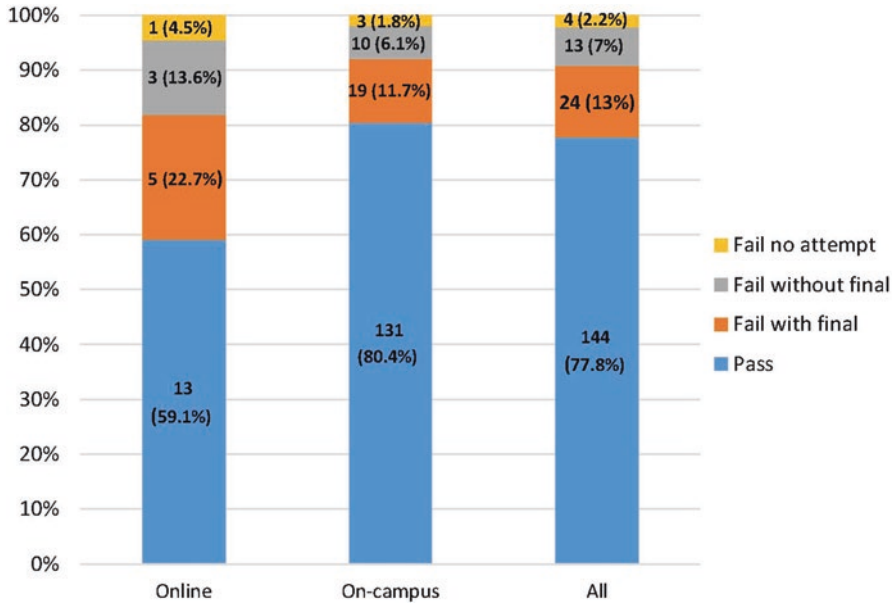


Fig. 3 Comparison of pass and fail rates for online and on-campus students

## 8 Conclusions

In order to pass the course, students must achieve the learning outcomes set for the course by obtaining at least 50% in total. Though the pass rate for online students on average was lower (59.1%) than that of their on-campus counterparts (80.4%), the fully online Japanese language course has proved that it is possible to achieve the goal. The course can provide flexibility in time, space and pace to the students, which is the primary reason for enrolment in the unit. There are still many challenges, especially the unavoidable issue of isolation, which is a potential problem in many aspects of language learning, namely in maintaining motivation and the pace of study. Online learning, regardless of whether extra materials are provided, is not the same as the on-campus experience. As a result, for instance, the pronunciation of the online cohort is different from that of the on-campus cohort.

The importance of the inclusion of synchronous experiences is significant, as the results show; those who attended one-hour ZOOM meetings regularly had a much higher chance of passing. This is most likely due to the opportunity to practise their language skills and to receive feedback on their progress.

Although there are many challenges facing those seeking to develop a Japanese beginners course online, these are mainly due to the limitations of technology. The communication issues encountered and the difficulties involved in testing Japanese writing skills mean that the outcomes for the online course cannot yet match those which can be achieved for the on-campus equivalent. While it could still be possible to provide a viable online course, this can only be achieved if the appropriate professional technical support and continuous IT consultation are provided.



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# The Development and Delivery of an Online Modern Greek Language Program



Maria Palaktsoglou, Michael Tsianikas, Antonios Litinas, and Cecily Wright

**Abstract** Since 2012, Flinders University in South Australia has been offering an online Modern Greek program to its students and also cross-institutionally to students of other Australian universities. The program includes both language and culture topics (A culture “topic” or a language “topic” is used to mean a culture “course” or a language “course” in this study.), but it was in the development of the language topics that we encountered specific challenges regarding quality practice in online teaching and learning. As our focus is on students developing communicative competence, the creation of learning materials and activities which maximized opportunities for communication was deemed essential. In line with this objective, we adopted a student-centred approach, allowing students to choose their mode of participation.

In this chapter, we first identify the theoretical framework which underpins the development of the Modern Greek language program, and then describe the course in order to demonstrate that it is consistent with best practice in online language teaching and learning. Finally, we discuss the evaluation of the language program based on an online student survey conducted in 2015 and 2016.

**Keywords** Modern Greek · Language and culture · Online language-learning · Communicative competence · Student-centred approach · Student evaluation

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## 1 Introduction

Modern Greek has been considered a less commonly taught language in the Australian university context. It is, however, a language of great cultural significance within Australia, and one which should be maintained for a variety of reasons. According to the 2011 census, almost 100,000 Greek-born people live in Australia and the Greek language is used daily by more than 250,000; more importantly, approximately 370,000 Australians identify themselves as being of Greek ancestry (Tsianikas and Maadad 2013).

In recent years, Australian university language programs have encountered certain challenges which threaten the maintenance of small language programs such as Modern Greek (Dunne and Pavlyshyn 2012). Technologies that enable online and distance learning are making such language programs more accessible and thus ensuring their maintenance. However, in order to provide effective online language programs, high quality educational design principles and appropriate pedagogies must be applied.

The Modern Greek program at Flinders University was established in 1988 and, since then, has been offered successfully at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The program has consistently attracted students from other state and national universities on a cross-institutional basis. For a number of years, Flinders University has had formal agreements with Australian universities including Charles Darwin (2002–2015), Griffith and Monash (current). Since 2012, all Modern Greek topics have been designed to be offered online and face-to-face, and have been delivered successfully.

During 2015–2016, a survey was conducted in order to evaluate the Modern Greek language topics. Ethics approval was granted,<sup>1</sup> and the survey was conducted online via SurveyMonkey. More than half of all students enrolled in Modern Greek language topics in 2015 participated in the survey.

This chapter will firstly identify and discuss the theoretical framework which underpins the design of the online Modern Greek language program. Our language topics will then be presented, demonstrating best practice in our theory-informed educational design that brings about effective online language teaching and learning. Finally, we will examine and discuss the results of the student survey as a validation and measure of the success of the Flinders Modern Greek program, and as an indicator of areas for improvement.

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<sup>1</sup>Ethics application reference number 7065.

## 2 The Theoretical Framework for Best E-Learning Practice

Online courses are now a familiar feature of university studies. In the case of less commonly taught languages with small enrolments, such as Modern Greek, it is a priority for its survival to offer online courses. To be effective, online courses must be carefully designed and delivered to meet the demands of twenty-first century students.

With quality and necessity in mind, “[s]ome of the universities in the world have started regulating e-learning practices by establishing quality assurance measures to ensure best practices in course designing and course delivery” (Al Zumor 2015, p. 173). These quality assurance measures are essential because “organizations must demonstrate the quality of their services in ways that are intelligible to potential students and their employers; faculty and staff; regulators; and government agencies” (Parker 2008, p. 305).

As part of this quality assurance process, several rubrics to assess online courses have been developed (Blood-Siegfried et al. 2008; Parker 2008). Whilst many of these rubrics do not specifically address online language courses and materials, the broad criteria used to determine what constitutes a quality online program are useful. The following can be identified as common criteria: introductory materials and general information, including goals and learning objectives; help and support for learners; course content and learning materials; interactivity as facilitated by technology; assessment and evaluation; usability in terms of online organization, aesthetics and design.

The Quality Matters Rubric (QMR)<sup>2</sup> deserves special mention as a quality assurance document which has the potential to “contribute tremendously to the creation of a constructive and interactive environment for learning English or any other foreign language” (Al Zumor 2015, p. 175). This rubric is organized around eight general standards: course overview and introduction, learning objectives, assessment and measurement, instructional materials, learner interaction and engagement, course technology, learner support and accessibility. A more detailed overview of the eight general standards of this rubric illuminates the principles that educators take into consideration for the successful design of online courses.

### 2.1 Course Overview and Introduction

The standards expected in the Course overview and Introduction are that they develop and promote learning communities. Students feel connected with the learning experience when learning environments are people-focused, with an emphasis on developing communication through the interaction of students with each other

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<sup>2</sup>The Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric (2018) is a set of 8 General Standards and 42 Specific Review Standards used to evaluate the design of online and blended courses.

and with instructors (Mohan et al. 2015; Al Zumor 2015). Learning communities are formed and bonded when supported interaction takes place (Khoo and Cowie 2011). By providing a comprehensive course overview and introduction which includes socialization tasks and discussions, educators in online courses can build learning environments, and move towards creating learning communities (Brooke 2013).

Communication is also central to language learning. Language courses designed to cater for online students should clearly communicate the “big picture” of the course and encourage students to use the online communication channels to introduce themselves and clarify any concerns they might have about course participation. For students who have an appropriate level of language competency, this communication could take place in the target language. Furthermore, as Deussen-Scholl (2015) claims, quality online instruction requires meaningful communication and the presence of a learner community. Tudini (2018) supports this view by describing how caring and collaborative communities are formed when students who are studying the same course have contact with each other. She also claims that online foreign language learning needs to be social as well as comprehensible, challenging, individualized and interactive. Finally, collaboration and community are important considerations of hybrid learning situations (Ducate et al. 2014). All students benefit from the formation of language learning communities. Regardless of the chosen mode of participation, regular meaningful contact with other students and instructors enriches the language learning experience.

## ***2.2 Learning Objectives***

The requirement that learning objectives be explicitly introduced and stated clearly in a language that is easily understood by students is widely supported (Borghetti 2013; Mohan et al. 2015; Al Zumor 2015). Learning objectives should assist students to become responsible for their own learning; they can sometimes be written as competencies to help students with this process.

## ***2.3 Assessment***

As a university requirement, students enrolled in both face-to-face and online modes are issued with a grade at the completion of each topic. Summative assessment activities have traditionally been the means by which grades are determined. Assessment plans for online language topics should not just replicate how students have traditionally been assessed face-to-face (Rubio and Thoms 2013, p. 5). Mohan et al. (2015) support the view that assessments should be designed specifically for the online environment, by including them in their list of the best characteristics of online learning activities. Topics need to be monitorable and assessable (Tudini

2018, p. 12) in a different way. In most cases, formative assessment practices are preferable to a long final examination. This is similar to what is referred to by the Integrative Assessment Steering Committee, from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), as an integrative approach (QAA Scotland 2007).<sup>3</sup> This recommended approach means that the distinction between assessment *for* learning (formative assessment) and assessment *of* learning (summative assessment) is lessened. With regard to online assessments in language learning environments, this approach is widely supported. Brooke (2013) explains how online language courses should strengthen the *process* of learning rather than the *product*, by moving the focus from the end-goal of passing the course successfully towards students completing relevant tasks as part of their ongoing participation. Likewise, Tudini suggests that resources and activities should be integrated into language programs through assessment, because “students perceive online interaction as central rather than peripheral, if it is assessed” (Tudini 2018, p. 9).

This integrative and interactive approach to continuous assessment requires a teacher’s presence (Russell and Curtis 2013). The importance of “instructor presence” is also acknowledged by Al Zumor (2015), who states that using a framework such as the QMR can facilitate the design of online language courses in which there is a strong sense of “instructor presence” (p. 174). As is also required by this approach, students receive immediate feedback (Gikandi et al. 2011), facilitated by synchronous technologies. It has been found that “language learners make progress in their ability to communicate if they receive feedback and support in real time” (Tudini 2018, p. 6).

With regard to designing assessment tasks which match learning objectives, Biggs and Tang (2007) have written extensively about a process they call “constructive alignment”, in which learning outcomes focus on what students are to learn rather than on the topics the teacher will teach. Using this approach, outcome statements or learning objectives clearly inform students of the behaviour they will need to demonstrate in order to meet the learning objective. A verb specifying the required behaviour or action is included in each of these learning objectives. If the same verb is used in the assessment task associated with that learning objective, students can clearly see the relationship between learning and assessment.

Kabouha and Elyas (2015) have researched the concept of “constructive alignment” in a language-learning context, concluding that students are assisted to achieve the best results possible when learning outcomes or objectives, teaching and learning activities and assessments are aligned, and students are made aware of the correlation between them. Likewise, Belpoliti (2015) describes the successful redesign of a beginners Spanish course at a Texan university, based on the principles of “constructive alignment”, explaining that “modifications in all components of the course curriculum [...] were carried out with successful results [such that] students

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<sup>3</sup>QAA Scotland is part of the UK-wide Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), an independent body which develops and operates quality assurance and enhancement arrangements that reflect the needs of higher education in Scotland.

[...] not only satisfactorily reached learning outcomes but expressed deep satisfaction in the exit survey” (p. 2).

## 2.4 *Learning Materials*

Online learning is a process which begins with the design or sourcing of high-quality learning materials specifically suited to online learning. These materials should be presented in various modes, made possible by networked hypermedia environments, i.e., visual, audio and textual (Tudini 2018). Zhao supports the view that learning materials should be current, engaging and authentic, stating that “access and exposure to engaging, authentic, and comprehensible yet demanding materials in the target language is essential for successful language learning” (2003, p. 13). With careful planning and the inclusion of appropriate materials, online environments can facilitate learning in the following ways:

- Provide access to multimedia presentations (visual, audio and text), which have been found to create stronger memory links than single medium presentations;
- Offer access to authentic video and internet resources, such as news and literature in the target language;
- Create opportunities for language learners to communicate in the target language (Zhao 2003).

Tudini supports the use of text, audio and video in online learning environments, describing them as “tools which facilitate integration of online resources into discussions” (2018, p. 9). Likewise, Brooke (2013) describes how learners can be engaged, both synchronously and asynchronously, in tasks and activities using a wide range of visual, audio and verbal or textual information. This approach is supported by Mohan et al. (2015), who have recommended labelling learning materials according to what students are required to do with them, e.g., read, listen, watch. Likewise, extension materials and recommended resources are clearly labelled so that students can easily distinguish between *required* and *additional* material.

## 2.5 *Activities and Learner Interaction*

According to Brooke (2013), cognitive language growth is embedded in the dynamics of social interaction. With this in mind, it can be said that online language learning environments should provide not only the learning materials to support students, as they prepare for social interaction, but also activities and environments, which encourage them to interact.

The instructional design of online language learning environments should be such that students maintain an awareness of the learning objectives, are motivated to complete the associated learning activities, and interact with encouragement from



the instructor, but without having the teacher in front of the learner (Yamada and Akahori 2007). Whilst it can be acknowledged that quality online language instruction requires access to instructor input (Deusen-Scholl 2015), the opinion that the teacher should participate as part of the learning community rather than the subject matter expert, is supported by Al Zumor (2015) and Ernest et al. (2013). It is also supported by Tudini (2018), who suggests that students should have the opportunity to interact with expert peer speakers other than the instructor, as well as receiving direct instruction from the teacher; a balance between the two is required.

Forums are an essential part of meaningful interaction. According to Qian and McCormick (2014), the benefits of online discussion forums have become widely recognized over the last decade. In the context of Chinese language learning by distance, it was found that forums enhanced the language learning experience by allowing students who did not attend face-to-face sessions to share learning strategies and discuss their learning. Whilst Qian and McCormick (2014) concluded that further research was needed to find out how to encourage a greater use of Chinese language in the course discussion forums, this was not seen as a negative aspect of the forums. This is because the forums were found to be highly effective in supporting students, both emotionally and academically, and creating course cohesion. Communication in the forums, described above, tends to be mainly in English; the focus is on supporting students to participate online, and providing an online space for them to get to know each other. These forums have an important role in creating what Qian and McCormick (2014) refer to as course cohesion, and the feeling that the online topic space is a learning community made up of real people (Al Zumor 2015).

According to Tudini (2018), real-time communication is also essential for successful language learning, which is enriched by real-time contact with speakers of the target language. Sun (2014) suggests that online language learning environments should support a three-mode interaction model (student-student; student-teacher; student-content). Al Zumor (2015) also recommends this model. In terms of communication technologies, “those which permit real time interaction appear to have the greatest potential for language development and the achievement of communicative fluency” (Tudini 2018, p. 7). Web-based classrooms provide an environment for synchronous communication and interaction.

There is no doubt that interaction enriches language learning experiences.<sup>4</sup> Ernest et al. state that “interaction lies at the centre of the sociocultural view of the learning process” (Ernest et al. 2013, p. 37), and it is recognized as very important in all language learning environments—face-to-face, blended or online (Sun 2011). It must be acknowledged and embraced that online environments offer new communication channels and should not be approached with the intention of replicating face-to-face interaction (White 2014). This highlights the need for materials and learning activities to be highly interactive, fostering student-student, student-teacher

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<sup>4</sup>Brooke (2013), Deusen-Scholl (2015), Ernest et al. (2013), Khoo and Cowie (2011), Rubio and Thoms (2013), Sun (2011, 2014), Tudini (2018), White (2014), Al Zumor (2015).

and student-content interactions. To meet this requirement, they need to be specially prepared for the online language-learning environment.

## 2.6 *Technology*

As has been previously acknowledged, online language teaching requires a high level of interaction. Technology facilitates this interaction. However, it should be taken into account that students will need assistance to adapt to what Tudini suggests is a “linguistically and technologically constrained interactional environment” (2018, p. 12). A wide variety of technological tools makes course materials available and connects learners, teachers and content, thus facilitating interaction and learning (Tudini 2018; Hung and Chou 2015).

In the past, it was recommended that students should not be overtly aware of the technology, as this could have a negative impact on their performance (Vrasidas and McIsaac 1999). Since 1999, when Vrasidas and McIsaac made this observation, it is likely that students have become more familiar with these technologies. Nevertheless, it is still important that the technological tools in online language learning environments are accessible, and easy to use. It should also be made clear to students how the technology supports their learning (Mohan et al. 2015).

One way in which technology supports learning is that it enables feedback in real time. Tudini (2018) suggests that language learners make better progress if feedback is provided and comprehensibility issues are resolved in real time. This highlights the importance of students being supported when they participate in synchronous web-based communication.

## 2.7 *Learner Support*

Learners feel supported and encouraged in online learning environments when they receive frequent and meaningful feedback.<sup>5</sup> It must be acknowledged that it is not the exclusive role of the teacher to provide this feedback. Both learners and teachers can use computer mediated communication technologies to provide real-time spoken feedback and asynchronous spoken and written feedback.

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<sup>5</sup>Brooke (2013), Deusen-Scholl (2015), Ernest et al. (2013), Liu (2013), Tudini (2018), Al Zumor (2015).

## 2.8 *Topic Usability*

According to Mohan et al. (2015), course websites should include images and highlighted text where appropriate; the pages should not be too cluttered or have too much white space. They recommend that content be partitioned, which means that it is separated into smaller units that are more easily navigable. They also suggest that usability is enhanced by repeating page structure throughout the site, chunking information into manageable bits and labelling it intuitively, having links opening in a consistent way, and providing alternative ways to access course content (Mohan et al. 2015). Al Zumor also recommends that online language courses should include “equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content” (2015, p. 176). This means that text transcripts are provided as an alternative to non-text content on the web pages, and that video and live audio have captions and a transcript.

## 3 The Development of the Online Modern Greek Language Program

Online language teaching and learning always poses specific challenges for designers and educators. No other field of study has such a focus on students developing communicative competence, and this requires learning materials and activities which maximize opportunities for communication. With this in mind, the development of Modern Greek language topics at Flinders University has focused on the design of learning materials, and the application of effective and appropriate pedagogies for online teaching and learning, using a range of synchronous and asynchronous technologies. Our approach has been to apply high quality educational design principles in order to create learning communities rather than just uploading resources to an online space and making them accessible to students.<sup>6</sup>

Since 2012, materials have been published online, and procedures have been in place to enable students to study Modern Greek language in different modes. Whilst the Flinders University system necessitates that students enrol as either *internal* or *external*, their Modern Greek language enrolment mode is not always an indicator of how they will participate in the topic. Some students choose to participate fully online, some attend university face-to-face but most take what is referred to by Blake (2011) as a “blended” or “hybrid” approach to their studies. The online language topics have been designed and delivered in such a way as to cater for all. Whilst the capacity of online systems for facilitating collaboration was recognized more than 20 years ago (Ernest et al. 2013), there is some evidence that, although once thought to be “digital natives” (Prensky 2001), “young people do not speak the

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<sup>6</sup>Our approach is also close to the following claim by Uschi Felix: “The most important consideration in achieving best practice is the distinction between delivering static content and creating interactivity and connectivity” (Felix 2003, p. 9).

digital language until, like preceding generations, they learn how to do so” (Smith et al. 2013, p. 115). Thus, we have avoided assuming that all students were digitally proficient, and we have included information about the technological aspects of participating online in every topic.

The development of the Modern Greek language topics followed closely the QMR rubric and the theoretical framework, which we have outlined. All Modern Greek online language topics included a section called “Welcome and Topic Information” which replaced the traditional “Study Handbook”. This section comprised a welcome message; topic description; educational aims and outcomes; a summary of learning activities and objectives; assessment and feedback details; information about communication and collaboration; and learning resources and technologies. Following the QMR rubric standards, we encompassed in all Modern Greek online language topics weekly objectives directly relating to the learning activities. These were visible on the same screen as the instructions for learning activities, which meant that students were able to read the objectives and then easily navigate to the learning activities to preview and complete them. In this way, they demonstrated they had met the topic’s requirements. Assessment was another area that was carefully considered during the development of the language topics. In accordance with the theoretical principles of QMR standards, we made continuous assessment practices an integral part of each language topic. As a result, a series of formative and summative assessment activities were incorporated into the topics, and students had to complete these tasks, thereby demonstrating ongoing participation.

The principle of providing appropriate, innovative and interesting online resources was closely followed. Listening, speaking, reading and writing activities added online as text, were supported by sound recordings and relevant visual materials. Links to appropriate online resources were also added. Relevant vocabulary was presented as text, supported by sound recordings, which students could listen to anywhere and anytime. Interactive grammar presentations, including self-correcting quizzes were included where relevant. Likewise, embedded YouTube videos and other cultural resources, which provided good examples of the Greek language being used in a cultural context, were carefully considered and incorporated. All learning materials were accompanied by clear instructions using language which was deemed consistent throughout all the Modern Greek online language topics. Where possible and appropriate, instructional text addressed the learner and included verbs which clearly specified what students were required to do with the learning materials in order to complete the tasks. Likewise, extension materials and recommended resources were clearly labelled, so that students could easily distinguish between *required* and *additional* material.

Teacher presence, visibility and contribution to both asynchronous and synchronous environments were deemed important. Modern Greek facilitators contributed to shared spaces, such as discussion forums, and gave real-time feedback during synchronous interactions (online tutorials). Instructors also responded to individual students, by commenting on learning journal entries and work samples, such as voice recordings, which were uploaded to the online topic space. Individual and

constructive feedback was given to students for all marked assessment tasks, as was computer generated feedback, upon completion of formative online quizzes. Participation in learning and discussion forums was deemed a requirement of all Modern Greek online language topics. These forums, monitored by the teachers, were linked to the listening, speaking, reading and writing activities; participation in the Greek language was strongly encouraged, especially for advanced students. In the synchronous online environment, Modern Greek language students were encouraged to practise listening, speaking, reading and writing, while they were supported by the teacher in their communication with each other and in their interaction with learning materials, specifically prepared for this environment.

Finally, the Modern Greek language topics were developed according to the usability criteria. Images were included as part of the learning materials to support listening, speaking, reading and writing in the target language and, in most cases, text and images were supported by audio. Coloured text and highlighting were used where appropriate (e.g., to distinguish between different speakers in a dialogue or to draw attention to important information). Links were included in a consistent way; content was partitioned into manageable bits and labelled consistently, according to the learning materials and activities included. The topics also included information to assist students with access to technological tools. Links to frequently asked questions were established, offering necessary information, such as how to view and download learning material or how to use the keyboard to type in Greek.

## **4 The Evaluation of the Modern Greek Language Course**

The evaluation of the Modern Greek language course was undertaken in 2015–2016. At the end of 2015, a survey was circulated to all the Modern Greek language students enrolled during the same year, and more than half of the cohort responded. It is interesting to point out that most students indicated that they had studied in blended mode. The aim of the survey was to identify strengths and weaknesses in terms of the course design and delivery of the Modern Greek language topics and revise them accordingly in 2017 and 2018. The survey included a range of questions on general and specific aspects of the online course design and delivery, with a special focus on areas relating to standards of the QMR rubric, such as assessment, participation, learning community creation and synchronous interaction, resources, feedback and usability. In this evaluation discussion, we will concentrate mainly on these aspects. Most respondents found that each online language topic was comprehensive and easy to navigate.

The introductory information was particularly useful for the majority of respondents, as it included clear explanations on the requirements that the students needed in order to participate in the topics. Clear assessment description rated highly with the students. Whilst all Modern Greek online language topics included a Statement of Assessment Methods, which has a brief description of the assessment requirements, the majority of the survey respondents agreed that the analytical description

of assessment was very useful information, as it provided a detailed overview of all assessable work, including percentages, due dates, instructions and expected outcomes. More than 85% of the respondents agreed that the weekly overview was also beneficial; the learning objectives were clearly stated, and were meaningful, as they displayed the correlation between the learning materials, activities and the learning objectives. Continuous assessment practices were also received positively, with the majority of the students agreeing that they had completed most of these tasks during their study. The tasks were easy to complete online and added to the development and enhancement of their learning process. Survey results also indicated that our approach to teacher presence and feedback was effective. Almost all respondents agreed that they appreciated immediate and constructive feedback and that their learning improved steadily and progressively.

Most importantly, survey respondents agreed that the Modern Greek online language topics included a good variety of contemporary and relevant materials. These listening, speaking and reading activities, supported by sound recordings and relevant visual materials, were particularly useful for their language learning and cultural understanding. The readily accessible and downloadable sound files of the vocabulary were valuable, as they helped to advance the linguistic competency of the students. Moreover, grammatical explanations and quizzes were providing linguistic and syntactical understanding; however, some students suggested the need for extra resources and activities to extend their knowledge.

The provision of synchronous communication and collaboration, via discussion forums and other shared online spaces, was commended because students felt a sense of belonging to a learners' community. The participants in synchronous online sessions, where resources specifically suited to this environment were shared, were satisfied with the learning outcomes of enhancing and extending their competency and knowledge, in a socially pleasant environment. Most participants in these synchronous online sessions agreed that they were an important feature of the topic and found the learning materials and the communication engaging. However, some students indicated a reluctance to participate in these synchronous sessions and, as a result, they were undecided about their value. It is likely that synchronous communication could be an area for future improvement in our Modern Greek language topics; a specific survey to determine student attitudes to this synchronous web-based technology would, however, be required.

Finally, students felt they had support in accessing and using the required technologies. Most agreed that they were able to use all the tools required for their learning, and, as a result, their study was engaging and rewarding. With regard to topic usability, the survey results indicated that most students had easy access to all learning materials, including online quizzes, discussion forums, grammar presentations, YouTube videos, sound recordings, external websites and text materials, while some were undecided, indicating once again that this is an area for future improvement. Overall, we can say that the survey results demonstrated good practice in design and delivery, though they identified some areas that needed attention or change.

## 5 Conclusion

The maintenance of small language programs, such as Modern Greek, can present a challenge for tertiary institutions. To meet the needs of twenty-first century learners, online courses with the flexibility to support a blended or hybrid learning mode play an important role. Technologies that enable online, distance or blended learning, are indeed making such language programs more accessible and thus ensuring their maintenance. Our study has demonstrated, in the context of Modern Greek, that students appreciate learning environments that enable them to choose their mode of participation to complete their study requirements. Our study has also indicated that, for languages, online learning could enrich students' language learning experience, if such courses are carefully designed and delivered to bring about learning communities that encourage interaction and collaboration. Thus, the design principles for the Modern Greek online course presented in this chapter might offer a sustainable, practical answer to small areas of studies that have limited resources.

We believe that the Modern Greek online program we have developed is a well-designed language course that encompasses an interactive environment in which learning and communication complement each other. Increasing enrolments in Flinders University Modern Greek language topics, together with the survey results, suggest that our approach can be considered effective. Our learning materials and teaching approach and pedagogies align with best practice, as portrayed in current e-learning literature. The survey has consolidated further the fact that we have best practice in learning outcomes, resources, assessment, interaction and communication. Most students were satisfied with the topic, felt part of a supportive learning community and claimed an advance in their linguistic and cultural competency due to the online and blended offerings of the program. Students regarded their Modern Greeks studies as a positive experience and have expressed no hesitation in recommending the course to others.

There were also some issues of concern, which were highlighted by the evaluation. Based on both positive and negative feedback, constructive revision of our language topics has been implemented. Finally, we strongly believe that best practice in online language teaching and learning requires frequent revision. For our language topics in particular, contemporary content, ever-changing student needs and progress in technology demand constant updating, so that the course can maintain currency, relevance and sustainability.

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# Adaptive and Mobile Learning at University: Student Experience in Italian Beginners Language Classes



Francesco De Toni, Federica Verdina, Marinella Caruso, and John Kinder

**Abstract** Adaptive and mobile learning technologies are leading innovation in personalized and blended learning for language education at tertiary level. However, the growth of adaptive and mobile resources is not matched by sufficient research on their effective implementation in university language courses. In this chapter, we present a study conducted in Italian beginners units at the University of Western Australia in 2017 (credit-bearing undergraduate courses). These units were redesigned to integrate adaptive and mobile learning resources for automated and personalized language practice. We describe and discuss qualitative and quantitative data on students' engagement with the adaptive platform, their evaluation of skill practice on the platform, and the use of mobile devices to access the platform. Our results show that adaptive and mobile technologies have great potential to enhance the student learning experience, but also that, at present, various issues limit the implementation of these resources. We offer recommendations to address these issues.

**Keywords** Adaptive learning · Mobile technologies · Language education · Learning analytics · Italian language teaching · Personalized learning · Student experience

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## 1 Introduction

The effective introduction of adaptive e-learning systems in language classes at tertiary level is one of the main challenges in the current process of integration of technological developments into university courses. While technological advancement offers new resources that have the potential to improve students' learning experience and performance, tutors and lecturers are not always provided with clear directions on how to assess the efficacy of these technologies in terms of student engagement and satisfaction.

Although technological developments and innovation trends in education are advancing at a fast pace, new challenges emerge that might not be solved in an equally short time. In particular, among the developments and trends with a short-term impact (one year or less) on tertiary education, Johnson et al. (2016) included learning analytics and adaptive learning, and consequently an increasing focus on blended learning and learning measurement (see also Adams Becker et al. 2017). These trends and innovations also apply to language teaching and learning, with the addition of mobile technologies as a subject-specific element (Adams Becker et al. 2016, pp. 9–11, 14–16).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Johnson et al. (2016) identified the effective adoption of personalized learning as one of the most difficult challenges generated by these technological innovations.

This chapter presents and discusses the first results of a study on the implementation of adaptive and mobile e-learning technologies in Italian beginners courses at the University of Western Australia in 2017. The overall objective of the study was to analyse evaluation, by students and teachers, of adaptive technologies in language courses at university and to assess the advantages and limitations of the learning analytics offered by these technologies. On the basis of our findings, we have developed recommendations for improving the integration of adaptive systems in language courses.

## 2 Background and Research Questions

In the context of language education, adaptive learning is generally defined as an educational technology for “delivering learning materials online, in which the learner's interaction with previous content determines (at least in part) the nature of materials delivered subsequently” (Kerr 2016, p. 88). The delivery process is automated, dynamic and interactive and aims at producing a personalized learning

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<sup>1</sup>The importance of these technological developments, which are rapidly reaching widespread adoption in higher education, has been recently confirmed by Adams Becker et al. (2018) and Alexander et al. (2019).

experience. The underlying assumption is that the students' learning outcome will improve if their learning experience is tailored to their needs and/or goals.

Over the past ten years, a growing number of studies have supported the positive impact of adaptive e-learning on student performance (Latham et al. 2014; Sangineto et al. 2008) and investigated the perceptions students and teachers have of the usefulness of adaptive systems (Limongelli et al. 2011; Özyurt et al. 2013; Schiaffino et al. 2008; Sevarac et al. 2012; Siadaty and Taghiyareh 2007). This line of research is ongoing and new models are being proposed for designing better adaptive systems, primarily on the basis of students' different learning needs (Bradac and Walek 2017; Liu et al. 2017; Truong 2016). Nonetheless, empirical studies on evaluating adaptive learning systems are still relatively limited (Liu et al. 2017) or are unavailable to the public (Kerr 2016, p. 90). In particular, research on the integration of adaptive systems in language classes at tertiary level and on students' and teachers' evaluation of these systems is scarce. This lack of research affects both the development of new adaptive technologies specifically designed for language education at university and the assessment of existing platforms for adaptive language e-learning.

As universities are more and more inclined to adopt adaptive and data-driven approaches to education, we were stimulated to think about what features we would seek in an e-learning platform for second language learning. We conducted a one-year study on the use of an adaptive learning platform in Italian beginners classes. The primary research goal of our project was to evaluate scientifically how we can effectively integrate the use of digital platforms for adapting learning in courses of modern languages at university and to identify which characteristics such software should have. While the scope of our research encompassed several aspects pertaining to the evaluation and assessment of the adaptive platform, in this study we focus on the following research questions:<sup>2</sup>

1. What was the students' engagement with the adaptive e-learning platform?
2. How did the students evaluate the adaptive e-learning system and its integration in the courses?
3. On what types of devices did the students access the platform? How easy was access on mobile devices?

In light of the results collected in our study, and in addition to answering these questions, we offer relevant recommendations for future software development and implementation in language courses.

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<sup>2</sup>We wish to point out that assessing the effectiveness of adaptive systems in improving students' performance and outcomes in language classes in comparison with non-adaptive approaches was outside the scope of our research. For this reason (as well as for ethical motivations) the study did not involve a control group.

### 3 Project Implementation

The research project was developed in the form of a case study in three Italian beginners courses during 2017. Various platforms of adaptive e-learning are currently available on the market.<sup>3</sup> To conduct our project we looked for a platform which could be used for language learning at university level; which could be integrated with Blackboard, the Learning Management System adopted by the University of Western Australia; and which had a textbook integrated with the e-learning platform. Among the limited number of e-learning environments that satisfy these requirements, we chose McGraw-Hill's Connect, a multi-subject e-learning platform that comes with an adaptive-learning software called LearnSmart. For Italian language teaching, Connect and LearnSmart are integrated with the textbook *Avanti!* (Aski and Musumeci 2014).

Like most adaptive systems currently employed in language education (Kerr 2016, p. 88), the version of LearnSmart that we used in our project provides individualized adaptive learning, in which “learning goals are the same for all the students, but students can progress through the material at different speeds according to their learning needs” (US Department of Education. Office of Educational Technology 2010, p. 11). Specifically, LearnSmart adapts online exercises to each student's needs according to their progress and provides instant feedback. Instant feedback is strengthened by encouraging students to self-assess their existing knowledge. Before allowing the students to answer each question of a module, LearnSmart prompts them to assess their knowledge of the correct answer; the students can choose between four options: “I know it”; “Think so”; “Unsure”; “No idea”. If the student selects the third or the fourth options, a hint to the correct answer or the full answer is provided, respectively. LearnSmart exercises are divided into modules, which mirror the content of the textbook chapters. During the practice session, each question that is answered incorrectly is presented again after a certain interval of time; the session ends when all the answers are correct. LearnSmart modules can be selected and assigned to the students as assignments or tests. In addition, the modules can also be accessed through the self-study option, i.e., students can work on the modules as autonomous practice. As regards device accessibility, LearnSmart is available for both desktop environments and mobile devices (tablets or smartphones). Finally, LearnSmart provides lecturers and tutors with a large array of analytics on student performance and time spent on the platform.

During the duration of the courses, the implementation of this tool in our language courses was expected to:

1. optimize students' learning through personalized learning paths;
2. provide students with effective learning practice, based on short but regular assignments;

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<sup>3</sup>For a review, see Kerr (2016).

3. and enable the use of data to track students' learning behaviours, while also allowing students to track their progress in the courses.

Through implementation, we aimed at:

1. providing students with short, regular, ubiquitous language practice opportunities, not as a way to spoon-feed students, but to teach them effective practices and habits for language learning;
2. improving the quality of in-class time by leaving grammar and vocabulary practice to self-study, and benefiting from students being prepared for classes;
3. providing students with personalized and immediate feedback on their performance;
4. and reducing the time teaching staff spend on checking and correcting homework in class.

The research was carried out in three Italian beginners units (i.e., courses) over two semesters in 2017: ITAL1401, Semester 1 (henceforth ITAL1401/s1; 89 students); ITAL1401, Semester 2 (ITAL1401/s2; 43 students); ITAL1402, Semester 2 (ITAL1402; 32 students).<sup>4</sup> Each unit had a duration of 13 weeks, but the use of LearnSmart was implemented from the second week. ITAL1401 is the first beginners unit and the prerequisite for ITAL1402 (second beginners unit). Thus, the overall number of students involved in the research was 132, as the students of ITAL1402 had been previously enrolled in ITAL1401/s1.

In each unit, the students were assigned a certain number of weekly modules on LearnSmart. The modules focused on the grammar and vocabulary covered each week and included revision of the previous weeks. Students could work in either mobile or desktop mode, and the weekly modules were part of the assessment structure, counting for 20% of the final mark.<sup>5</sup> To receive their weekly mark, the students had to complete all the modules assigned for the week. Since each question in the modules is presented multiple times until the students provide the correct answer, all students had the opportunity to complete each module. The intention was to give students about 50–70 min of weekly practice on LearnSmart, and the number of modules assigned each week changed accordingly. Each module included a certain number of question items, and LearnSmart automatically provided the expected average time that students need to complete each module. The content of each module could be slightly customized in order to reduce or increase the expected

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<sup>4</sup>The University of Western Australia did not offer the unit ITAL1402 in Semester 1 of 2017.

<sup>5</sup>The decision to allocate 20% of the final mark to the completion of the LearnSmart modules took into account two concurrent goals: on the one hand, the percentage had to be sufficiently high in order to encourage the students to complete the modules; on the other hand, we needed to avoid allocating an excessive percentage to a type of assessment that is inherently more exposed to the risk of academic misconduct. Limiting the risk of academic misconduct while completing unsupervised assessment online remains a major challenge to adopting e-learning technologies in university education. This risk was taken into account while planning the assessment tasks for the units. For this reason, the largest part of the unit assessment was conducted through traditional in-class tests.

average time required and to provide a better fit with the topics of the unit. We encouraged students to spend some time on the assigned modules every day rather than completing all the modules in a single session, although LearnSmart did not provide us with an option to make this distributed practice schedule compulsory.

## 4 Methodology

Our methodology for the assessment of the adaptive platform, its integration in the units and the experience of students and teachers, is both quantitative and qualitative, and comprises four elements.

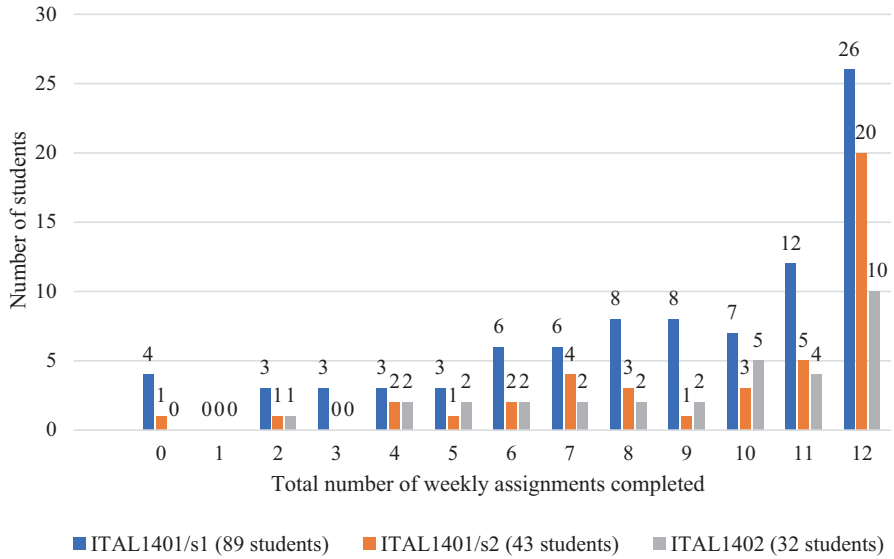
1. Data collection from Connect and LearnSmart analytics: during both semesters, every week we monitored and collected learning analytics about the students' performance and engagement.
2. Student surveys: one for each unit, at the end of each semester; the surveys were administered online. Overall, 75 students fully completed the surveys. The respondents were distributed across the three units as follows: 36 respondents for ITAL1401/s1 (40% of enrolled students); 22 for ITAL1401/s2 (51% of enrolled students); 17 for ITAL1402 (53% of enrolled students).
3. Focus groups: two focus groups were held with the teaching staff (four tutors plus the unit coordinator), one before the beginning of the first semester and one at the end of the first semester; one focus group was held with students (three students) at the end of the first semester.
4. Teacher diaries: in ITAL1401/s1 the four tutors were encouraged to collect notes on their teaching experience and on their perception of students' preparation, engagement and satisfaction.

## 5 Results and Recommendations

### 5.1 Student Engagement

#### 5.1.1 Results

The analysis of the data collected from LearnSmart shows that the students' engagement with the adaptive platform was moderately high, on average. The chart in Fig. 1 shows the distribution of the total number of assignments completed by the students in each unit. In all three units, 50% or more of the students completed at least 10 out of 12 weekly assignments (50% for ITAL1401/s1; 58% for ITAL1401/s2; and 59% for ITAL1402). In all three units, at least 29% of the students (i.e., almost one third) completed all the assignments. We think that the 20% of the unit assessment allocated to the completion of the weekly Learn Smart assignments gave the students a strong incentive to complete the modules.



**Fig. 1** Number of weekly LearnSmart assignments completed by the students

**Table 1** Arithmetic mean of the time spent on LearnSmart weekly assignments by the students (in whole semester and per week) and expectation of time spent per week according to LearnSmart forecast

	Arithmetic mean of time (hours minutes)		
	Spent in whole semester (12 weeks)	Spent per week	Expected per week (according to LearnSmart modules)
ITAL1401/s1	11 h 07 m	0 h 55 m	0 h 50 m
ITAL1401/s2	14 h 00 m	1 h 10 m	1 h 16 m
ITAL1402	8 h 00 m	0 h 40 m	0 h 50 m

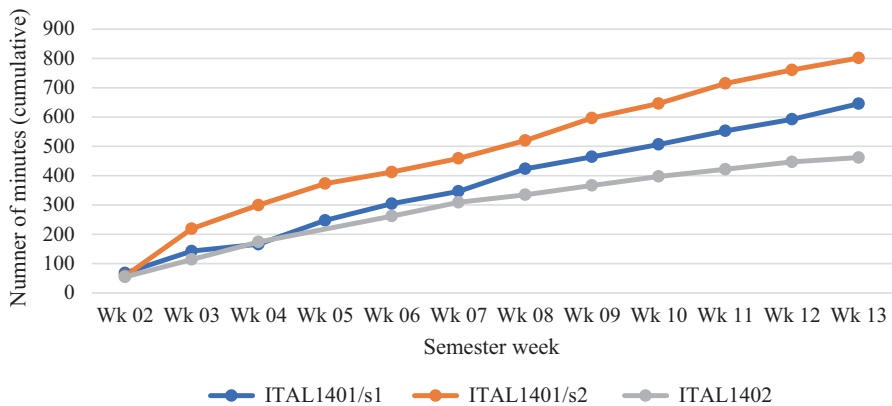
We used LearnSmart estimates of the time required to complete each module to calibrate the workload for each week. As regards the time the students actually spent on completing their weekly modules, we observed variations across the three units. In ITAL1401/s1 the average of the total amount of time that students spent on LearnSmart is 22% higher than the time we assigned. On the other hand, in ITAL1401/s2 and in ITAL1402 the average time spent by students is, respectively, 8% and 21% lower than the time predicted by the adaptive software (see Table 1). We believe that the significant reduction in the time spent in ITAL1402 is most likely due to improved skills among the students, since they had already completed ITAL1401/s1. The difference between the time spent in ITAL1401/s1 and ITAL1401/s2 is more difficult to justify. However, the decision to increase the workload by 26% (in terms of time) in ITAL1401/s2 compared to ITAL1401/s1 might have had



the side effect of increasing the repetition of questions in LearnSmart, which in turn might have increased the speed of the students' answer time.

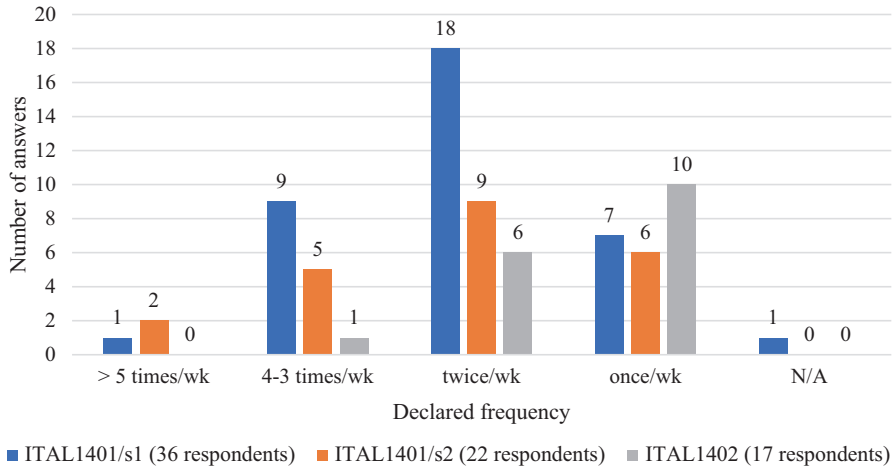
If we look at the trend of the number of minutes spent on LearnSmart during each week, we see that the students' engagement with LearnSmart was fairly constant in each unit. Small variations in the number of minutes spent each week seem to be due to differences in the size of each week's assignments rather than in students' performance or engagement. In Fig. 2, we have plotted the cumulative average of the number of minutes that the students in the three units spent on LearnSmart each week.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to the distribution of practice, while some students seem to have followed our suggestion to work on LearnSmart a bit every day, the majority used it only once or twice a week. Since LearnSmart does not provide any learning analytics on how frequently the students used the platform, we gathered this information from student surveys (see Fig. 3).



**Fig. 2** Cumulative trend of the arithmetic mean of the minutes spent by all the students on LearnSmart

<sup>6</sup>We had to make some adjustments to the chart in Fig. 2 due to some incompleteness and incorrectness in our data. Data collected by LearnSmart analytics on student performance and engagement are always cumulative. In order to have a record of weekly variations in the data, we had to manually download LearnSmart analytics at the end of each week. Unfortunately, this meant that, if the data collected in a certain week proved at a later stage to be incomplete or incorrect, we had no means of accessing the original data for that week. Specifically, for unknown reasons, the total (cumulative) number of minutes spent by some students by the end of the fourth week of ITAL1401/s1 was incorrectly recorded by LearnSmart as lower than the total number of minutes spent by the same students by the end of the third week. In order to reduce the impact of this error, in the chart we replaced the incorrect data with the corresponding data of the previous week; this error causes a slight decline in the growth rate of the average number of minutes spent by the students in ITAL1401/s1. Furthermore, by mistake, we downloaded incomplete data on time spent by the end of the sixth week of ITAL1401/s1 (data of about one-fifth of the students are missing) and no data on time spent by the end of the fifth week of ITAL1402 (which explains the missing data point in the chart). We believe that these singular issues do not significantly reduce the overall value of our data collection.

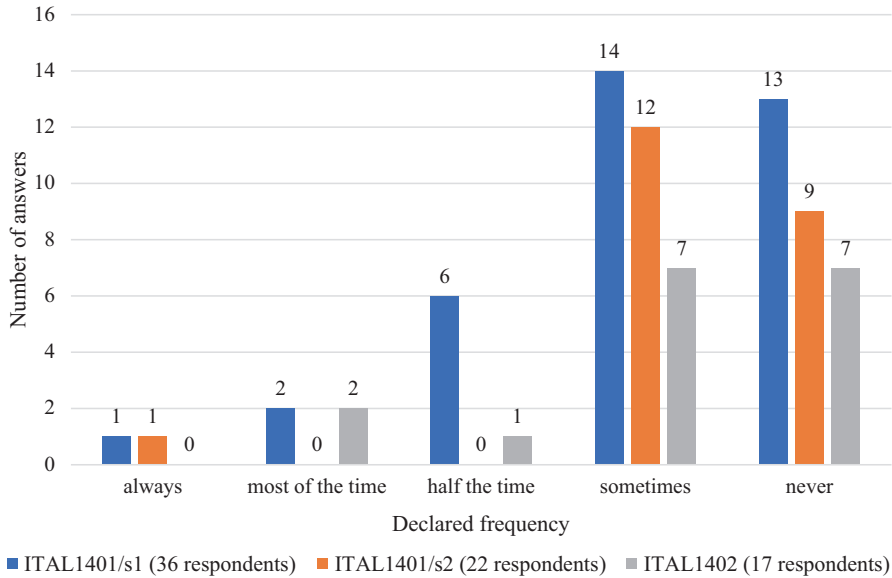


**Fig. 3** Distribution of the answers to the survey question: “If you completed the LearnSmart modules regularly, how often did you use LearnSmart each week?”

This lack of more regular engagement is probably due to the fact that students did not understand the value of spaced practice in language learning, and perceived the LearnSmart modules as normal online quizzes rather than tools for everyday consolidation. However, this tendency could also be attributed to the impossibility of setting up daily practice plans with reminders, like those available with apps like Duolingo, for example. The hypothesis that most of the students perceived LearnSmart as an assessment item to complete in order to get their weekly mark rather than a resource for regular language practice is supported by the very sporadic use of the self-study option, as inferable from the figures on time spent and as confirmed by the surveys (Fig. 4).

### 5.1.2 Recommendations

The estimated time for the completion of a module is calculated by the adaptive software on the expected average time students take to complete all the module’s questions. In consideration of what emerged in our research, we believe that these types of practice modules could be enhanced if they were based on time slots and not on the number of questions per module. This would allow all students to do the same amount of practice (in terms of time) regardless of the time that each student needs to answer each question, and therefore would also address the needs of more advanced students. This approach would entail a form of adaptive learning that, rather than simply being individualized, would truly be personalized, i.e., would adapt not only the learning pace but also the learning objective to each student’s skills and needs (cf. US Department of Education. Office of Educational Technology 2010, p. 11). Language instructors could set a fixed amount of time for language



**Fig. 4** Distribution of the answers to the survey question: “After completing the LearnSmart modules assigned each week, how often did you redo the same modules as self-study?”

practice that students would be required to complete in a specified timeframe (every week, for example), and the adaptive software would divide this time into slots that cover different language skills in accordance with each student’s needs. The effectiveness of this structure would moreover benefit from an option for daily practice goals with reminders.

## 5.2 Skills Practice

### 5.2.1 Results

LearnSmart modules focus exclusively on grammar and vocabulary practice. There were two modules for each chapter of the textbook: one on grammar (*Struttura*) and one on vocabulary (*Lessico*). As mentioned in Sect. 3, when assigning the modules, it was possible to select the number of items on which students would have to work and, for some modules, also narrow down the content to more specific sections of the book. For example, the section *Struttura* of Chapter Two of *Avanti!* covered four topics—Adjectives; The verbs *essere* (to be) and *avere* (to have); There is/There are; and Possessive adjectives. It was possible to deselect some of these topics, and moreover reduce the number of questions per topic; however, the software did not allow for flexibility in selecting sub-topics. Since the number of question items per module can be reduced but not augmented, by narrowing down the topics of a

module, the number of available items in each module (and consequently the time students could practise) was also automatically reduced.

Despite these limitations, for all three units the vast majority of the surveyed students agreed that the LearnSmart modules had been extremely or moderately useful in improving their grammar skills and their vocabulary (see Table 2).

In particular, the respondents found that the modules were more useful in improving their vocabulary skills, and would have liked to have more practice with a grammar focus, as evidenced by some of their comments:

**Comment 1** I would like LearnSmart to cover more grammar practice for what we cover in the Unit.

**Comment 2** I think the grammar element of LearnSmart could be strengthened. Exercises more like our test/revision questions would be great.

**Comment 3** In regards to Learn Smart, I felt that it mostly covered vocabulary and it may have been good to incorporate some Learn Smart grammar practice, if possible.

Students also reported that they would have liked to see more variety in the question pool, as well as questions in a dialogue style and more context to help them understand the meaning better. One student (Comment 8) also suggested the use of LearnSmart for writing practice:

**Comment 4** It would be great if the LearnSmart pool for questions were greater. It's because doing the self study, you encounter the same question often.

**Comment 5** Regarding the modules, it would be nice if the questions could be varied up more, it was a bit infuriating when the same question appeared 2–3 times in a module (if answered correctly), I do understand that repetition is important when one makes mistakes but again it'd be nicer to add more variety to the questions.

**Comment 6** For the modules to have a bit more variety, so less of the same questions pop up again.

**Comment 7** I would like to see that LearnSmart includes more than the same questions repeated on a particular chapter or unit.

**Comment 8** Good for revision. However, it never had us writing sentences which probably would help greatly.

In addition, students stressed the need for explanations alongside the exercises, in order to understand the rationale behind the answers. While students acknowledged

**Table 2** Percentage distribution (average across all units) of the answers to the survey question: "Please indicate how useful LearnSmart was in improving your grammar skills and your vocabulary"

	Extremely useful	Moderately useful	Neither useful nor useless	Useless
Grammar	32%	47%	20%	1%
Vocabulary	51%	43%	5%	1%

that repetition without constantly having to stop to check a meaning or a grammar rule can be beneficial, they also felt the need to have links to the ebook and explanations of the correct sentence after a few attempts.

**Comment 9** It would be useful to have links to the ebook at the top of the page so we can go back and revise/read before attempting the LearnSmart. As the course jumps forward and back in the book a little, it was not always easy to find in the book (or ebook) when re-doing LearnSmart modules.

**Comment 10** Maybe an option to view an answer or question translated into English after completing the question (getting it right or wrong) would be useful for people struggling or just for someone's reassurance that they completely understood the question/answer.

Students also identified inconsistencies between the topics covered during the course and some of the vocabulary items they had to practise in LearnSmart.

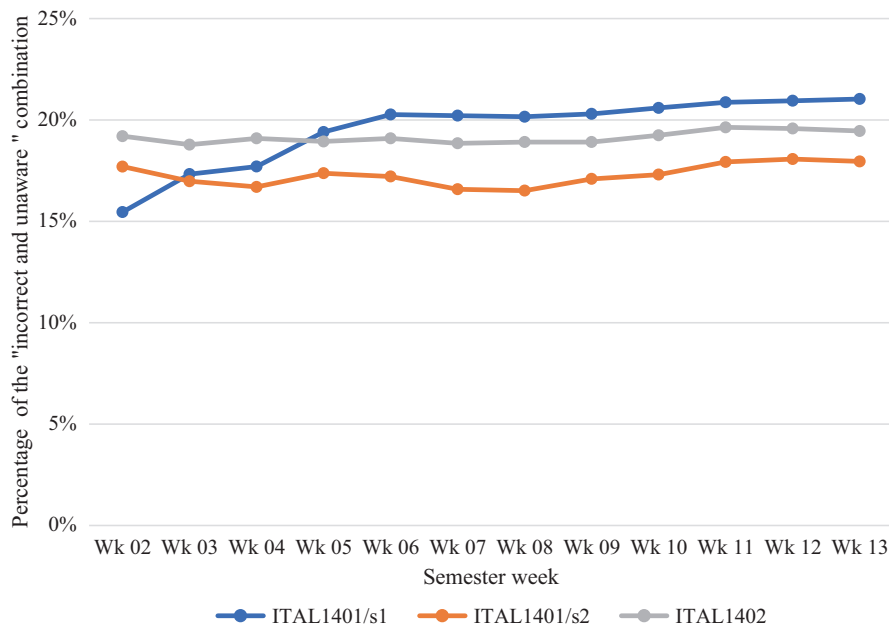
**Comment 11** I sometimes felt the vocabulary in the assigned LearnSmart modules didn't necessarily correlate to what we'd been learning in class.

**Comment 12** The LearnSmart modules didn't really correspond with what we had been taught.

**Comment 13** Sometimes the LS modules are on things we haven't learnt yet, or things we learnt a couple of weeks earlier. Maybe that's intended, not sure.

This is due to the fact that, as mentioned above, it was often impossible to select the specific section of the book covered in class, excluding the parts that we did not want to include in the course outline. While we encouraged students not to feel intimidated by the yet unknown lexical items, and to use this as a way to increase their vocabulary, we believe that it is important to provide students with a range of exercises that they identify as relevant to their learning experience. The risk is to lose students' attention and interest in a potentially very useful tool.

Finally, another tool we used for assessing students' evaluations of the adaptive system with regard to skill practice was LearnSmart analytics on students' metacognitive skills. As seen above, before completing each exercise on LearnSmart students had to declare whether they knew the answer ("I know it"), were more or less unsure ("I think so" and "Unsure") or did not know the answer at all ("No idea"). In the focus group, the students told us that they liked this function as it allowed them to think about their preparation and progress. However, the data on metacognitive skills that we collected from LearnSmart suggest that this function did not have a significant impact on the students' awareness of their own mistakes. LearnSmart analytics divides the students' responses into four categories: "Correct and aware", "Correct and unaware", "Incorrect and aware" and "Incorrect and unaware". The results in these categories show small variations over time within each unit, especially after the first 3 or 4 weeks of the unit. The distribution of the results is also consistent across the three units: most responses are "Correct and aware" (59–72% of all responses across all three units over all the 12 weeks); "Incorrect and unaware" responses follow (15–21%); then we have "Incorrect and aware" (7–12%); and



**Fig. 5** Trend in the combination of incorrect answers and students' unawareness (example of students' metacognitive skills)

finally "Correct and unaware" (5–9%). As an example, Fig. 5 shows the trend across all three units with regard to "Incorrect and unaware" responses.

### 5.2.2 Recommendations

In the light of students' answers and comments, we think that practice modules should address a broader range of language skills, and these skills should be better integrated within the same module, rather than being separated into two separate modules for grammar and vocabulary. Although still inadequate for longer texts, tools that allow students to write short sentences and get immediate feedback could be integrated in this type of platform.

Teachers should be allowed to have more freedom in choosing the topics of the modules, so as to make sure that the questions reflect the course content and are relevant for students. For self-study, students should instead be able to practise on a wider variety of topics without having to select a specific chapter or skill. The software could recognize students' performance on the contents covered in the course so far and address their specific needs accordingly. Moreover, students would benefit greatly from receiving clarification on their answers and from being able to easily access specific sections of the textbook for further explanation.

The potential of a (by-definition) flexible and non-linear resource is constrained in the linear and non-flexible configuration of textbooks, and could be integrated in language courses only by rethinking all the tools through which the course is delivered, textbooks included. Instead of being built on textbook content, these tools should be designed together with a new generation of modular textbooks. Language educators should be able to create a course by choosing and assembling different types of modules covering a range of language skills, contexts of usage, and delivery modes (that is, in-class work, self-study, and assessment).

Finally, feedback provided to students on their awareness of their own language competence should be strengthened. Although the students already recognize the benefits that questions on their metacognitive skills can have, it seems that the feedback on metacognitive skills still has a limited impact. Specific exercises that enhance students' awareness of the limits of their own linguistic competence could support teachers' feedback and stimulate students to focus their attention on their specific linguistic weaknesses.

## 5.3 *Devices*

### 5.3.1 **Results**

At the beginning of each unit, students were told that they could use LearnSmart on different devices, and were instructed on how to utilize the LearnSmart app if they wanted to complete their modules on their tablets or smartphones. In our surveys, we asked the students what devices they used to access the platform. The majority of the respondents to the surveys told us that they completed the modules on their laptop (ITAL1401/s1: 94.4%; ITAL1401/s2: 81.8%; ITAL1402: 94%). When we asked them to explain the reasons behind the choice of the device, only one student seemed to be satisfied with their mobile experience of LearnSmart.

**Comment 14** Very easy to use on a smartphone, and convenient, allowing you to practise anywhere if you have a free five minutes.

Among the students surveyed who experienced technical difficulties with the software, more than half lamented that LearnSmart did not work properly on their smartphone (55.5%). Apart from a couple of comments on broader technical difficulties encountered in using the app on smartphones (Comments 15–16), the majority of comments were related to the interface of the app (Comments 17–23).

**Comment 15** The app did not work on my phone it was just a blank screen when I downloaded it.

**Comment 16** LearnSmart would not load on my smartphone and when it did, it would constantly crash or freeze.

**Comment 17** The interface of LearnSmart app is not great at all. I wish it was better and more user friendly.

**Comment 18** Whilst attempting to use LearnSmart on my phone it was extremely difficult as the whole page was not visible and could not be expanded and/or scrolled.

**Comment 19** The LearnSmart app on my phone was extremely small and I was unable to read it.

**Comment 20** Also found it difficult to see different sections and complete different tasks on phone, sometimes buttons to answer questions didn't work (couldn't type in some boxes on smartphone so would automatically get incorrect answers when I tried to submit).

**Comment 21** Operating on mobile devices was a little challenging due to the format, but overall not impossible.

**Comment 22** The app for the iPhone is set up similar to the website and not in an app format therefore it was difficult to use as the questions were super small and often it would click the wrong answer due to its size.

**Comment 23** I personally didn't find it user-friendly, so I preferred to use it on my laptop. I was hoping it was going to be easy on my phone, that I could just click as I would do with other apps like Duolingo, but I found it easier to go on Blackboard and do it on my laptop.

As these comments show, the interface on the app was in fact similar to that on the computer, and it is not user-friendly on small screens. Questions could not be expanded and were not legible. The same problem applied to answer buttons, and this resulted in students tapping on the wrong answers by mistake. Comment 23 highlights another element to consider. If used on the computer, LearnSmart was integrated with the university Learning Management System (Blackboard) and could be easily accessed through this platform. Each week, we made the LearnSmart assignments available through a dedicated folder on Blackboard, so that students could use only one platform. However, the same integration was not available if students accessed Blackboard on their phone or through the Blackboard app. We believe that a higher number of students would have worked on the mobile app if this had better settings in terms of format and accessibility and had therefore offered ubiquitous and more agile access.

### 5.3.2 Recommendations

Students' choices and comments make it clear that the experience of adaptive e-learning software must be easy and enjoyable if we want to provide students with a tool that adapts not only to their learning pace and skills but also to their needs in terms of practice time and space. We believe that the adaptive learning experience is not complete if students are not allowed to practise whenever and wherever they want. We suggest that adaptive tools for language education should be supported by efficient mobile technologies and allow a fully blended experience of formal and informal learning environments.



## 6 Conclusions

On average, more than 80% of the surveyed students (with an average of 93% across the two ITAL1401 units) reported that the adaptive platform was “extremely useful” or “moderately useful” and told us that the effort they put into these activities paid off. They liked being able to do regular work online outside the classroom, and they appreciated the flexibility of being able to do it anytime and wherever they were. Using our case study as a starting point, in this chapter we have proposed recommendations for the future use and development of adaptive learning systems specific to language education: more individualized platforms; modular, non-linear textbooks; and mobile functionality. This research certainly does not answer all the needs of language education at university, but it provides food for thought about the future of institutional language teaching and learning.<sup>7</sup>

While institutions ask us to improve and expand the use of technologies within and outside the classroom, the lack of tools to meet this request is problematic and raises the question about where these resources should come from. In particular, it is important to identify who will lead the transformation of university language classes in order to integrate adaptive learning technologies effectively. Our research suggests that, at the moment, more collaboration between publishers, software developers and tertiary institutions is required. This is necessary in order to design university language courses—but this will soon apply to all university teaching and learning—in such a way that the use of adaptive learning technologies addresses the need for a subject-specific personalized learning experience.

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## Part VII

# International Exchanges and Intercultural Connections

Intercultural competence has become a widely recognized graduate attribute, featuring in the lists of competencies desired by many universities today. Whilst language programs are a site of learning where such an outcome transpires more naturally than in others, this does not mean that language scholars are complacent about their students' development of this competency, or that they do not reflect constantly on the means by which they can enable the development of intercultural awareness in their students. This section offers two examples of classroom experiments which were designed to provide exchanges between language students in a range of countries and a range of languages. While the objectives and methodologies deployed in both courses were different, both reported on the progress in intercultural awareness that had resulted from the use of telecollaborative exchanges.

Carloni and Zuccala describe a complex learning and teaching project based on the use of Skype. Their telecollaborative project involved students of Italian Studies at Monash University and students enrolled in the Masters in Teaching Italian to Foreigners at Università di Urbino. The cross-institutional project was designed to develop the oral communication skills of the students through interactions such as video recordings, which both teachers and students rated highly.

Mrowa-Hopkins and Sánchez Castro present a model devised expressly for cultivating intercultural learning and understanding in undergraduate students, through online Skype exchanges. Their study involved two groups of students at Flinders University. One group was paired with students at Universidad Panamericana in Mexico, and the other with students at Universität Paderborn in Germany.

In both cases, the authors have pointed to the need to conduct further investigation into the complex issues raised by the exchanges between their student cohorts. However, their primary objective was achieved in that each model proved an effective platform for enabling authentic exchanges, developing communicative skills and enhancing intercultural understanding.

# Blending Italian Through Skype: A Diachronic and Comparative Account of a Telecollaborative Project



Giovanna Carloni and Brian Zuccala

**Abstract** This study aims to provide a comparative, diachronic account of two consecutive implementations of the telecollaborative project, “Let’s go digital! Contemporary Italy ‘surfs’ to Monash: discovering literature, culture and language”. The project involved students from the Masters of Teaching Italian to Foreigners program at the Università di Urbino Carlo Bo (Italy) and the Italian Studies Program at Monash University (Australia). This study builds on our previous work (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, 2018), and gives an evidence-based account of this exploratory phase of cross-institutional collaboration, designed as the first stage of a more extensive program. The two pilot trials held in 2017 and 2018, including the changes made to improve the project’s format, are discussed and compared using the feedback given by both students and instructors.

**Keywords** Telecollaboration · Desktop videoconferencing · Blended learning · Transnational pedagogy · Cross-institutional collaboration

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This article is the result of the joint efforts of its two co-authors. However, should a distinction be made for institutional reasons: Giovanna Carloni wrote Sections 3, 4 and 5; Brian Zuccala wrote the abstract as well as Sections 1 and 2.

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

By 2016, the Italian Studies Program at Monash University (Australia) had been offering for some time an advanced unit based on nineteenth-century literary materials (Foscolo, Manzoni, Leopardi) and focusing on *Risorgimento*.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, the unit appeared to be both highly appreciated by students (constantly scoring among the top three units in the Italian program in the 2012–2016 period) and effective in terms of retaining students from the semester 1 to semester 2 transition (with an average retention rate of 83% or above in the same period). On the other hand, the unit, being an advanced one for second- and third- (and occasionally fourth-) year students, also often seemed to be the catalyst for end-of-career students' feedback on the (perceived) constraints associated with a comparatively limited per-student time and with 200 minutes overall of weekly, in-class tuition (four weekly blocks, subdivided into one predominantly language-focused workshop and one predominantly cultural content-driven workshop). That feedback also pointed to the positive impact that further exposure to native spoken (Italian) language could have on learners (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 120).<sup>3</sup>

Within this context, and in an effort to improve the performance and effectiveness of the unit, as well as its reception by students—both of these aspects having emerged from final Student Evaluations of Teaching and Units (SETU)<sup>4</sup>—Italian Studies initiated a (tele)collaboration project with the Masters course of Teaching Italian to Foreigners at the University of Urbino.<sup>5</sup> As outlined elsewhere (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, 2018, both of which can be understood as more theoretical pieces), the collaboration drew upon a core of recent scholarship on telecollaboration-centred blended learning (O'Dowd 2006; Belz and Vyatkin 2008; Ware and O'Dowd 2008; Guichon 2009; Develotte et al. 2010; Helm and Guth 2010; Murphy et al. 2010; Liddicoat and Scarino 2013; Kern 2014; Lewis and O'Dowd 2016a; Sykes 2018). It resulted in the design of a blended and Skype-mediated component for the Italian Studies Advanced 1 unit. This new, blended unit was delivered in Semester 1 2017 as a pilot trial and re-run in a consolidated format in Semester 1 2018, after a number of modifications had been made. This chapter, after an overview of the blended component's key features and aims (“An Overview of the

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<sup>1</sup>An early version of this paper, titled “An Italian-Australian Project: Blending Italian at Monash through Desktop Videoconferencing” (by Annamaria Pagliaro, Giovanna Carloni and Brian Zuccala) and without the 2018 run's results, was delivered as an oral presentation at the 2017 LCNAU colloquium.

<sup>2</sup>ATS3227 Italian Studies Advanced 1. The unit was coordinated by the then Convenor of Italian Dr Annamaria Pagliaro, who made implementing the project possible and enabled data collection throughout it, and to whom goes a special note of thanks.

<sup>3</sup>This primary reason for blending is discussed more extensively in Carloni and Zuccala (2018).

<sup>4</sup>As Carloni and Zuccala have indicated (2017, p. 121), Monash SETU and Monash Unit Guides are only available to Monash staff and students with Authcate credentials.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.uniurb.it/corsi/1680273>

[Project's Structure and Aims](#)”),<sup>6</sup> focuses on the key changes made to the blend in the 2017–2018 transition, as well as their theoretical and practical implications (“[2018 Monash-Urbino Telecollaborative Project: Developments](#)”). We then compare those modifications against the students’ perception surveys, with the aim of assessing their efficacy (“[Instructors’ and Students’ Perceptions: A Case Study](#)”).

## 2 An Overview of the Project’s Structure and Aims

The online digital project was conducted with the (inter)actors situated in geographically distant locations. In one-on-one partnerships, a cohort of advanced Italian learners in Australia and a cohort of Italian instructors in Italy interacted in Italian through Skype-mediated desktop videoconferencing. In the cross-institutional project, each Monash University student (17 students in the first trial, 19 in the second) in the Italian Studies Advanced 1 unit was partnered with an instructor (8 in the first trial, 5 in the second trial) of Italian as a foreign language. In both these trials, the instructors were experienced teachers who had already completed their Masters degree in Teaching Italian to Foreigners. However, as discussed elsewhere (Carloni and Zuccala 2018), in the future pre-service teachers (PSTs)<sup>7</sup> will ideally fulfil this role as part of their course in the expectation of value to both student and PST, in terms of effectiveness, broad implementation and long-term sustainability.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing on the positive results highlighted by scholarship focusing on Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE) (Guth et al. 2012; O’Dowd 2012; Jin 2013; Vinagre 2016; Lewis and O’Dowd 2016b; Porto 2017), the Monash-Urbino project aimed primarily to enable Australian learners to discuss Italian culture-specific topics with (distant and) properly trained native Italian speakers. Such discussions had the two-fold objective of facilitating and encouraging the development of students’ conversational and interactional skills in Italian while the learners broadened their intercultural awareness. Students’ capacity to articulate and verbalize (in Italian) the differences and similarities between the Italian and the Australian cultural landscapes was enhanced.

Before engaging in each Skype-mediated meeting, students were asked to complete, in self-study mode, Italian culture-specific digital activities. The aim of the self-study was to foster students’ autonomy (Fuchs et al. 2012).

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<sup>6</sup>This is extensively illustrated in Carloni and Zuccala (2017, pp. 119–129).

<sup>7</sup>This is aligned to the increased number of pre-service teachers recruited for OIE projects, the positive effects of which on the PSTs themselves are illustrated by, among others, Guichon (2009), Develotte et al. 2010, and Murphy et al. (2010).

<sup>8</sup>Unlike most of the telecollaborative projects implemented in Australia (Tudini 2016), the project does not rely on institutional funding of any sort.

The co-designers of the blend<sup>9</sup> created didactical materials which integrated content, foreign language pedagogy and technology knowledge dimensions, according to the Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra and Koehler 2006; Koehler and Mishra 2008).<sup>10</sup> Each of the weekly digital lessons featured authentic videos, an input aimed at balancing the mainly written as well as predominantly “literary” input to which students were exposed during in-class tuition.

The blend was designed within a socio-constructivist framework, drawing upon the four-stage checklist developed by Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013, p. 243),<sup>11</sup> according to which learners are regarded as active and dialogic meaning-constructors, and instructors are considered to be facilitators (Harasim 2012, pp. 60–69; Carloni and Zuccala 2017, pp. 122, 127). Each digitally mediated session consisted of four components: (i) brainstorming activities; (ii) pre-viewing activities; (iii) while-viewing activities; (iv) and post-viewing activities.<sup>12</sup>

Activities and relevant digital content were made available to students through personalized webpages created with Weebly. Instructors then used MindMeister to design the brainstorming activities, which called upon the students’ prior knowledge. The interactive and visually rich mind-maps demanded active engagement on the students’ part: learners, by elaborating upon previously acquired notions, had to complete different sub-sections focusing on different topics, in which they were required to respond using words to describe concepts presented through images (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 126).

The pre-viewing activities were designed to introduce keywords and were conducted using the digital noticeboard Padlet. These activities required learners to combine vocabulary items with definitions or images, which were presented on the noticeboard.

Students were introduced to the concepts they needed to acquire in order to be able to carry out the post-viewing activities through short videos. These videos, which dealt with contemporary Italian culture-specific topics deeply connected to the literary topics discussed in class, were between five and ten minutes long in the 2017 trial and were then reduced to no more than five minutes in 2018, in response to students’ feedback) (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 127). Instructors used Google Forms to design while-viewing activities available online to facilitate students’

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<sup>9</sup>The theoretical framework of the project and the digital teaching materials were devised collaboratively by Giovanna Carloni, Giorgia Bassani, Margherita Bezzi, Alessandro Droghini, Luca Ma, Maira Marzioni, Ilaria Pasquinelli, Jacopo Pettinari and Ilaria Puliti.

<sup>10</sup>The task design of the project was created in keeping with the “strong approach” to telecollaborative task design devised by O’Dowd (2016, p. 287).

<sup>11</sup>It consists of context (stage one), course design (stage two), learners and teachers/tutors (stage three), and evaluation and development of the blend (stage four).

<sup>12</sup>The digital tools used to produce these sessions were: Google Forms, <https://www.google.com/forms/about>; MindMeister, <https://www.mindmeister.com>; Padlet, <https://it.padlet.com>; UtellStory, <http://www.utellstory.com>; Weebly Education, <https://education.weebly.com>

comprehension of the videos. This set of activities consisted primarily of closed-ended questions: matching, true/false, and multiple choice.

The two post-viewing activities were conducted in digital, Skype-mediated videoconferencing (DVC). The first consisted of open-ended questions guiding students in analysing and assessing critically the concepts presented in the videos. While interacting in Italian with their instructors through Skype, students had to provide answers to these questions (which were also embedded in their personalized webpage). The questions gradually increased in complexity, going from factual,<sup>13</sup> to convergent,<sup>14</sup> to divergent questions.<sup>15</sup> The second post-viewing task was designed using a multimedia storytelling tool, UtellStory. It consisted of Australian-Italian interculturally driven opinion exchange, role play and problem solving. The post-viewing tasks encouraged students to deploy both the concepts and the language hitherto acquired in new contexts, and were designed to foster sustained and complex output in Italian (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 128).

Learner-generated knowledge was used to assess student participation (Lee and McLoughlin 2008, p. 16). Learners, by acting as knowledge producers, were expected to show a deep understanding of the intercultural perspective underpinning the digital learning project. In preparation for the last Skype-mediated session, they were required to create a multimodal presentation on a topic selected by them on the basis of thematic categories such as food and sport. The topic needed to be presented from a cross-cultural perspective—Italian first, then Australian (or vice versa), then “mixed”: Italian-Australian.

“Syllabus integration” appears to be a key element “in achieving the normalization of technology” (Gruba and Hinkelman 2012, p. 6), and the blended component of the course seems to fall best into the category of an oral task, which it effectively replaces (Carloni and Zuccala 2018, pp. 436–437). Thus, all aspects of this component, including the final student-generated artifact, were assessed by using criteria derived from the original marking rubric for oral examination (grammatical accuracy, vocabulary and idiom, fluency, analysis, pronunciation and intonation, comprehension) and the whole component was worth 10% of the total grade for the unit.

The project had mostly positive outcomes in terms of participants’ feedback. In the 2017 pilot trial, data gathered via online questionnaires showed that the students’ perception of the overall project was very positive, with over 90% of the participants declaring that they “would be willing to take part in a similar course in the future”. These results mirror the entire unit’s approval rate of over 85%, as shown by the 2017 Student Evaluation of Teaching and Units (SETU).

With regard to the students’ willingness to participate in a similar project, the data of the 2018 trial confirm this trend. The student assessment of the project’s overall usefulness was similar, in that the 2018 dataset also showed a steady approval

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<sup>13</sup>These questions involve what can be considered as low-level cognitive skills.

<sup>14</sup>These questions involve what can be considered as mid-level cognitive skills.

<sup>15</sup>The latter were aimed at triggering higher-order thinking skills. Students thus engaged with the topics at an increasingly deep level, and instructors encouraged students not only to answer but also to generate questions.



rate throughout the course. Over 70% of the students chose either “agree” or “strongly agree”<sup>16</sup> with the statement “I found the meeting useful” (Question 1), while no student assessed any of the meetings as not being useful (choosing either “disagree” or “strongly disagree”). Likewise, as to the usefulness of each individual meeting, there is no substantial variation—despite the decreased number of meetings—, with over 60% of the participants giving a full mark (= “strongly agree”) to each meeting.

This first section has illustrated the structure of the project with a particular focus on the features and the perception-related data, which appear to have remained stable across the two pilot trials. In the next two sections the major innovations designed and introduced during the 2017–2018 transition will be illustrated, and both their reception by students and the instructors’ perceptions of their effectiveness will be assessed. This comparative account is intended to determine the optimal form in which the blend should/could be delivered either within the same context or elsewhere.

### **3 2018 Monash-Urbino Telecollaborative Project: Developments**

In designing the 2018 project, changes were made to the 2017 blend in three key areas: i) the types of activities leading up to the first Skype-mediated session; ii) the number of Skype-mediated interactions to be required of students throughout the semester; and iii) the outcomes of the learners’ final presentations.

As to the first area, research shows that the implementation of effective socialization patterns, targeted to foster socialization among telecollaborative participants, is pivotal for telecollaborative exchanges to succeed (Stickler and Hampel 2015, p. 59). In this respect, the analysis of the 2017 Monash-Urbino project indicated that both instructors and students found it rather difficult, during their first Skype-mediated lesson, to start the activities straight away as they did not know each other at all; thus, they ended up using the first 20–30 minutes of the first DVC to get to know each other. In the 2018 trial, in order to get round this problem, students were required both to watch the videos where their instructors introduced themselves and to video-record their own 3–5 minute introductions for instructors to watch before the first Skype-mediated lesson. While watching instructors’ videos, each student was expected to identify their own instructor by detecting customized clues inserted in the videos; students thus carried out a while-listening activity to achieve a set objective, which made the whole process both more challenging and more motivating. To talk about themselves in the video-recorded introductions, students followed

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<sup>16</sup>Questionnaires were designed in keeping with the terminology of the Student Evaluations for the unit (based on five levels of appreciation: “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”).

the guidelines developed by the project designers, namely a script featuring some open-ended questions (such as: “What’s your name? Why do you study Italian? Do you like Italian? Why do you like it? Have you ever been to Italy, if so, when? Or, would you like to visit Italy? Why? What comes to mind when you think of Italy? Do you work? If so, what do you do? Do you like your job? What would you like to do when you graduate? What are your hobbies and interests? What do you expect from this telecollaborative project? What do you expect from your instructor?”). Students could access the guidelines to create their own videos through a multimedia storytelling presentation based on a UtellStory interactive model.

As far as the number of Skype-mediated lessons is concerned, student feedback from 2017 had revealed issues with the extremely time-consuming nature of the project (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 135); specifically, the eight Skype-mediated sessions per student conducted in 2017 seemed too many in relation to the 10% mark assigned for the Skype-centred component of the unit. To address this perceived discrepancy, in the 2018 Monash-Urbino telecollaboration each student took part in just two Skype-mediated lessons.

For their final assignment, students were required to create, in 2018, just as they did in 2017, a user-generated multimodal presentation focusing on a cultural topic. This topic was presented within an intercultural framework designed to demonstrate their creativity in a foreign language (Stickler and Hampel 2015, pp. 63–64). To foster intercultural awareness, students were expected to investigate Italian-Australian intercultural elements explicitly (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, p. 117). In the 2017 telecollaboration, students only discussed their multimodal intercultural presentations on Skype with their telecollaborative instructors. To encourage further collaboration among students in the 2018 trial, they were required to share their multimodal presentations with their Monash instructors and classmates as well as with their telecollaborative instructors; in particular, students discussed their work with their classmates during face-to-face classroom instruction.

### **3.1 Research Questions**

In the light of the modifications to the 2017 blend illustrated above, the present study aims to answer the following research questions focusing on the 2018 Monash-Urbino telecollaborative project:

- (a) How useful was it for instructors to watch the videos where students introduced themselves before the first Skype meeting?
- (b) How useful was it for students to watch the videos where instructors introduced themselves before the first Skype meeting?
- (c) How useful/effective was it for students to use videos to introduce themselves to instructors before the first Skype meeting?
- (d) According to the instructors, how effective were the activities in which students engaged during the two telecollaborative lessons?

- (e) According to the students, how motivating were the activities in which they engaged during the two telecollaborative lessons?
- (f) According to the students, how effective were the activities in which they engaged during the two telecollaborative lessons?

## **4 Instructors' and Students' Perceptions: A Case Study**

### **4.1 Participants**

A cohort of 19 students took part in the 2018 Monash-Urbino project, each of whom, as indicated, took part in two Skype-mediated lessons and created an initial video-introduction as well as a final multimodal presentation. Each student was paired with the same instructor for both Skype-mediated lessons. Five instructors took part in the telecollaborations; thus, each instructor had the opportunity to interact with various students.

### **4.2 Method**

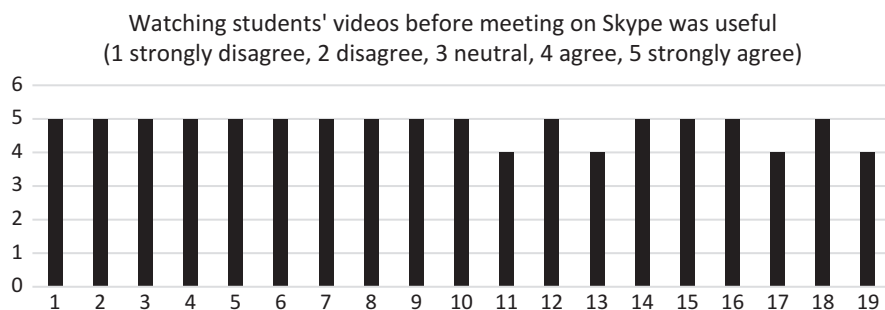
The data for the present study were collected through online self-evaluation questionnaires that both instructors and students were required to fill in after each Skype-mediated lesson. The questionnaires featured both closed and open-ended questions covering a wide range of aspects. An online final questionnaire was also administered.

## **4.3 Results and Discussion**

### **4.3.1 Perceptions of Self-Introduction Videos**

Overall, instructors found it extremely useful (Fig. 1) to watch the videos where the 19 students involved in the project introduced themselves. By answering a five-point Likert scale question administered through online questionnaires, instructors assessed nearly 80% of students' video presentations as being of maximum usefulness (5 out of 5), and assessed the remaining 20% as being only slightly less useful (4 out of 5).

Instructors evaluated watching students' videos as useful for various reasons. Primarily, the videos allowed instructors to assess students' language proficiency. In particular, through the videos, instructors realized that some students had a very

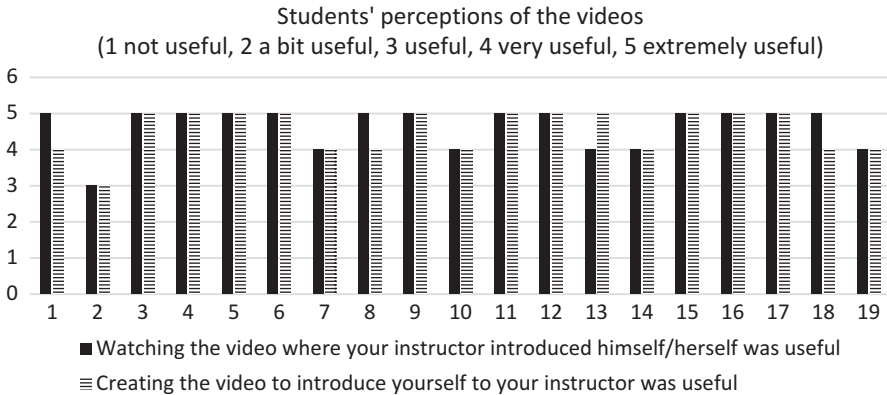


**Fig. 1** Instructors' responses to watching students' videos

high level of language proficiency, actually much higher than expected, which forced them to think carefully about how to make dialogical interactions and activities challenging and motivating for such students. Instructors also regarded watching students' videos as highly valuable because this activity enabled them to get to know students' characters, backgrounds, and interests beforehand. The videos also assisted them with planning teaching practices and dialogical interactions catering to students' specific needs, interests and learning styles. In response to students' interests, for example, instructors picked the topic of the first and/or second lesson, selecting from the various materials available (some of the topics were the brain drain in Italy, mafia and crime in Italy, and young people and politics in Italy). Being able to tailor each individual session to students' specific needs and preferences allowed instructors to address the 2017 student feedback, which had pinpointed, at times, insufficiently personalized topics (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 134). Furthermore, instructors mentioned the advantage of seeing students' faces as well as hearing their voices before interacting face-to-face on Skype, which helped to make the first meeting less stressful and threatening.

Through both the five-point Likert scale questions and the open-ended questions administered through online questionnaires ("Watching the video where your instructor introduced himself/herself was useful and/or interesting because ..."; "Creating the video to introduce yourself to your instructor was useful and/or interesting and/or motivating because ..."), students evaluated how useful they found (a) watching the instructors introducing themselves in the videos and (b) recording videos to introduce themselves to instructors before meeting on Skype for the first lesson.

Overall, the data in Fig. 2 show that all 19 students engaged in the project ranked watching instructors introducing themselves before meeting on Skype for the first lesson rather highly in terms of usefulness, and found creating a video to introduce



**Fig. 2** Students' perceptions of the videos

themselves almost equally useful. One student rated recording his/her own video introduction even slightly more useful than watching their instructor's video.<sup>17</sup>

Students' evaluation of the opportunity to watch the videos of their instructors before the beginning of the project was very positive for various reasons. Most students highlighted the advantage of getting to know their instructors in terms of character, background, and interests. Students indicated in particular that the videos allowed them to find things in common with their instructors, which facilitated their first Skype meeting since both students and instructors knew by then what to talk about ("I found the introductory video incredibly useful and interesting as I was able to learn a bit about my tutor and her interests before meeting her, which eliminated awkwardness and allowed us to progress smoothly and fluently into conversation"). Students also felt that watching instructors' videos made connecting with them much easier while meeting on Skype ("you are able to get to know your instructor and you are able to connect with them better when you communicate"). Furthermore, some students appreciated the opportunity to use the videos as a listening activity ("It was like a short listening activity to help us warm up before doing the meetings"), while also highlighting the added value of listening to native speakers talking ("I always find it useful to listen to native speakers").

In general, students enjoyed and valued creating videos to introduce themselves to their instructors. Firstly, all students claimed that their own video introductions allowed instructors to know what to talk about as an ice-breaker at the beginning of their first Skype meeting ("it helped my instructor ask me questions and helped us have good conversation"). Students also found it important that instructors learned the reason why they studied Italian ("I could show them who I am and explain

<sup>17</sup> 13 students (nearly 70% of the total) evaluated watching instructors' videos as extremely useful; 5 students (about 25%) as very useful and 1 student (about 5%) as useful. Students' scores ranged between 3 and 5. Conversely, 11 students (nearly 58%) evaluated creating their own video introductions as extremely useful; 7 (about 37%) as very useful and 1 (about 5%) as useful. Students' scores ranged between 3 and 5.

my motives for studying Italian, which we referred back to during the lesson”). Furthermore, students mentioned that recording the video made them practise their speaking skills (“It was also useful because it forced me to use my conversational skills before the lesson, which was great preparation”) and revise some vocabulary items and/or lexical sets (“a bit of practice speaking and revision of vocabulary that hasn’t been used in some time”). Someone saw the video-recording of introductions as a challenge but, at the same time, as an advantage since it represented a new experience in terms of the medium to be used, namely video-recording, and the genre to be developed, that is, a rather long introduction about oneself from various perspectives in a foreign language (“It was challenging to see how I could use my Italian speaking skills to structure a verbal presentation”), and the length of the talking time in Italian (“it helped me to practise speaking in Italian for long periods of time”). Some students mentioned the advantage of practising Italian while at the same time getting used to talking in a foreign language in a technology-mediated learning environment, which enabled them to feel more relaxed during their first Skype meeting (“It forced me to use my Italian skills in the speaking realm, which isn’t done often and it allowed me to think more about how to express myself more naturally in Italian. In my opinion, it also helped to make the overall experience a fair bit more relaxed, as it gave me prior experience speaking live in front of a camera and speaking on the fly in a foreign language”; “Having to create a video of my own was equally useful because it allowed me to get used to the camera and I was able to get over my nervousness”). Other students found the opportunity to watch and listen to themselves speaking in Italian to be a useful metacognitive experience, and an advantage (“It gave me a chance to record and listen to myself speaking in Italian, which I don’t often do”). In line with current research, metacognition thus emerged as an asset of the project: “Ultimately learning [...] and evaluating may become one process that engages users in self-awareness, develops meta-cognitive skills and self-regulation and elevates intrinsic motivation, by also leading to more learner autonomy” (Caws and Heift 2016, p. 132). Numerous students stressed that student-generated video introductions were especially useful because they enabled instructors to plan teaching practices catering to students’ learning styles (“The instructor was able to understand what makes me learn best before the lessons”). Likewise, students valued the fact that, since instructors were able to watch student-generated videos, they could assess their level of language proficiency before the first Skype meeting (“Your instructor has a sense of who you are and your ability in Italian so that they can best address your needs”). Furthermore, one participant perceived student-generated video-recorded introductions as the opportunity to reflect upon oneself as a person (“It gave them a sense of who I was”), while other students mentioned that the activity was fun, thereby fostering motivation towards the project.

The positive outcome associated with the video-introduction component emerges further when we examine students’ answers to the open-ended question—“During the lesson I felt...”—, which was aimed at enquiring about the level of confidence/comfort experienced by the students at the beginning of the project, after the exchange of video introductions, and after each meeting. In this respect, the data

show that there was already a very high initial level of confidence and comfort at the beginning of the 2018 project (probably thanks to the very positive impact of video introductions), with an overwhelming majority of “calm” and “comfortable” answers and only 3 out of the 19 students (fewer than 5% of the participants) feeling “nervous” during the first meeting. By the end of the project the percentage was 0.0%.

On the whole, student evaluations of the use of the video introductions show that this practice was perceived as very effective, thus confirming the claim that “Early socialization experiences have a long-term impact on newcomers’ satisfaction, performance and intention to stay in a group” (Nazir et al. 2015, p. 177; Ferguson et al. 2018, p. 210). This evidence suggests that video introductions can be implemented in future telecollaborative projects successfully. Students’ positive evaluations are in line with instructors’ perceptions.

### 4.3.2 Perceptions of Activity Effectiveness

After each Skype meeting, instructors assessed the effectiveness of the five activities implemented in each lesson by answering a five-point Likert-scale question administered through online questionnaires. A total score for each activity was

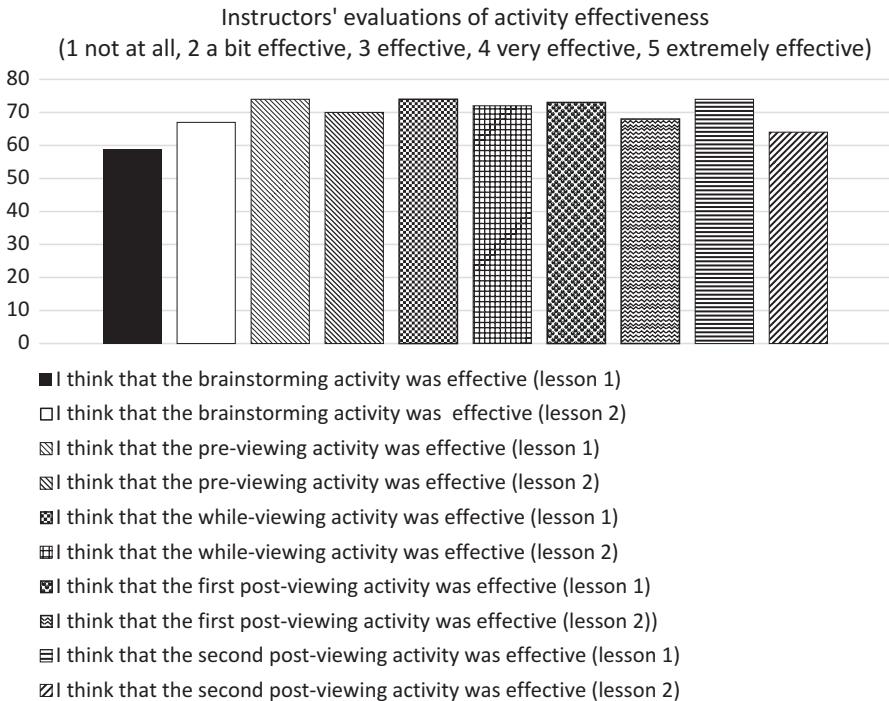


Fig. 3 Instructors’ evaluations of activity effectiveness

obtained by adding together all the instructors' scores related to each activity for each lesson (Fig. 3).

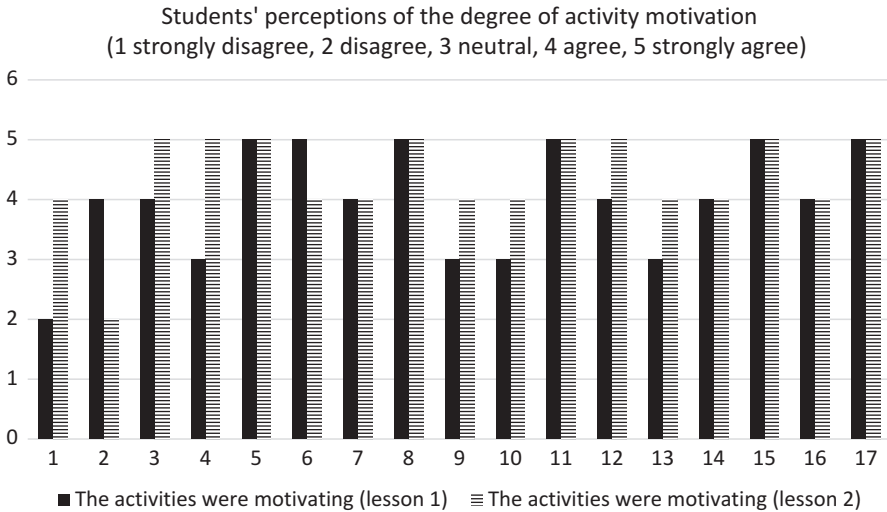
Overall, instructors assessed the activities implemented as effective. In general, except for the brainstorming activity, the activities of the first lesson were perceived as slightly more effective than those of the second lesson. In particular, the pre-viewing activity and while-viewing activity, as well as the second post-viewing activity of the first lesson, were scored the highest and to the same degree, followed closely by the first post-viewing activity. A significant gap emerged between the brainstorming activity and all the others. The interactive brainstorming MindMeister-based activity of the first lesson, requiring students to complete interactive mind-maps autonomously, was considered less effective than that of the second lesson. In general, instructors rated brainstorming activities as less effective than all the other activities, probably because students were not used to working on their own to activate their prior knowledge using mind-maps, operating as active learners, and this uncertainty and lack of confidence on the students' part emerged during the Skype-mediated lessons.

Conversely, the interactive Padlet-based matching activity aimed at introducing key concepts and vocabulary items, which definitely required a lighter cognitive load, was rated slightly higher for the first lesson. The while-viewing interactive activity, created with Google Forms and featuring closed-ended questions (such as multiple choice and true/false questions), as well as automated self-assessment, was rated almost to the same degree for both lessons—although that of the first lesson was scored slightly higher. These activities, which were the only activities provided with automated self-assessment, showed the least difference in scores between the two lessons. Both the first and second post-viewing activities of the first lesson were assessed as slightly more effective than those of the second lesson; a bigger gap was detected for the post-viewing activity of the second lesson.

Through a five-point Likert scale question administered through post-lesson online questionnaires, 17 students (only the answers of the students who assessed both lessons have been included in the study) evaluated how motivating the activities were in each lesson.

Overall, the data (Fig. 4) show that, but for a few exceptions, students found the activities quite motivating in both lessons, although to different degrees. In general, students found the activities of the second lesson slightly more motivating (scores ranged between 4 and 5 except for one student who scored them 2) than those of the first lesson (scores ranged between 2 and 5); 11 out of 17 students (nearly 65% of the participants) scored the activities between 4 and 5 (and the remaining slightly less). In particular, seven students found the activities of the second lesson more motivating than those of the first lesson while two students found the activities of the first lesson more motivating than those of the second lesson. Furthermore, eight students found the activities of the first and the second lesson motivating to the same degree. To a certain extent, students' slight preference for the activities of the second lesson in terms of motivation may be due to the fact that, during the second lesson, learners were already familiar with the activity types and sequencing. Such familiarity was likely to make accomplishing the various tasks easier, since the





**Fig. 4** Students' perceptions of the degree of motivation for each activity

cognitive overload connected with carrying out a technology-enhanced activity for the first time was no longer an issue, and this allowed students to focus solely on the content of the lesson. In this context, it seems worthy of mention that in relation to the significantly decreased number of per-student sessions in comparison with the 2017 project, the 2018 students were asked "What do you think would be a sufficient number of meetings across the semester?". Over half of the students responded by indicating that four Skype-mediated meetings would be an appropriate workload for the semester, thus positioning the suitable amount of DVC in between the 2017 workload (eight meetings: perceived as excessive) and the 2018 workload (two meetings: perceived as insufficient overall).

Answering a five-point Likert-scale question in post-lesson online questionnaires, 17 students (only the answers of the students who gave a score to both lessons have been included in the study) evaluated the five activities implemented in each lesson. A total score for each activity was obtained by adding together all the students' scores related to each activity for each lesson (Fig. 5).

Overall, students found all the activities of the second lesson slightly more effective than those of the first lesson, which is in keeping with the results that emerged from the analysis of the data focusing on motivation, except for the second-post viewing activities, which were assessed equally for both lessons. This piece of data is in contrast with the perceptions of the instructors (Fig. 3), who regarded all the activities of the first lesson, except for the brainstorming activity, as being more effective than those of the second lesson. The mismatch between instructors and students may be related to instructors' and students' different expectations.

In keeping with instructors' perceptions, students ranked the first brainstorming activity as less effective than the second brainstorming activity, probably because

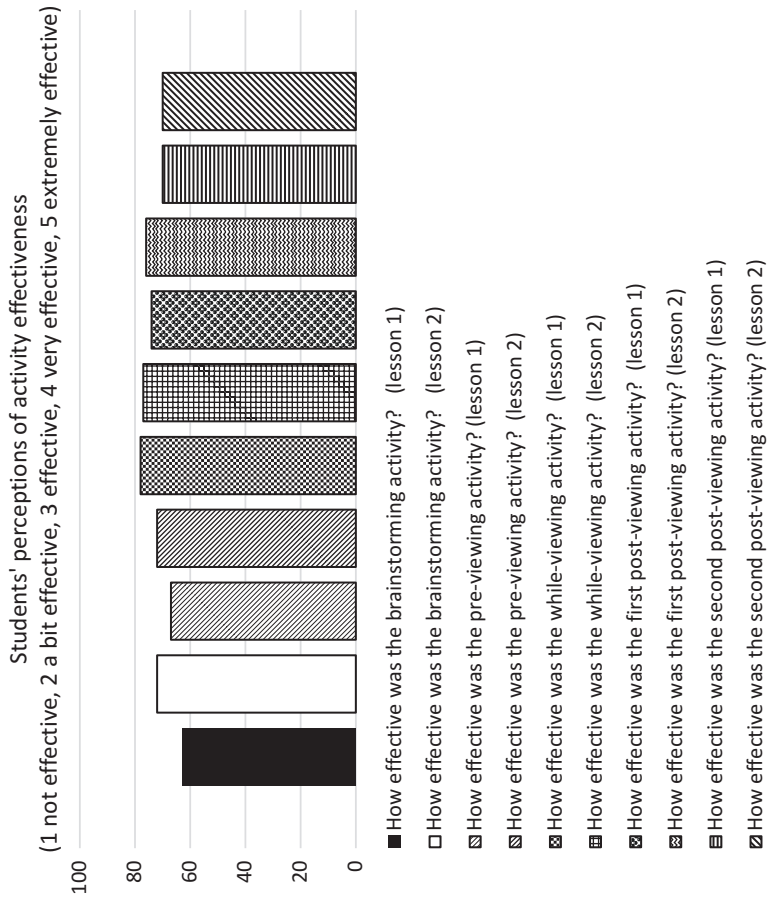


Fig. 5 Students' perceptions of activity effectiveness

during the first lesson students were not familiar with this kind of activity, which required quite a high degree of competence in various lexical sets as well as autonomy. Furthermore, students had to wait for the Skype lessons to get their instructors' feedback on the activity, which was likely to decrease their ability to self-evaluate and challenge their ability to tolerate uncertainties. Students found the brainstorming activity much more useful in the second lesson probably because, as discussed, they had by then familiarized themselves with this kind of activity and its cognitive, language and content-specific challenges. Students ranked the while-viewing activities as the most effective of all in both lessons. In this context, it is worth mentioning that both instructors and students perceived these while-viewing activities, provided with automated self-assessment, as very effective, which seems to suggest that automated self-assessment may be especially suitable to increase students' sense of self-efficacy while working autonomously online.

On the one hand, students ranked the first post-viewing activities as the second most effective activities in both lessons while the second post-viewing activities were ranked lower and considered slightly less effective, which suggests that students preferred answering teacher-led open-ended questions (such as convergent, divergent and interculturally driven questions) on video content rather than carrying out interculturally driven problem-solving tasks and/or role plays.

On the other hand, instructors evaluated both second post-viewing activities (Fig. 3) as more effective than both the first post-viewing activities, which suggests that instructors placed more value on the students' sustained language output and the dialogical interactions in the target language they engaged in, while carrying out tasks which were linguistically more challenging and required a good degree of creativity: "tasks were devised to foster sustained complex output in Italian, instrumental in fostering pushed output. In this way, interacting with their instructors, learners [...] [were expected to use] the foreign language to evaluate content, formulate hypotheses, role-play, and problem-solve" (Carloni and Zuccala 2017, p. 129).

## 5 Conclusion and Future Developments

By way of conclusion, after having conducted a comparative overview of instructors' and students' perceptions of different activities, it seems appropriate to draw on those data to formulate some hypotheses regarding ways to improve the blend. In terms of task design, instructors identified some shortcomings in the second post-viewing UtellStory-based activities, such as the use of too many slides to contextualize the tasks and provide instructions, which became too time consuming. As a result, in the future implementations of the project, such as the South African-based telecollaborative project that is currently being designed by drawing on the

Monash-Urbino format,<sup>18</sup> another digital tool will be used to devise these activities and, at most, five slides will be used to provide contextualized instructions. Furthermore, as the instructors pointed out, the tasks provided in the second post-viewing activities did not always manage to get students highly involved; consequently, in the future, tasks will be designed to help students engage even further in the analysis of their own national contexts and identities from an intercultural perspective, since this aspect was especially appreciated by students.

Overall, students seemed to regard the structured and/or guided activities as being more effective. Here they were required just to match images and/or lexical items and/or key concepts with their own definitions autonomously, to answer closed-ended questions provided with self-automated assessment, and to take part in teacher-led conversations, such as in the first post-viewing activities, where they were expected to answer open-ended questions which they could access on the project website. As the instructors' evaluations highlighted, notwithstanding the shortcomings discussed above, students carried out the second post-viewing tasks rather well. However, overall, learners did not appear to realize how effectively they actually performed in these more culturally, cognitively, and linguistically challenging activities, such as interculturally driven problem solving, and role plays. This suggests that instructors probably did not manage to give students suitable scaffolding and/or enough positive feedback conducive to fostering learners' ability to self-evaluate. As a result, in the future, to help students become aware of how well they perform in these highly engaging tasks—requiring higher-order thinking skills and more advanced language skills—, a customized assessment grid should be devised. Through such a grid, soon after each Skype lesson, instructors can first evaluate how effectively students accomplished these specific tasks and then share their evaluations with them. Likewise, a similar self-assessment grid can be provided to students so that they can compare their own perceptions with their instructors' evaluations, thereby reflecting critically on their achievements and, as a result, increasing their sense of self-efficacy. To enhance inclusive teaching, feedback explaining the reasons underpinning the various evaluations provided should also be made available to students through podcasts and/or videos, since “Usable feedback is specific and constructive [and] crucial to usable feedback is the word ‘because’” (Baume and Scanlon 2018, p. 7). The various types of feedback provided could thus focus on different aspects of the tasks, such as, to what degree the task objectives were accomplished; how successfully turn-taking was managed by students; how fluent and accurate students' output was; and how appropriately learners used vocabulary. Overall, there should be a greater focus on the explicit development of metacognitive skills, in order to foster students' autonomous learning and their sense of self-efficacy while engaged in telecollaborative tasks. To this end, in the future, instructors should explicitly state in their video introductions what they expect from students, how students can successfully carry out autonomous work online, and how learners can accomplish the various digital activities together with

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<sup>18</sup>On this Wits University-based project, see Virga (2018) and the [BLOSA.co.za](http://BLOSA.co.za) initiative.

their peers and/or instructors in the most effective way. As Ferguson et al. (2018)—building on Wintrup et al. (2015)—point out:

Learners look for information about what is expected of them, whether their learning is expected to develop incrementally or the [...] [lesson] is structured in discrete blocks of learning. Making this information easily visible, but not dominant, facilitates the learning experience and helps to manage learners' expectations. Learners can be strategic and make informed choices about how to spend time if it is clear to them how social learning and interactivity contribute to engaged learning, and which activities are most important if a learner does not have time to complete them all (p. 211).

It is envisioned that, by adopting some of these strategies, instructors and curriculum developers might be able to produce a refined blend which might, in turn, contribute to improving the effectiveness and the reception of units such as Italian Studies Advanced 1, either in the Australian context or elsewhere.

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# How Do Language Learners Enact Interculturality in E-Communication Exchanges?



Colette Mrowa-Hopkins and Olga Sánchez Castro

**Abstract** E-communication offers considerable potential for learning about one's own and others' cultures and enhancing intercultural understanding. However, an in-depth analysis of variables related to openness to others, critical self-awareness and self-analysis, which are central to developing intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1997), cannot be easily tested (Dervin and Vlad 2010; Martin 2015; Zarate 2003). With this challenge in mind, our project engages language learners in three universities in Australia, Germany and Mexico in cross-cultural exchanges via Skype. Discourse analytical tools are used to document how learners talk about culture and for what purposes, with the aim to explore: (1) participants' willingness to engage in collaborative processing of cultural information; and (2) participants' online "intercultural dynamics" (Ogay 2000, p. 53). Arguments are made in support of a "developmental paradigm" (Hammer 2015) that shifts the intercultural lens beyond the individual's skills and traits to the process through which interculturality is constructed between interlocutors. By examining exchanges with a focus on features of dialogic interaction whereby students recontextualize their own knowledge with their interlocutor, this study illustrates how students mediate their own learning (Kohler 2015) and develop an awareness of their own attitudes.

**Keywords** E-communication · Cultural difference · Cultural relativity · Intercultural awareness · Discourse analysis · Collaborative processing · Intercultural dynamics · Dialogic interaction

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## 1 Introduction

After decades of research on intercultural competence, the question we need to ask is: are we getting any clearer in our definition and assessment of knowledge and skills needed to become interculturally competent? In recent scholarly debates on what is required to become interculturally competent, concerns have been raised about relying on an outdated model based on the mainstream “cognitive/affective/behavioural” model (Martin 2015). Instead, arguments are being made in favour of a “developmental paradigm” that is grounded in the “dynamic interaction that arises between individuals” (Hammer 2015). Such a constructionist-grounded approach shifts the intercultural lens beyond the individual’s skills and traits to the process through which cultural meanings are discursively constructed in interaction (i.e., enacting interculturality). In other words, the measure of intercultural competence should be based on the experience of the individual’s engagement with cultural difference.

From a pedagogical perspective, how can we facilitate the development of intercultural competence for language learners? Many studies of intercultural language learning in online contexts initially focused on exchanges of cultural information in the belief that simple exposure to target language culture mediated by its target language speakers would contribute to intercultural awareness. However, according to Hammer (2015), examination of practical applications generally provides weak evidence of students becoming more effective at navigating the murky waters of cultural differences. More recent studies, for example, Ware (2013) and Tudini (2007), go beyond the raising of intercultural awareness to challenge students to reflect upon their own culture. They examine the role of dyadic construction of interculturality in the second language classroom in an attempt to identify key interactional features that promote intercultural negotiation.

The focus of this study is thus to report on the implementation of an online Skype exchange project which aims to promote intercultural learning and understanding between students across three universities located in Australia, Mexico and Germany. It examines students’ self-recorded exchanges and assesses them within the debate on the inclusion of interculturality in language learning and teaching. By analysing the negotiation of meaning that occurs between exchange partners, our study seeks to highlight the social nature of “intercultural mediation” (Liddicoat 2014; Kohler 2015), where rapport building, that is, the development of personal relationships between the participants, may have a significant impact on the negotiation of intercultural knowledge and attitudes.

Research has shown that e-communication tools have multiple advantages. Skype, in particular, provides an authentic frame for both language and culture learning (see Guth and Marini-Maio 2010; Liddicoat and Tudini 2013; Taillefer and Muñoz-Luna 2014; Tian and Wang 2010). It provides a synchronous vehicle for increased exposure to L2 input via native speaker encounters, combining both visual and audio information, essential for accurate encoding and decoding of messages. Skype also provides a cost-effective opportunity for intercultural exchanges,

exposing students, who may not otherwise have the opportunity, to sustained interaction with persons from other cultural groups. As our project aims to increase students' sensitivity to diverse cultural practices, and to develop a broader understanding of the conventions, values and belief systems that operate within their own and others' cultural domains, the use of Skype tools seems thus particularly suited to meet these objectives.

## 2 The Project Rationale

Initially, this pilot project set out to explore traces of evidence of cultural learning in undergraduate students' Skype interactions. However, as the project was developing, we became increasingly aware that "evidence" might not be the right word for what we were hoping to find. According to Dervin and Vlad (2010), a "culturalist" approach, which seeks to document the development of intercultural (Belz and Kiginger 2002) or pragmatic (Belz 2003) competencies along the model proposed by Byram (1997), reduces the other to national or cultural characteristics. Rather, these authors advocate examining how multiple cultures and identities are co-constructed and used to define oneself in interaction. The cultural content of learners' exchanges cannot be taken as proof, or evidence of culture learning, and is therefore not as important as how they mediate the multidimensional aspects of culture in interaction. Our analysis and reflections are therefore anchored in a discursive approach, applying Levy's (2007) multidimensional understanding of culture to the analysis of "cultural related episodes". Zakir et al. define these "as any part of a dialogue produced in the teletandem sessions in which the students focus on any interest, explanation or inquisitiveness about their own culture or the partner's" (2016, p. 26).

Our approach uses the five dimensions of culture as described by Levy (2007) because they broaden the understanding of culture as: (a) *elemental*; (b) *relative*; (c) *group membership*; (d) *contested* and (e) *individual (variable and multiple)*. According to Levy:

*Culture as elemental* refers to one's cultural orientation, values and beliefs system that are taken for granted and seem mostly unproblematic. It colours our understanding and interpretation of other groups' cultural experiences.

*Culture as relative* refers to recognizing one's own and others' cultural practices and comparing or contrasting them. This view often leads to generalizations.

*Culture as group membership* refers to group identification (e.g., age, religion, language, etc.). This is quite noticeable when interlocutors are drawn to one another on account of their perceived shared belonging to a particular social group.

*Culture as contested* may be associated with "culture shock" at both an individual level and a broader societal level, where one's core beliefs and values may be challenged. In our data this manifests itself through the types of questions and responses that reflect inquisitiveness about cultural groups or practices.

*Culture as individual (i.e., variable and multiple)* in which culture is interpreted as a variable and subjective concept. This is revealed when intercultural partners share individual experiences that are "subject to individual interpretation." (Levy 2007, p. 111)

It is important to keep in mind, as Levy (2007) explains, that “the concept of culture is essentially holistic in nature and each dimension overlaps and builds upon the one before” (cited in Zakir et al. 2016, p. 23).

### 3 Organization of the Project

The corpus used in this study is part of a larger study that ran across several semesters in 2014 and 2015. It involved pairing two cohorts of Flinders University undergraduate students with overseas students. The first cohort were intermediate-level Spanish language learners (Group 1/SPAN) who spoke English as their first language and were paired with advanced-level English language learners at Universidad Panamericana in Mexico. The second cohort of Flinders University students were enrolled in “Intercultural Communication” (Group 2/LING), spoke English as their first language and were paired with advanced-level English language learners at Universität Paderborn in Germany. We chose to focus on overseas students who had advanced levels of English so that language difficulties would be minimal.

Participants were requested to email each other to arrange a first meeting over Skype, to introduce themselves, and subsequently to meet in pairs on at least three separate occasions via Skype at their chosen location. Participants were informed that they would be expected to audio-record their conversations for a minimum of three 15-minute sessions over a 12-week semester, and to hand up the self-recorded conversations for analysis by the researchers. All recordings of exchanges were conducted on a voluntary basis and the only incentive offered to students was the benefit they would derive from participating in such a project. In total, five pairs of students completed the project in Semester 2 2015. Their recordings constitute the data for this report.

Lead questions on cultural themes were suggested by the instructors and were provided to all exchange partners. These were selected based on their relevance to everyday encounters. The proposed themes sought to promote mutual give and take between the participants and provided prompts for exchanges on cultural knowledge, negotiating one’s understanding and interpretation. General themes selected for the intercultural exchanges included: (a) social conventions in everyday situations; (b) young people’s social life; (c) cultural celebrations; (d) attitudes towards different cultural groups and minorities; (e) conflict in relationships; and (f) social issues (e.g., same sex marriage; euthanasia; binge drinking; the environment; etc.) (See Appendix A).

### 4 Analysis and Discussion

Recorded data were transcribed and analysed by us to determine how the participants coming from different cultural backgrounds approached the cultural dimensions. Excerpts taken from our corpus will highlight key elements of the process of

enacting interculturality that we seek to document. We discuss, firstly, an excerpt from the Skype exchange between the Australian and German participants and, secondly, an excerpt from the Australian and Mexican participants. As we are about to see in the following excerpts, various dimensions of culture co-exist that we think are representative of participants' engagement in culture learning as they discursively co-construct meanings about culture.

#### 4.1 Looking at Excerpt 1—B-K and Bel

In Group 2 (Skype session 2), we identified several topics involving cross-cultural comparisons of lifestyle, social practices, and social groups, thus signalling one's understanding of a foreign culture (see Excerpt 1 in Appendix B). In looking at how the partners process cultural information, the data provide evidence of the multidimensional aspects of culture as outlined by Levy. At the start of this session, both speakers briefly establish group similarities between young people across the two countries. B-K (the German student) is trying to open up the topic by alluding to differences based on observation of social groups (young people), but Bel (the Australian student) dismisses this by emphasizing the similarities rather than the differences between them. Culture can thus be seen as *group* membership, indicating the need to establish rapport between the interlocutors. The topic of youth culture, however, is not taken up because presumably it does not require deeper inquiry (youth culture being taken as *elemental*). Alternatively, it could be that Bel is deliberately trying to avoid disagreement and wishes to set off the discussion on consensual terms, the weather being generally considered culturally acceptable for the purpose of small talk. This is supported by other studies of telecollaborative communication. For example, Zakir et al. note

[...] that participants frequently try to find something in common with their partners abroad, especially with regard to social practices and lifestyles. This can be interpreted as a need, or willingness, to identify with one another in order to get "closer" and make the interaction more pleasant and friendly (2016, p. 24).

In turn 5 (T5), B-K reframes the topic by taking up the lead question suggested by the instructor, i.e., "knowledge about each other's country and culture". After a brief mention of the weather, B-K quickly raises issues of historical and political consequence for Australians (T11, T13, T15) by mentioning what she knows about Australia, i.e., mainly the Indigenous people and Australia's historical beginning as a penal colony. Feeling that the topic is too contentious, Bel manages to shift her understanding of culture onto safer ground by providing factual geographical information. In doing so, she adopts a didactic voice, mentioned by Liddicoat and Tudini (2013) in their study of chat interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers (NS/NNS). Bel also takes on the role of South Australian tourism advocate, stressing intra-cultural differences within Australia. For example, she emphasizes the distinctive features of South Australia in terms of accents, wineries, and evaluating the attraction of Melbourne vs. Adelaide. Later, in T44, she tentatively offers to talk about her knowledge of Germany in order to remain on the topic of

establishing solid cultural facts about the other's culture (T45), but her attempt is aborted by B-K who is not satisfied with the responses to her initial inquiry on Australian Indigenous groups. In T50, B-K is seeking to deepen her understanding of Indigenous Australians, and perhaps hopes that Bel can clarify the negative representation that her Australian friend, Alana, has reported to her about this group.

What has happened is that Bel is driven to a position which requires calling into question a dominant Australian historical and cultural narrative, which she outwardly rejects as a negative stereotype. Although she distances herself from this view—"...it's a very unusual topic in Australia because historically at school we haven't been taught much about what actually happened to the Indigenous Australians in the history" (T51)—, it is not clear which perspective Bel adopts on the historical events that shaped the cultural context of Australia. This would require her embracing varying viewpoints dealing with conflicting interpretations of events and forcing her to adopt, to quote Kramsch, "a didactic moral stance" (2013, p. 28). From this transcript then, we can clearly see elements of *contested culture within the larger national culture* as mentioned by Levy (2007), but unlike the other excerpts, there is little explicit marking of awareness of *cultural relativity*.

By contrast, focusing on another brief excerpt taken from an exchange between Din (Australian) and Jul (German), the following quote demonstrates the need to go beyond stereotypes and representations, and explores culture as a *relative* concept. In this excerpt, the students are talking about a cultural practice—food consumed at Christmas—as a marker of identity and discuss it as individual, variable and multiple.

[...] we eat certain foods on certain days (.2) there are many families who eat certain things on Christmas...like fish probably. I think most people eat fish (.) **but my brother and I we don't like fish so there has never been fish at Christmas but maybe that's something I would introduce to my life if I were to live abroad.** I would suddenly adopt traditions that I didn't have when living in Germany because I live here and I know I am German but when I am abroad maybe I'll have to try harder to be some kind of German who lives abroad. I will maybe try to be more (..) person at first and then try to go out and learn new things new stuff (.) **That's interesting I haven't thought about that before.** (T495–504)

Interestingly, the German student becomes aware that if she were to travel or live abroad, she would enact a German cultural identity based on her family traditions.

#### 4.2 Looking at Excerpt 2: Irene and Myra

In the following exchange between Irene (Australian) and Myra (Mexican), taken from Group 1 (Skype session 2), our analysis further reveals how the notion of *cultural relativity* is discursively constructed (See Excerpt 2 in Appendix B).

In T89, Myra asks Irene to provide information on how Adelaideans spend their public holidays and, in particular, Australia Day. This request is met with some hesitation from Irene as she states that Myra's question is a difficult one to answer and

presents the celebration of this public holiday as both a culture-relative and a culture-contested experience.

*Culture as membership* is shown in the way Irene explains which group, or members of the Adelaide community, she aligns with in the celebration of this holiday. We note that Irene displays membership to the non-Aboriginal community in T94, and recognizes Aboriginal people as part of the Australian population in T92, to which she also belongs. The dimension of *culture as relative* is also displayed in T92 as Irene explains that this holiday is experienced differently depending on the social group with which one aligns. That is, she identifies herself as a non-Aboriginal person, and at the same time she distances herself from white Australians who celebrate Australia Day.

Irene's personal interpretation of the celebration of this day is further developed in the conversation, and we can observe both dimensions of culture as *contested* and as *individual* in her discourse. While in T94, Irene states that, like most white Australians, she also spends the day drinking, having a barbecue and going to the beach, this membership dimension coexists with the identification of points of contestation towards cultural representations. Specifically, in turns 92, 94 and 96, Irene states that Australia Day is the day when Australia was invaded by the British. Hence, she argues, it is a very sad day for Aboriginal Australians. Indeed, Irene further states in T102, that she is embarrassed at the fact that Australia Day is celebrated, and that white Australians do not respect how Aboriginal Australians experience this celebration. Moreover, she interprets these differing perspectives as indexing division in Australian society between white and Indigenous people.

This triggers Myra's engagement with Irene's moral stance on whether Australia Day should be celebrated. First, in T101, Myra lets Irene know that, based on her own research into the issue, she is aware of social fragmentation in relation to this celebration. Given the timing of this exchange, which coincides with the Party for Freedom's attempt to mark the anniversary of the Cronulla riots in Sydney,<sup>1</sup> Myra may be aware of the tensions provoked by this event as reported in the media. Of course, she could simply be referring to her knowledge of social division in Australia in a more general sense. What we can ascertain, however, in T105, is that Myra attempts to connect with Irene's arguments. She requests confirmation as to whether, in celebrating Australia Day, the "social [groupings are] just like separate", that is, whether this celebration is politically positioned as a celebration for all Australians or, as Irene assertively states, Aboriginal people's opposition is ignored. Although they are both collaborating in establishing their knowledge of Australian culture, one notes an imbalance in the development of the participants' discourse, as Irene

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<sup>1</sup>The Cronulla riots refer to ten days of violent racial tension which occurred in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla beach between 4 and 13 December 2005. The events were sparked by a brawl between three off-duty life savers and a group of young men of Middle Eastern appearance. These dramatic events were reported widely across the Australian media and the plan by the Party for Freedom to organize a rally to mark the tenth anniversary of the Cronulla riots in December 2015 was thwarted by a federal court ruling. A documentary covering the events, *10 days that shocked the nation*, was made in 2016.

tends to take over and misses the opportunity to seek further elaboration on Myra's knowledge of social issues in Australia.

Overall, the dynamics observed in these exchanges point to the participants' willingness to engage in collaborative processing of cultural information. There is evidence of inquisitiveness in Myra's reflection, and of critical analysis in Irene's contributions. This analysis brings into the discussion a critical reflection on how the celebration of a public holiday reveals marked differences in perspectives and beliefs from different communities within a given national milieu.

## 5 Final Words

The online exchanges between the two Flinders student groups and their overseas partners yielded rich and complex results, all of which would benefit from further exploration. Based on the limited data presented here, our analyses reveal that:

- (i). Overwhelmingly, exchange partners draw on cultural similarities to establish a rapport, preferring to align themselves with each other (as illustrated in Excerpt 1). A question that could be further investigated is whether establishing a rapport on the basis of finding common ground is simply due to a lack of familiarity between the participants or a reluctance to engage further in intercultural negotiation.
- (ii). Participants engage in identifying differences that they perceive at many levels, as if they were trying to establish their *otherness* (see the two Australian-German exchanges). We found examples (particularly in Excerpt 2) that illustrate how a reflective space is thus created, within which challenges to the participants' own world view shape their developing intercultural understanding.
- (iii). Micro analyses looking at explanatory sequences and reformulations still need to be carried out to reveal more about how cultural representations are negotiated in online exchanges and to ascertain the affordances that this medium provides in fostering the development of learners' critical understanding. Pragmatic differences could be highlighted along the lines provided by Liddicoat (2014). For example, "decentring" could be fostered if learners are guided to reflect on how pragmatic acts are linguistically and culturally enacted. Specifically, by adopting Eggins and Slade's (2004) systemic functional approach to analysing discourse, learners could be led into identifying speakers' differing roles in the construction of culture-related episodes. This approach may enable practitioners and learners to jointly uncover: a) speech functions selected in dialogic structure (i.e., how learners construct social interaction by using language to align themselves with others and to position themselves in the exchange activity); b) levels of discourse interactivity (i.e., the degree to which interaction is predicated on the incorporation of reference to interlocutors' content and acknowledgment of prior conversational contributions); and c) the precise discursive moves that exemplify intercultural

communicative competence and enable its further development (Ryshina-Pankova 2018, p. 219).

In summary, a close analysis of students' conversations indicates that online intercultural exchanges provide opportunities for students to co-construct cultural knowledge. In the excerpts that we have presented, interculturality is enacted as learners explore cultural representations based on self-reflection on both their own and other cultural perspectives, and as they draw from each other's personal experiences. By documenting aspects of learners' emerging awareness of their own and others' cultural practices and attitudes in a context of authenticity, this study contributes to the scholarship on interculturality and intercultural learning.

As stated earlier, in this project we are not concerned with making claims about the success or failure of intercultural competence in terms of pre-set goals. We believe that promoting critical understanding through authentic contact is ultimately crucial for developing intercultural awareness and cultural sensitivity amongst our students, given that "nowadays, focus is on connections not just differences; multi-layered affiliations, not unidimensional identities, contact rather than community" (Canagarajah 2011, p. 212).

The use of culture-related episodes can serve as a springboard for initiating critical reflection in the classroom prior to engaging in online exchanges, and for re-examining the data in follow-up sessions. Specifically, structured small group discussions on transcribed intercultural exchanges are likely to enable a collaborative exploration of the identified culture-related episodes. These can lead from the discovery of cultural knowledge to further questioning around the complexity of students' own perspectives and assumptions. We believe it is critical to create such opportunities for moving beyond the dichotomous discourse of uniformity and diversity.

## Appendixes

### *Appendix A*

#### **Lead Questions to Serve as Prompts for Exploring Cultural Themes**

1. Information gathering and description: conduct a brief conversation around each other's country location, place, region. What do you already know about each other's country? Reflect on what it means to be a German or an Australian person.
2. Describe a particular festival or celebration of historical significance for your own cultural identity.
3. Information gathering and reflection: What do young people do and where do they do it when they go out? In what ways is your social life similar to or different from that of your friends? What do you think of those similarities or differences?



4. What prejudices do you have about other people? What are they based on? Appearances? Behaviours? Where do you think they come from? Your family background? The media? How do you deal with stereotypes?
5. Explore a social issue (e.g., same sex marriage; euthanasia; binge drinking; the environment, etc.). Express your personal opinion.
6. Explore a particular everyday situation (e.g., gift giving; how to accept/refuse an invitation; a family meal; the use of space in your home/city/university; etc.). Can you draw similarities with /differences from your partner's cultural practices?
7. Explore personal relationships within different environments: dealing with conflict within the family environment; friendships; girls/boys; socializing; taboo topics?
8. Recall two or three occasions when you found a display of polite behaviour particularly striking and try to work out why this was. What do you think of the statement one often hears: "Everyone is rude these days"? Does it make any sense?

## Appendix B

### Excerpt 1 Bel (Australian) and B-K (German)—Skype session 2, (Group 2/LING)

1.	B-K	It's not my first time to Australia actually (.) A couple of years ago I spent a semester abroad and I lived with an Australian girl. She was from Melbourne (.)
2.	Bel	ok. That's excellent (.)
3.	B-K	so I know there's a (xx) like a difference in life from observing young people in Australia and in Germany I think and other
4.	Bel	yeah yeah I guess there are different climates but other than that <b>I think maybe socially it's kind of the same</b> (.2) I don't know what questions you have but do you have something about broad themes? Is that similar to what we have?
5.	B-K	yah I have (.) <b>knowledge about another country and culture</b> (.) yeah (.) I think maybe we can talk about that today and then if you want
6.	Bel	yeah we can do that (.2) yeah ok (.) do you want to go first
7.	B-K	yeah I don't know yeah (.) <b>should I tell you about what I know about Australia</b> or=
8.	Bel	=yeah yeah
9.	B-K	ok where do I start then hum...I know it's really (x) <b>the weather is nice</b>
10.	Bel	((laughs))
11.	B-K	I know that <b>you have (x) a lot of Indigenous people there</b>
12.	Bel	yeah
13.	B-K	and I know like historical wise I know <b>basically Australia used to be a prison</b> I think
14.	Bel	oh yeah yeah (.)
15.	B-K	<b>the early days I know that (.) basically until now</b>
16.	Bel	<b>yeah (.) do you know about South Australia?</b>
17.	B-K	no not in particular no (.)
18.	Bel	ok (.) all right

(continued)

**Excerpt 1** (continued)

19.	B-K	can you tell me something about it? <b>Is it different from (the rest of) Australia</b>
20.	Bel	yeah (.) we've got I think 7 states and territories so hum I don't know whether you've seen a map of Australia but it's divided into different areas
21.	B-K	yeah
22.	Bel	<b>and culturally we are still fairly similar all the way around but our accents do change</b> between some of the states
23.	B-K	ok
24.	Bel	which I don't know whether you'd recognise or not but I think some people like your friend from Melbourne would say things slightly different to the way I would say them (.) so they she might say /skæ:l/ and I say /sku:l/which is it's only a slight difference but yeah a few differences there and then as far as being warm and cold I guess I think it's a lot warmer than Germany is
25.	B-K	I think so too ((laughs))
26.	Bel	yeah (.) we do have where I am from in SA <b>we do have 4 seasons. So we have winter as well.</b> We don't get snow here (.) it's not cold enough (.) Very occasionally very rarely we might get one day where it might snow on a little mountain that we have but as soon as it hits the ground pretty much it melts so that's not <b>nothing like Germany</b> in that way yeah hum I guess <b>SA is very well-known for wine for wine</b>
27.	B-K	ok
28.	Bel	yeah so we've got lots of wine regions so if you go travelling you can see a lot of grapevines and hum yeah it's probably one of our big industries hum (.) and then other than that ((laughs)) we're always comparing SA to Melbourne or Adelaide to Melbourne
29.	B-K	ok
30.	Bel	hum (.) <b>because Melbourne is much more fun than Adelaide</b> (.) so
31.	B-K	ok
32.	Bel	((laughs)) we are getting there but we just don't have as much our population is not as big so yeah I guess
33.	B-K	(x)
34.	Bel	what's that sorry
35.	B-K	((repeats)) <b>how far away is Melbourne from Adelaide?</b>
36.	Bel	I can only tell you in hours ((laughs))
37.	B-K	how many hours (.)
38.	Bel	if you are driving it would take about 8 or 9 hours' drive I have a girlfriend who is from Germany as well she came to Australia I met up with her and we went for a for a holiday I guess from Melbourne back to Adelaide and we drove and it was funny because I discovered that <b>she talked in kilometres and I talked in hours</b>
39.	B-K	yeah
40.	Bel	and we were laughing about that all the time because I'd say how many hours it would take (.) and she'd be like "but how many kilometres is that?" She'd say that there is traffic so it would change so I'd say "I guess it does" but roughly yeah that kind of (.)
41.	B-K	yea (.) like 8 or 9 hours from Germany (.) no matter where you come from I think you basically left the country

(continued)

**Excerpt 1** (continued)

42.	Bel	yeah (.) absolutely (.) especially if you are on the autobahn as well (.) you can be superfast and
43.	B-K	yeah
44.	Bel	yeah it wouldn't take long ((longer pause)) <b>now I'll try to think of things I know about Germany</b>
45.	B-K	<b>maybe (but) I do have a lot of questions</b>
46.	Bel	ok
47.	B-K	because it says " <b>what knowledge of social groups exist in your country</b> "
48.	Bel	yeah
49.	B-K	and Alana the girl from Melbourne <b>she always talked about like the Indigenous people (.) they don't really -she said they are unemployed and that they are drunk and they take drugs and all that stuff</b>
50.	Bel	ok (.) <b>oh Gosh (.) Ok hum there is a stereotype</b> that that happens and there's certainly people that might do that but <b>it's not specifically indigenous people that are drunk and take drugs</b> so hum we actually -there's a lot I guess if you think of (.) <b>it's a very unusual topic in Australia because historically at school we haven't been taught much about what actually happened to the Indigenous Australians in the history</b> and that's something that we are concentrating a lot more on now in primary schools and in high schools and educating people about what actually has happened in the past has been quite a terrible hum thing that's happened so <b>there's definitely a lot of Indigenous people that still live try to live kind of traditionally to a degree in very rural areas of Australia but there's also a lot of Indigenous Australians that live in cities and they go to universities they go to school hum they play football they go out</b> so they're kind of <b>I think there's a very strong stereotype in Australia that Indigenous Australians are drunks and they don't go to school and they're uneducated but there's definitely a lot that's probably not so true if you know what I mean.</b>

**Excerpt 2** Irene (Australian) and Myra (Mexican)—Skype session 2, (Group 1/SPAN)

90.	Irene	on Australia Day? ((tapping)) wow: that is: a tough↑ question
91.	Myra	okay:
92.	Irene	<b>depends who you are: um so like: I don't really celebrate Australia Day because it happens to be the day we were um: like invaded by the English so it is like- a really sad day for: like our Aboriginal Indigenous population</b>
93.	Myra	um okay:
94.	Irene	<b>and I am not like: I am not Aboriginal but I guess it is a bit- like: iffy about whether it is ok to like to celebrate that day most Australians um drink a lot of alcohol and like have a barbeque and go to the beach um</b>
95.	Myra	uhu
96.	Irene	and I do that too but like I don't know I am kind of I am not into Australia Day because it's like it's quite a sad day it would be like celebrating when like (1.0) um: <b>I don't know: I am trying to think of a comparable example- I don't know if I know one like:=</b>
97.	Myra	=[yeah↑ I did- I did um:
98.	Irene	<b>[I'm trying to think of any ideas</b>
99.	Myra	Pt. how do you call it um: an <u>investigation</u> about it
100.	Irene	[oh↑ ok

(continued)

**Excerpt 2** (continued)

101.	Myra	<b>[and yeah↑ I- I: read about that (.) like there's: some people that are not happy about celebra:ting that idea (.) and that stuff:</b>
102.	Irene	yeah:
103.	Myra	so yeah: hehe
104.	Irene	<b>yeah ok↑ that's interesting because most Australians (.) like they don't like our Aboriginal population and the white population in Australia are like- really divided</b>
105.	Myra	uhu
106.	Irene	<b>so: most white Australians are like: I don't give a <u>shit</u> ((mocking tone)) you know?</b>
107.	Myra	uhu uhu
108.	Irene	<b>um: but like I guess: um so: I am not I am not that excited about Australia Day it's like oh: it's kind of an embarrassment- it is kind of an embarrassing day you know:</b>
109.	Myra	hehe yeah↑ hehe
110.	Irene	yeah:
111.	Myra	so uh about what you <u>say</u> so the: social is just like: separate? or like:
112.	Irene	yeah like- everything↑ except well like- wow such a big↑ issue to talk about (.)
113.	Myra	hehe
114.	Irene	[well so: but it is a good one↑
115.	Myra	[hehe
116.	Irene	um: so a lot of our: like um Aboriginal population lives um: ok so Australia like- um: like is like in the middle it is like a desert right?
117.	Myra	uhu
118.	Irene	so nobody- nobody↑ <u>really</u> lives in the middle of Australia because there is- like there is no water there: so everyone lives (.) so most of the white people live like: around Australia like (.) in the capital cities <b>so we don't really have lots of small country towns like- like Latin America has kind of so um: (.) you went off <u>blurry-</u></b>
119.	Myra	I'm blurry?
120.	Irene	can you hear me?
121.	Myra	yeah
122.	Irene	can you hear me?
123.	Myra	yeah
124.	Irene	[cool okay
125.	Myra	[yeah
126.	Irene	<b>good↑ um: but lots of Aboriginal people live um: in like the desert <u>basically</u> in communities: um so: lots of white people have <u>never</u> met an Aborig- like an Indigenous Aboriginal person because: there is like: they live in the city and like most of Aboriginal people who <u>do</u> live in the city like live in the outskirts: like in the <u>poor</u> suburbs</b>
127.	Myra	ok
128.	Irene	yeah: it is <u>really</u> divided and um: like there is a <u>lot of problems</u> with racism

## Annotation Conventions

The following annotation conventions, adapted from Jefferson (2004), have been used in excerpts reproduced here to indicate intonation, stress, comments, timing, pauses, turn-taking and sounds. Numbers in the left-hand column indicate speaking turns. Pseudonyms are used to identify speakers and appear in the middle column.

:	Colon(s): Extended or stretched sound, syllable, or word
::	the sound is prolonged even more
—	Vocalic emphasis
?	Rising vocal pitch
↑ ↓	Pitch resets; marked rising and falling shifts in intonation
!	Animated speech tone
-	Halting, abrupt cut-off of sound or word
(( ))	Scenic details
(x)	Transcriber doubt
(.)	Micropause less than (0.2)
(1.2)	Longer pause
=	Latching of contiguous utterances
[	Speech overlap
Haha	Relative open position of laughter, written down more or less the way it sounds
Hehe	Quiet laughter. Laughter is written down more or less the way it sounds
pt	Lip Smack: Often preceding an in-breath
Ah, eh, um	Fillers
<b>Bold</b>	Emphasis added by the transcribers

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## Part VIII

# Ways to Deeper Language Learning

The chapters in this section centre on efforts to improve the motivation of learners enrolled in tertiary languages and cultures subjects. Informed by the latest theoretical perspectives in foreign language education, three empirical studies report on teaching and research nexus projects which aim at developing twenty-first century skills in language learners.

All three studies report positively on the approaches they have developed in different language areas to enhance student motivation for language study. Xu and Hanley's chapter focuses on initiative and self-direction, leadership and responsibility, autonomous and life-long learning. It reports on their findings from adopting a student-centred approach which introduced autonomous and reflective learning tasks into the curriculum across two language programs, Chinese and Spanish. The results show heightened motivation and enhanced metacognitive skills regarding individual language learning processes and cross-cultural interactions, establishing an enhanced foundation for future learning.

Featured in this section is also a chapter on an innovative teaching program aimed at developing students' motivation for language study. Situated in the theoretical framework of Dornyei's L2 Motivational Self System, Amorati's study presents findings on how vision-generating and vision-enhancing activities can serve as effective motivating sources and thus help students reflect on how L2 learning forms part of their future personal and professional identity.

In a third study, learner autonomy and intercultural learning are seen to be equally well developed through programs that incorporate both cooperative learning practices and in-country study. The chapter by Aponte Ortiz shows how a "collaborative learning" approach can be used effectively to prepare students to make deeper connections with the host culture when studying abroad. Implemented in a Spanish program in an Australian university, the approach utilizes students' diverse backgrounds and experiences as a rich source of knowledge and as a platform for students to work collaboratively in groups to help each other reflect upon, and seek new knowledge about, pertinent issues related to the host society and culture.

It is clear from the studies presented in this section that the strategies adopted to enhance the learning experience and capacity of language students provide an effective platform for future research and planning.

# Developing Learner Autonomy: A Comparative Analysis of Tertiary Chinese and Spanish Language Cohorts



Hui Ling Xu  and Jane Hanley

**Abstract** Learner autonomy has become an increasingly important component of educational curricula at all levels and is recognized in tertiary education as a key graduate capability. In this digital age, with a rich pool of language learning resources readily available, foreign language education is also an ideal platform from which to foster active and autonomous learning. Considered important twenty-first century skills, autonomous and life-long learning have regained robust attention in the educational sector, with a growing body of research examining their significance and outlining practice in fostering learner autonomy in foreign language classrooms. This chapter reports the findings of a project based on a student-centred approach and introducing autonomous learning tasks into the curriculum across two different language programs (Chinese and Spanish). This approach facilitated cross-linguistic comparison, given the different nature of the languages and the different learner motivation orientations. The results show that there were overall benefits as well as certain disparities between the two cohorts in terms of their self-reported improvement in the area under examination. We offer some analysis of possible causes and teaching implications for future iterations.

**Keywords** Learner autonomy · Life-long learning · Language education · Student-centred approach · Chinese · Spanish · Learner motivation

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## 1 Introduction

The concept of autonomous learning has gained greater currency in tertiary education in recent decades. The rationale stems from the recognition that there is a pressing need to support educational outcomes more effectively, and to prepare graduates for the cognitive challenges and complexity of the twenty-first century. Key skills for the twenty-first century include the precise learning and innovation skills fostered through reflection, skills which encompass critical thinking, problem solving, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural interaction, leadership and responsibility (Lee et al. 2012, p. 3). Against such a backdrop, institutions of higher education have included the development of independent learning ability as an important outcome—in the present context, through The Graduate Capabilities Framework (Macquarie University 2015).

Language teaching pedagogy is still surprisingly often characterized by teacher-centred pedagogy and teacher-led classrooms, which have limitations for making language learning a student-centred and learner-driven process. While there have been calls for adult learners especially to take on more responsibility for their own learning, when digital resources are so readily available, many of them still tend to “revert to the traditional role of pupil, who expects to be told what to do” (Fernandes et al. 1990, p. 101). Although this observation was made more than two decades ago, it still paints an accurate picture of some foreign language learners today, with a high teacher focus and a thinking style that may reduce the forms of active engagement expected by language teachers (Cheng et al. 2011). In fact, a previous study conducted to gauge the learning motivation and intensity of Chinese language learners found that most students spent less than one third of the required and recommended hours in outside-of-class study (Xu and Moloney 2014a). This chapter describes the efforts made to address the abovementioned issues. Specifically, it outlines an approach to transitioning students towards autonomy via learning tasks that provide diverse opportunities for students to reflect on language learning and to develop independent learning skills.

In order to conduct our study we have adopted the comparative approach of examining two different language cohorts, namely students of Chinese and Spanish. Our rationale for this choice is that both languages are popular but that each cohort has different motivational profiles and language learning challenges to confront. In the case of learners of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL), motivation is linked to an instrumental orientation, with many students anticipating a competitive employment edge (Xu and Moloney 2014a, b). Chinese heritage language (HL) learners also identify learning Chinese as a way to connect to their cultural roots. In comparison, in the Australian context, there are relatively few HL learners in Spanish, and low numbers of students with clearly articulated career-related motivations. Furthermore, the majority of students of Chinese study Business and Economics, whereas the majority of students of Spanish study in Arts and Humanities areas, creating different study expectations and reflecting prior experiences. Such variables may affect students’ attitudes and thus efforts expended in completing tasks.

The significant questions of learner expectations, learner self-concept, and the role of culture in learner autonomy must be taken into account in comparing diverse cohorts, especially in a highly multicultural tertiary sector like Australia's, with large numbers of international students as well as first and second generation migrants (Palfreyman and Smith 2003). This comparative study of two different languages studied by quite contrasting cohorts constitutes a contribution to the evidence for the potential benefits of building language learner autonomy through reflection. However, we also conclude that for greatest effectiveness educators must be alert to the specific needs and existing skills and knowledge of their students. In the ensuing sections, we first review relevant research, and then report on the teaching intervention, the data obtained, as well as the implications for language pedagogy approaches.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Developing Learner Autonomy*

More than three decades ago, Holec (1979, 1981) promoted the concepts of learner autonomy and student-directed foreign language learning, concepts that greatly influenced later research (Riley 1988; Mulcahy 1991; Little 1996, 2000; Benson 2000, among others). Although the literature mobilizes a wide range of terms, such as “learner autonomy”, “learner independence”, “self-direction”, “autonomous learning” and “independent learning”, these refer to similar concepts (Ivanovska 2015). Littlewood (1996), for example, examines the components that make up autonomy in language learning and states that at the core of the notion of autonomy are the learners' ability and willingness to make choices. Benson (2007) declares that the core of the notion of autonomous learning is the capacity to manage one's own learning and take greater responsibility. For teachers, it also means adopting a student-centred approach or encourages student-centred learning. Student-centred learning is underpinned by constructivist learning theories whose core notion is that the learner is the central entity who must be actively engaged in seeking and constructing meaning. Fundamental to the theoretical framework of student-centred learning are the principles that: learning is a personal interpretation of the world using the learner's beliefs and values; learning is an active process of making meaning from experience; learning takes place in relevant contexts; reflection is essential; and learning is a collaborative process in which multiple perspectives are considered (Semple 2000, p. 25). In classroom practice, this usually means encouraging students' own knowledge creation and then the process of reflection on how their understanding is changing.

The strong renewal of interest in developing learner autonomy in recent years demonstrates that educators and researchers continue to recognize the important role autonomy plays in foreign language education, particularly in the twenty-first century. Many studies state the benefits of developing students' autonomous

learning skills (e.g., Lamb 2009; Kormos and Csizér 2014). Nunan and Richards (2015) comment on the overall benefits of autonomous learning for enhancing confidence and motivation alongside intercultural awareness. Furthermore, reshaping the roles of the teacher and the student will radically change the distribution of power and authority that plagued traditional classrooms. Students are regarded as having the “capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (Little 1991, p. 4). The autonomous language learner takes responsibility for the totality of their learning situation. They determine objectives, define content to be learned and course progression, select methods and techniques, and monitor and evaluate progress. Interventions to foster autonomy must focus on supporting students’ real choice (Lamb 2006). They also rely on initial metacognitive development among staff and students, since, as Smith and Ushioda (2009, p. 244) have warned, there is a significant distance between specialist and popular understandings of autonomy.

In more recent years, a new dimension of learner autonomy has also emerged in relation to authentic contexts and meaningful interaction outside the classroom. Termed Work-Integrated Learning, such an approach integrates theoretical learning with professional experience, and aims to provide students with opportunities to apply the knowledge (theory) and practice (skills) they acquire at university in a variety of contexts (Bouvet et al., this volume).

This type of learning experience provokes individuated learner engagement with their own learning and experiences, often through processes of evaluation and reflection, and constitutes an endpoint, along with immersion programs and international exchange, for which students need to be adequately prepared through earlier learning experiences.

## ***2.2 The Role of Reflection***

In promoting effective autonomy, we recognize the important role of reflection. Benson (2011) identifies reflection and the development of metacognitive knowledge as a central dimension of learner autonomy, inextricable from the creation of concrete learning strategies. While it is difficult to isolate the effect of reflection from other pedagogical and learning practices, it may support a stronger sense of student self-efficacy and heightened motivation (Benson 2011, p. 126). According to Anderson (2008), strong metacognitive skills empower language learners: when these learners reflect upon their learning, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve it. Wang et al. (2009) stress the significance of the learning of processes, such as the need for students to plan, control and evaluate learning, if they are to be able to manage it effectively. They describe these strategies as “sequential processes to control cognitive activities and to ensure that a cognitive goal is achieved” (Wang et al. 2009, p. 48). Their study shows that high levels of self-efficacy accompanied students’ success in the language and strong metacognitive strategies impacted positively on learners’ achievement.

Since reflection and autonomy are interrelated, a genuinely reformulated and student-centred approach, which provides an opportunity for fostering reflection, must create space for real learning experiences that have a transparent purpose, so students internalize their value but are not restricted by teacher-imposed outcomes. To promote learner autonomy and independent learning, teachers need to adopt student-centred approaches in order to facilitate skills development. According to O'Neill and McMahon (2005), the core of the approach requires shifting power to students, but all too often it is only paid lip service and insufficient attention is given to genuinely building students' skills as active learners. Kormos and Csizér (2014, p. 295) have also suggested that well-designed reflective diaries could serve as a valuable source of additional information on the interrelation of motivation and autonomy. These interconnected areas of autonomy and reflection underpin the language pedagogy design detailed in this study as well as the methodology for evaluating its effectiveness.

### **3 Methodology**

#### ***3.1 The Participants***

Two volunteer cohorts from the intermediate level of the Chinese and Spanish programs at the researchers' university participated in the project. The rationale for focusing on this level included the established pedagogical challenges of intermediate as a consolidation and breakthrough level, creating foundations for successful advanced study, which may include short- and long-term immersion experiences. Our project thus aimed at supporting development in autonomous learning skills for current and future learning needs. Cross-language comparison also helps to evaluate its usefulness for a wider application in language teaching more generally, given significant language and cohort differences between Chinese and Spanish programs. When reporting data, the students are referred to by their program and a number (CS1 indicates Chinese student 1 and SS1 indicates Spanish student 1).

#### ***3.2 The Teaching Intervention***

The teaching intervention was implemented in the second semester of 2015. It took the form of an E-portfolio, that is, all the students submitted their work online via an integrated module. To align with our project aim to develop autonomous learning skills through processes of intercultural reflection, the task was divided into three components, as shown in Table 1. However, due to the limitations of space, we report here primarily on learner autonomy components, with intercultural learning's relationship to reflection to be explored elsewhere.

**Table 1** Outline of components of the teaching intervention

Component 1	Getting started	Weeks 1 & 2	Select and review two articles on learner autonomy and interculturality
			View a film excerpt featuring intercultural interaction
			Short essay writing:
			Outline given definitions
			Offer own definitions
			Compose a list of characteristics of autonomous learners
Component 2	Learning logs & learning reflections	Weeks 3–11	Compose five learning logs (one every 2 weeks), two components each:
			Short reflection on study experience over the 2 week period
			Complete 1 of 10 language learning or intercultural activities (e.g., interviewing native speakers, reflecting on own past intercultural experiences, evaluating learning apps, programs, or links, designing an activity for peers to complete and critique)
Component 3	Final reflective essay	Weeks 12 & 13	Capturing their journey, noting their development in targeted areas and critiquing the project

### 3.3 Data Collection

We used both quantitative and qualitative data in the analysis. For quantitative data, we conducted pre- and post-project questionnaires, while the qualitative data consisted of students' learning log entries, reflective essays, and focus group interviews. The pre-project questionnaire consisted of 14 questions with Likert scales from 1 to 5 (1 being Strongly Disagree, 5 Strongly Agree), aimed at measuring students' self-reported level of learner autonomy before the project. The autonomous learning questions could be roughly divided into three categories: goals, engagement, and strategies. The post-project questionnaire consisted of nine Likert Scale questions that asked students to rate their beliefs about their own improvement. While participant numbers were small (Chinese students = 24, Spanish students = 29), the quantitative analysis serves as a snapshot of self-perception pre- and post-project which can assist with framing the qualitative analysis and also provoke reflection on, and improvement in, future pedagogical design.

## 4 Data Analysis

### 4.1 Pre-Project Data

Figure 1 summarizes the pre-project findings. Sentiment levels were constructed by combining the lowest two scores (1 and 2) and classifying them as Disagree; combining the highest two scores (4 and 5) and classifying them as Agree; and treating the middle score 3 as Neutral. For every comparison in our study, Chi-Square tests were undertaken to determine whether there was any statistically significant difference in student sentiment. Results shown in Fig. 1 indicate that the number of Agree responses was significantly greater than expected (invariably yielding P-Values <0.00). That is, students felt reasonably confident in their abilities before they commenced the activities in the project. This result is consistent for both the Chinese and Spanish cohorts across all categories. When comparing the two cohorts of students, no significant difference in attitude was found with respect to Goal Setting ( $\chi^2 = 0.399$ , P-Value = 0.819). By contrast, Spanish students rated themselves significantly higher with respect to Engagement ( $\chi^2 = 15.766$ , P-Value = 0.000) and Strategy ( $\chi^2 = 5.826$ , P-Value = 0.054).

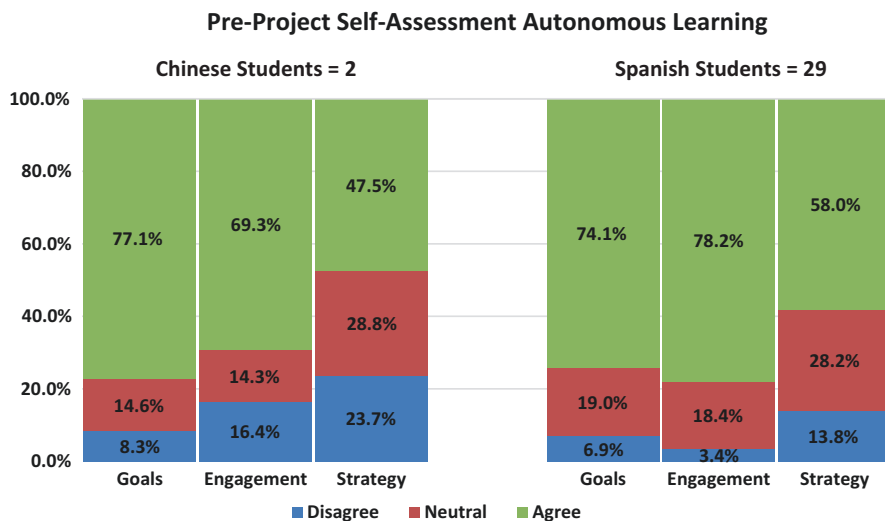


Fig. 1 Pre-project self-assessment of autonomous learning

### 4.2 Post-Project Data

The post-project questionnaire was designed to measure students’ beliefs about their improvement, with statements such as “I have become more able to take responsibility for my study”. Values in Fig. 2 reflect similar attributes for the post-project survey results. Here again, Chinese students rated themselves highly in all categories: the responses were not evenly distributed, as there was a significantly greater proportion of Agree responses (invariably yielding P-Values <0.00). This indicates that students felt that the activities in the project contributed to a significant improvement in their performance across all categories. Spanish students also registered a significant improvement in their performance with respect to Strategy ( $\chi^2 = 22.776$ , P-Value = 0.000), but this is not the case with Goal Setting ( $\chi^2 = 1.5$ , P-Value = 0.472) and Engagement ( $\chi^2 = 0.25$ , P-Value = 0.882).

When comparing the two cohorts of students, no significant difference in attitude was found with respect to Goal Setting ( $\chi^2 = 1.007$ , P-Value = 0.605) and Engagement ( $\chi^2 = 5.88$ , P-Value = 0.053), whereas Chinese students recorded a significant improvement in their performance with respect to Strategy ( $\chi^2 = 13.74$ , P-Value = 0.001).

It is worth noting that the even smaller sample size of Spanish students in the post-project group has resulted in small expected counts for Goal Setting and Engagement. Hence, it is difficult to come to a reliable conclusion for these categories.

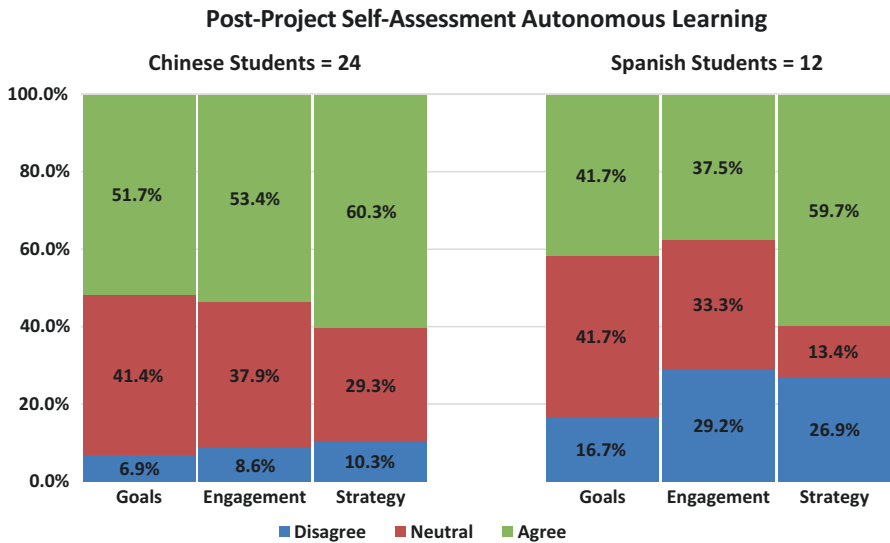


Fig. 2 Post-project self-assessment of autonomous learning

### 4.3 *Qualitative Data*

#### 4.3.1 Learning Log Entries

##### The Chinese Group

Students' learning log entries reflected on several common themes: how they set and adjusted goals, how they found opportunities to learn outside of class, and what strategies they adopted to make a self-critique of their effectiveness and actions. Some students also commented on their motivation level as it rose and ebbed because of week-to-week study load, and on how they prioritized their learning activities. Worth noting is that students wrote about extending their outside-of-class learning by practising speaking with native speakers, such as workmates or international students on campus. Heritage language (HL) students also commented on engaging more in speaking with family or extended families:

"[...] there are many exchange students from China and Taiwan at my residential college. I've befriended a few of them and frequently converse with them in Chinese and English".

"Yesterday, I managed to interact with my patients at work on a comfortable and casual level."

"I would make good use of any opportunities to improve my mandarin speaking when chatting with my Chinese friends and families from overseas."

Students' autonomous learning beyond the classroom was also frequently facilitated by multimedia resources. In fact, most students chose evaluating apps as a preferred activity. Many students also wrote about how they adopted strategies perceived as suitable and effective for language learning, some of which may correlate to both perceived and real differences in linguistic distance and time cost of script acquisition:

"I have also found that re-writing the Chinese character over and over has helped me a lot throughout the semester as it allowed me memorise them better."

"Through both these methods, I feel like I am able to recognize more characters because I am using both my visual memory and muscle memory and hopefully my results will show through."

##### The Spanish Group

While fewer students of Spanish had established family or community networks of native speakers, they also extended outside-of-class learning by practising speaking. In some cases, this was a more confronting experience than for the students of Chinese, as it was the first time students had attempted such communication outside of speaking to their classroom teacher. Comments that indicate the way such an experience provoked reflection on autonomous learning include: "This experience



made me understand that the Spanish in class is not sufficient, that small words like *argot* make a big difference when speaking with a person from a Spanish-speaking country.”

Students of Spanish, like those in the Chinese group, were highly likely to evaluate digital resources as a chosen option. This proved effective at provoking reflection on learning activities, since students were able to identify limitations of many automated language-learning tools: “the activities were all similar [...] and the questions were too easy.” In a similar vein: “[...] they are very limited in their capacity to improve your Spanish in its totality, since they don’t really assist totally with the construction of the language or its larger understanding.”

A few students were less able to mobilize this evaluative skill effectively, remaining on the surface of the out-of-class practice with digital resources, at a descriptive level, failing to relate tools to their personal language learning experience. Comments along these lines included: “It doesn’t have any disadvantages”, and “a subscription service, it gives access to a wide range of videos”.

Their conception of autonomy and the key focuses in learning beyond the classroom were generally broader, with some explicit comments on the link between autonomy and motivation:

“It inspires me to depend on myself. I’m interested in spending more hours on study, dedicating myself to discover the language by myself.”

“It’s very important to establish goals and be rewarded after completing these objectives. This is essential for maintaining my motivation.”

### 4.3.2 Final Reflective Essays

While the learning-log data reported above was constructed weekly, reflecting an “on-the-run” strategic approach to learning, the reflective essay enabled students to take a personal retrospective view, and evaluate holistically rather than in fragments, digging deeper for further reflection. Several salient themes emerged from a coding and critical analysis of the Reflective Essay data.

#### The Chinese Group

##### Metacognitive Development

The majority of the students were enthusiastic about the metacognitive value of the learning log, finding it a “tool of discipline and reflexivity” (CS3), providing a “deep reflective space” (CS3). CS6 believed the log writing “forced me to put myself into the zone of learning by myself”. As a heritage learner, CS7 wrote that it was a “great starting point as a means of reflection upon my Chinese identity” and that it “particularly facilitated me to deeply identify the reason why I chose to learn Chinese”. CS9 wrote that, with the advantage of hindsight, and showing

metacognition, he saw “that my study methods have changed significantly from the beginning of the course till now, as well as my perspective and attitude towards learning and trying new things”.

Further, students commented that the reflection had afforded them new self-knowledge about language learning:

“Upon completing some activities of evaluating learning aids such as online dictionaries, etc, I had become more aware of the usefulness of these resources extending language learning in an informal setting beyond the scope of the unit materials and formal assessments. These activities (sic) will sustain my motivation to remain an autonomous (sic) learner by not always seeking to reply (sic) on tutor when I have queries.” (CS8)

Related to the theme above was the evidence of students’ self-awareness of what worked for them and what action to take based on their self-evaluation: “I have learned from this (sic) mistakes and realize that it is crucial to pay more attention to the different varieties of Chinese.”

### **Confidence Building and Heightened Motivation**

It is evident from many of the students’ learning logs that their confidence and motivation were boosted. For CS18, the regular blog entries gave him “a sense of pride”: “I’ve come so far in these few months, and learned so much”. CS2 wrote that “I am now able to watch Chinese TV variety shows without much (sic) translation subtitles”; while CS5 thought that “this semester, compared to last, I have made a lot more progress as a language learner [...] it actually makes you want to try harder.” CS12 wrote: “it is almost the end of the semester I have found that I have more motivation toward learning Chinese.”

### **Developed Ability and Appetite for Autonomous Learning**

Most students chose activities in which they needed to find and assess digital resources for learning. This data confirms the findings of other studies (Benson 2013; Nunan and Richards 2015) on how autonomous learning opens up a range of opportunities for students’ learning. CS18 found that this activity “influenced me to look beyond what I knew and allowed me to realize I had so many more resources available”. CS4 felt empowered: “I know how to better myself in learning via the use of outside materials such as apps, websites”.

Students also liked the critical aspect of the task, as reflected in CS5’s comment that she enjoyed gaining the “mindset of assessing a tool personally before using it; with a new critical mindset, I am a lot more aware and in control when using a new resource.” CS18 maintained that through these activities, he moved from a focus on passing the exam, to an attitude of asking “what can I learn and how will it contribute to me as an individual?”

We noted the frequent intersections between the role of family and the use of literacy resources, which helped HL learners to develop progressively higher levels of knowledge of language and culture. CS19 concluded: “autonomous learning is as important as taking lessons in class, as what you are learning in class is never enough to help you. [...] As a background speaker; I try my best to speak Chinese whenever possible to my parents and relatives”.

## The Spanish Group

Overall, the Spanish students reported a more mixed response to the tasks, with frequent reference to early doubts about the relevance of the reflective process to language acquisition and a self-reported strategic approach to task selection, prioritizing ease of access and speed of completion. One explanation for the students' mixed perception is that task design was insufficiently autonomous, which reflects the high self-concept regarding strategy and engagement also shown in the pre-task questionnaire and focus group interview. An example of high self-concept comes from SS5 who commented, "As someone who reaches beyond what I learn in class both in terms of concepts and content, I have to admit I have some difficulty finding much joy in feeling compelled." A large proportion also suggested writing their blog in Spanish, an element that was discounted in the first iteration as unreasonable for the Chinese students, but which has since been implemented in the Spanish program.

### Metacognitive Development

Despite the initial reservations expressed by some students of Spanish, many reflective essays showed evidence of metacognitive skills development:

"I became much more conscious of activities [...] I was doing in my 'spare time'." (SS13)

"I have been more conscious of the strategies I implement to learn and the effectiveness." (SS22)

"[...] without that blog I would not have noticed my improvements and my motivation would not be as high." (SS7)

"I was quite surprised that a component [...] was comprised of autonomous/cultural learning tasks. This is because I had never thought of how I approached my individual learning." (SS12)

This elevated consciousness, noting of progress and enhanced motivation, and growing cognizance of learning styles demonstrate that many students retrospectively found significant value in the act of recording and evaluating their learning activities beyond the classroom, especially as it enhanced self-awareness.

### Confidence Building and Heightened Motivation

In terms of confidence and goal setting, students reported several improvements in affective relationships to language learning:

"These tasks encouraged me to go outside my comfort zone and to seek other ways of learning." (SS3)

"I wanted to prepare activities that I could look back on, so I generalised them in order for them to relate [...] to my language learning in the future." (SS17)

"I found that the more I enjoy the activity the more excited I was about learning more [...]. I learned to appreciate and take into consideration the culture and the origins of the language. [...] I became more aware of the ways in which languages can be learned and that

different people learn in different ways and that it is important to find ways that suit yourself [...]” (SS25)

Several suggested that strengthening the production of a learning community and taking a cooperative approach to learning would naturally heighten motivation and engagement. For example, they noted:

“[...] an increase in the cooperation and communication between participants in the course.” (SS8)

“I learnt by week 9 the importance of conversational Spanish as a way to not only retain grammar learnt in class, but also ways to express my mood or situation with urgency. [...] I became aware, as I listened to others speak, that I would need to become comfortable with certain phrases, words, and sentence formations that I could place at the forefront of my mind rather than searching for the ‘perfect’ response.” (SS19)

The increased confidence in this cohort, alongside their focus on communicative and socially oriented language learning, suggest the powerful potential of using reflection to promote autonomy.

### **Developed Ability and Appetite for Autonomous Learning**

Many students recognized benefits to autonomous learning in relation to awareness and independent goal setting: “I found it most productive when I set weekly goals” (SS20). “I had more control of my language learning because it allowed me to engage in activities that I saw fit and I could personalise the experience” (SS2).

Quite a few students expressed an appetite for an even more autonomous approach to learning, echoing some of the initial reservations and frustrations students held early in the semester regarding feeling overly directed: “allowing the students to be more creative would result in more diversity” (SS5). “I would have also enjoyed creating my own activities to demonstrate my autonomous learning skills” (SS16).

At the other end of the spectrum, some students arrived, indirectly, at a recommendation for a more directed and teacher-centred approach, believing they should have more recourse to staff for clarification and that resources should be recommended or set, or suggested a more guided in-class exercise. This spread of responses between a positive desire for greater individual autonomy, and an expressed desire for more teacher direction, indicate the importance of balance in facilitating autonomy without leaving students with insufficient skills or an inadequate framework for understanding its purpose.

### **4.3.3 Focus Group Interviews**

The focus group interviews brought out mixed sentiments and attitudes in the two groups. The Chinese group confirmed positive sentiments and attitudes towards this task. When asked what they enjoyed most in doing the activity, many spoke about how the activities had allowed them more flexibility to do things that they would not normally do in class and how they developed useful skills to assist out-of-class

learning, perhaps reinforcing the greater need for skills development in autonomous learning in Chinese programs.

“Probably the time I had to find all of the internet resources was probably the one I enjoyed best.”

“YouTube links and websites was beneficial for my autonomous learning because I would actually be using that outside of class...I was learning extra materials apart for (sic) the class materials that we learn in class.”

When asked how the task would help them in their future study, the Chinese students’ responses are also positive:

“[...] we’re more aware of what we need to work on to better our autonomous learning. So, we’re more prepared moving forward when we start the year for Chinese.”

“[...] well I’m actually going to exchange in China next semester, so I definitely think this will be very helpful for me.”

Some Spanish students expressed more negative sentiments, generally reporting strong pre-existing autonomy, though finding positives in reflection, which allowed them to articulate more clearly the relationship between in-class engagement, other activities and their developing skills. It is notable that there was a smaller group of participants than for the Chinese cohort, which may have heightened the effect of self-selection in the focus group discussion, representing students with higher intrinsic motivation and interest in language learning strategies. This is suggested by comments like:

“In terms of setting goals before I knew about this project, I set myself some other goals for my Spanish [...] reading one book a month in Spanish, of getting certain levels in a certain app through the year, and I’ve stuck completely to that. I did write about that in my diary, but the goals, essentially, I didn’t have any of them for this autonomous learning. Since I was already doing my own thing, this was an extra.”

“Perhaps if we could tailor the activities towards more of our goals and have more leeway.”

Overall, the tendency in the Spanish focus group discussion, while more negative than the reflective essays regarding the value of activities, reinforced findings from the essays which emphasized a high desire for autonomy within the parameters of task. This echoes Lamb’s (2006) warning about the indispensability of maximizing genuine learner choice.

The Spanish students’ focus group also echoed learning-log evidence of a strategic approach to learning and a time-poor experience in contemporary tertiary education, with comments such as “I picked the ones which were probably the easiest and quickest” and “Time was a really important component in choosing”. As already suggested by the examples in preceding sections, students confirmed that the essay was a more effective trigger for reflection: “In the essay, I was able to talk about what type of learner I guess I am. That was the only real place that I reflected on what worked for me.”

Despite the focus group identifying hesitations about structuring learners' autonomous activities and integrating them with classroom experiences, they also identified benefits they derived from the explicit focus on reflecting on autonomy:

"[...] having your own understanding of autonomous learning is quite good because everyone does have their own different types of learning."

"It's definitely transferable between subjects that aren't languages. It's like a philosophy of learning that you work hard, and you find your own resources, and you find other ways that work for you to get the knowledge that you want."

The slight differences in qualitative data between the two cohorts is suggestive rather than conclusive. Nevertheless, it provides an impetus for potentially conducting further investigations into language and cohort-specific factors and potential variations in the effects of the approach to implementation. In the institutional context in which the intervention was carried out, there were differences in the context of the task implementation between Chinese and Spanish due to different modes of delivery, the nature of other teaching and learning activities in the units which direct students' attention towards different goals, and differences in staff profile. In addition to these contextual factors, educators must consider the characteristics of the target language and the skills and time investment required to learn it successfully, and how skills and time investment may vary according to the students' own background and experience, which may include the percentage of heritage language learners, bilingualism, prior formal learning, experience with autonomous approaches, etc.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

In conducting this study, we explored the pedagogical benefits of linking learner autonomy and reflection in tertiary language programs. Participants showed some learner individuation and self-critique, as well as heightened motivation. Perhaps more significantly, self-reflection also produced indications of enhanced metacognitive skills regarding individual language learning processes and cross-cultural interactions, establishing an enhanced foundation for future learning. Many participants commented with critical acuity on factors impacting their own motivation and study habits, as well as on limitations they had identified in their previous strategies for learning.

This initial study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants, and across only two languages. However, frequent participant recognition of positive aspects of the approach suggests significant potential for wider applicability. The slight differences between the Chinese and Spanish cohorts also demonstrate some of the challenges of wider implementation. The most marked points of difference were Spanish students' greater stated expectation of, and desire for, autonomy, and greater preference for the immediate deployment of language skills in the

process of reflection. We can conclude that this is partly a product of the different student profiles. This underscores the importance for instructors of tailoring curriculum design to promote learner autonomy in ways that build organically on student expectations of study experience, ensuring that students develop adequate skills for reflection and autonomy, while students with existing skills in these areas are given opportunities for greater high-level creativity and genuine self-direction. Overall, the study supports an approach to learning design that links autonomous learning and learner self-reflection, although future evaluation of its broader effectiveness should include aspects such as strategies for differentiating by language profile and by cohort, assessing longer-term outcomes for students, and measuring impact on areas like retention and sustained motivation.

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# Drawing upon Disciplinary Knowledge to Foster Long-Term Motivation: Implementing Future L2 Selves in the Australian Tertiary L2 Classroom



Riccardo Amorati

**Abstract** In the context of high attrition rates in language subjects at the tertiary level in Australia, an examination of classroom practices that encourage long-term investment in L2 studies is warranted. After discussing the centrality of the concept of vision and of future self-guides in cutting-edge theories in L2 motivation research, this chapter examines the motivating potential of learning activities operationalizing the construct of L2 vision. A pedagogy rooted in visualization activities offers several benefits in the Australian context, as it ensures that the variety of linguistic and non-linguistic motives for which individuals pursue language studies is discussed in the language classroom, allowing students with different base degrees to reflect on how L2 learning forms part of their future personal and professional identity. The chapter bridges the divide between theory and practice by proposing a semester-long visionary program centred on three activities, paving the way for trial implementations.

**Keywords** Motivation · Tertiary education · L2 pedagogy · L2 vision · Possible selves · Visualization activities · Visionary program · Classroom practice · L2MSS

## 1 Introduction

Attrition rates have been a pressing problem for tertiary language departments in Australia (Martín et al. 2016, p. 5), with only 25% of students completing three full years of language studies (Nettelbeck et al. 2007, p. 3). Martín et al. (2016, p. 5) go as far as to argue that “the most striking characteristic of L[anguages] & C[ultures]

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programs in Australian universities is the relative scarcity of students.” Among the strategies adopted to counteract this trend, the restructuring of university curricula and of degrees has offered students the opportunity to study languages alongside their main area of studies and to receive a double qualification, as in the case of the Diplomas in Languages. While the issue of degree limitation has been partly solved top-down with the introduction of these study pathways (see, for example, Brown and Caruso (2016) with regard to the University of Western Australia), an examination of classroom practices that encourage long-term investment in language studies is warranted.

After reviewing the latest advances in L2 motivation research, this chapter discusses the benefits of an approach aimed at fostering student motivation by means of enhancing the elaborateness and plausibility of their future L2-related vision. It argues that classroom activities should encourage students to reflect on the advantages associated with L2 learning, as well as to consider the relevance of the L2 that they are studying to their future personal and professional aspirations. It then proposes, as a case in point, a semester-long motivational program centred on three visionary activities which could be implemented in the Australian tertiary context, paving the way for trial implementations.

## 2 L2 Motivation and Vision

Dörnyei (2001, p. 2) has described the motivation to learn other languages as “one of the most elusive concepts in the whole domain of the social sciences.” In the past decades, a robust body of literature has attempted to make the intuitive concept of motivation researchable, producing a wealth of theoretical models which have placed emphasis on different aspects of the construct, thereby offering multifarious theoretical perspectives—for an overview, see Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011). Despite the lack of consensus in the understanding of motivation, researchers agree that it plays a pivotal role in determining successful L2 learning (Dörnyei and Ryan 2015).

Recent theorizing on L2 motivation research has brought the concepts of future self-guides and vision to the forefront of scholarly inquiry (see, for example, Csizér and Magid 2014). The current dominant model in the field is the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005, 2009); see also recent debates on this model in Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017). Two psychological theories form its theoretical background: Possible Selves theory (Markus and Nurius 1986) and the Self-Guide theory (Higgins 1987).

### 2.1 *The Psychological Basis*

Possible selves are viewed as future-oriented images of one’s self-concept or, in other words, “visions of what might be.” (Markus and Nurius 1986, p. 49). They draw on hopes and aspirations and represent the individuals’ vision of what they could become, of what they wish to become and of what they are afraid of

becoming. As possible selves are future-oriented constructs, fuelled by imagination, they can provide direction to purposive behaviour. Psychological research has found that a series of conditions are needed to enable future self-images to exert their full motivating force (Oyserman and James 2009; Oyserman et al. 2006; Pizzolato 2006; Yowell 2002; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011, pp. 83–84):

1. the future self-image is present;
2. it is different from the current self;
3. it is elaborate and vivid;
4. it is plausible;
5. it is not perceived as certain;
6. it is in harmony with external expectations;
7. it is regularly activated;
8. it is accompanied by procedural strategies;
9. it is counterbalanced by offsetting it with a feared possible self, i.e., students are aware of what could happen if they fail to attain their ideal L2 self.

Higgins (1997) has identified two key possible selves:

1. the ideal self, which encompasses the attributes that individuals would ideally like to possess in the future and
2. the ought self, which instead entails the characteristics that one wishes one should have to meet expectations and to avoid failure.

While the former represents the ideal identity that individuals envision for themselves, the latter describes a vision held by others and includes learners' perceived sense of duty and moral responsibilities. The motivating function of future self-guides is explained by Higgins' Self-Discrepancy theory (Higgins 1987; 1996; 1997), according to which motivation arises from one's own desire to reduce the gap existing between one's current self and one's personally relevant future self.

## ***2.2 The L2 Motivational Self System and the Importance of Vision***

Dörnyei drew upon this body of literature to develop a model for understanding L2 motivation, labelled the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). The L2MSS consists of three components:

1. the ideal L2 self which is defined as “the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self” (Dörnyei 2009, p. 29);
2. the ought-to L2 self, which includes the attributes that language learners believe that they should possess to fulfil expectations and to prevent negative outcomes in their learning process;
3. the L2 learning experience, which encompasses situational factors occurring in the immediate context of learning.

Several studies have found that the ideal L2 self plays a major role in determining motivated behaviour (Csizér and Kormos 2009; Ryan 2009); see also Dörnyei (2009) for an overview. This construct appears to be particularly effective as a motivating source for adolescents and adult students, but not for pre-secondary students, as self-concepts do not normally stabilize before adolescence (Dörnyei 2009, p. 38; Zentner and Renaud 2007).

The consolidation of the ideal L2 self as the dominant theoretical lens for understanding motivation may lead to believe that the expended effort on L2 learning is always proficiency driven. There is copious literature (Agnihotri 2014; Phipps and Gonzales 2004) arguing against this assumption and highlighting the intrinsic value of the language learning process in itself, regardless of the acquisition of pragmatic returns such as L2 skills. Hence, the ideal L2 self should be conceptualized as an L2-related vision with a broad range of reference which may or may not include the ability to use the L2, depending on the motives of each individual learner.

The L2MSS places particular emphasis on learners' imaginative capacity, which allows them to envision their future identities. Imagination and vision are now well-established key concepts associated with Dörnyei's model, in line with the psychological literature from which it originated (Markus and Nurius 1986). Vision has been labelled as "one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning" (Dörnyei and Kubanyiova 2014, p. 2). Its main attraction, as Dörnyei (2014, p. 11) underlines, is that it represents "one of the highest-order motivational forces", whose explanatory power lies in its ability to make sense of the long-term investment in time and energy that the learning of another language requires. Individuals pursue languages for a variety of reasons and their commitment is sustained by an equally wide array of motives. However, the vision of the person that they would like to become in the future in relation to the target language seems to be one of the most effective predictors of their long-term motivated behaviour (Dörnyei 2014, p. 12). This vision is likely to build upon the symbolic and/or material resources that learners believe that they will acquire through the L2 learning process (Norton Peirce 1995, p. 17). The attainment of these resources allows them to renegotiate their positioning both on a global scale and in relation to the socio-contexts that they inhabit (Darvin and Norton 2015; Norton 2013).

Although the two selves at the core of the L2MSS represent the key framework of reference in L2 motivation research (Boo et al. 2015), new selves have emerged from recent studies on learners of languages other than English, who have largely been disregarded in the field of L2 motivation (see, for example, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2017) for an overview). Due to space limitations, we will only consider here an identity dimension which is particularly relevant to our discussion of the implementation of possible selves in the Australian classroom: the "community-engaged L2 self" (Amorati 2019). This self was developed to make sense of the identity aspirations of some university students of Italian in Melbourne, a city characterized by the presence of an active Italo-Australian community. Learners who envision this identity wish to study Italian to access local L2 community resources and acquire more meaningful forms of local participation. This self is likely to hold

relevance for L2 learners pursuing L2 study in transcultural spaces shaped by diasporic L2 communities visible in the local context, such as learners of Italian and of other community languages in Australia (see also 3.1).

### 2.3 *Pedagogical Implications*

The L2MSS suggests that L2 motivation can be increased by helping students to cultivate an attractive, vivid and elaborate future L2-related vision and by assisting them to turn this vision into action, thus capitalizing on the motivational capacity of future self-guides.

Vision-centred activities operationalizing the psychological theory of possible selves have been found to be an effective tool to increase students' motivation and sense of self in a wealth of university contexts (Fukada et al. 2011; Magid and Chan 2012; Magid 2014; Sampson 2012), thereby confirming the pedagogical significance of possible selves.

Fukada et al. (2011) have tested a series of vision-based activities on a sample of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners recruited from six Japanese universities. The aim of their motivational intervention was to assist learners to examine, harness and share their desired L2 selves and to encourage them to expand their social networks and affiliations with communities of practice outside the classroom. Visions of possible selves were found to be positively correlated with motivation and expended effort in L2 learning, suggesting that the use of possible selves in the language classroom allows students to "stimulate each other's investments in-class and out-of-class" (Fukada et al. 2011, p. 344) and encourages them to become more agentive in their L2 learning process.

Sampson's (2012) action research on a sample of EFL students in a rural Japanese university has provided further evidence that the integration of vision-enhancing activities into lessons leads to heightened motivations and increases learners' perception of the centrality of self-regulation for guiding direction to their learning.

Magid and Chan (2012) have discussed the effectiveness of two visionary motivational programs designed for Chinese EFL university students in two universities in Britain and Hong Kong. Both programs led to a significant increase in students' motivations, improved their linguistic self-confidence and helped them develop clearer future aspirations. Their findings point to the conclusion that, as Magid (2014, p. 350) notes, "it is possible to enhance L2 learners' vision of their Ideal L2 self through visualisation training and that strengthening of the vision can be done in a relatively short amount of time."

Various visionary training programs for language learners have been developed (Dörnyei and Kubanyiova 2014; Fukada et al. 2011; Hadfield and Dörnyei 2014; Sampson 2012; Magid and Chan 2012). To the best of this author's knowledge, the most recent and comprehensive one was proposed by Hadfield and Dörnyei (2014).

**Table 1** Sequencing of Hadfield and Dörnyei's (2014, p. 9) visionary motivational program

<b>Imaging identity: My future L2 self</b>	
Creating the vision	
Substantiating the vision	
Counterbalancing the vision	
Unifying the vision	
Enhancing the vision	
<b>Mapping the journey</b>	<b>Keeping the vision alive</b>
From vision to goals	Developing identity (targeted visualizations, role models, self-belief) Making it real (simulations, cultural events)
From goals to plans	
From plans to strategies	
From strategies to achievement	

As Table 1 illustrates, this program consists of three main visionary areas:

1. “Imaging identity” aims to help students create a tangible, vivid and realistic vision of their future L2 self;
2. “Mapping the journey” encourages students to develop strategies to reduce the discrepancy between their current self and their personally relevant future self;
3. “Keeping the vision alive” serves to activate and develop students’ L2 vision throughout the learning process.

Timetable and curriculum constraints may represent one of the biggest barriers to the implementation of motivational programs at university level. It is the well-known problem of bridging the gap between theory and practice or, in other words, to make theoretical desiderata fit into the realities of classroom practices. Hadfield and Dörnyei (2014, pp. 286–287) maintain that time-constrained programs still retain their motivating potential if core activities involving visualization, vision substantiation and goal setting are included.<sup>1</sup> As they note (2014, p. 285), visionary-centred activities can be implemented as part of regular classroom work or as routine breakers. Particularly in the former case, it is important that these activities not only pursue a motivational aim, but that they also foster the acquisition of language content. This can lead to the creation of a “language-plus-motivation” program (Hadfield and Dörnyei 2014, p. 286). Motivation activities can be utilized to practice language structures (e.g., an activity in which students have to describe themselves in the future can be used to practise the future tense) or they can be used to expose students to new structures (e.g., a text about two people describing their future self can be implemented to expose students to the future tense and can be followed by focus-on-form activities).

<sup>1</sup>The reader is referred to Hadfield and Dörnyei's book (2014) for an exhaustive overview of activities for EFL learners which operationalize these three motivational areas and which can be adapted to other languages and learning contexts.

### **3 From Theory to Practice: A Visionary Approach in the Australian Tertiary Context**

It is argued that the introduction of a vision-centred approach in the Australian tertiary language classroom can offer several benefits.

#### ***3.1 The Benefits of a Visionary Approach***

This approach provides the opportunity for students and teachers to explore the linguistic, but also the non-linguistic advantages associated with language studies. Indeed, classroom debates on students' expectedly varied L2 visions can be an effective way to have them share ideas on the meaning that they attribute to their L2 learning experiences and can also serve to heighten their awareness of the multiple dimensions that L2 learning can add to their identity. A discussion of the multiple benefits of L2 learning is particularly important in the Australian context, where there is some evidence that "students are unaware or do not seem to appreciate the depth and range of benefits [associated with L2 learning]" besides its instrumental value (Kinoshita and Zhang 2014, p. 96). Vision-centred activities can be integrated into the syllabus to draw students' attention not only to the instrumental value of L2 proficiency, but also to the educational, cultural and social enrichment that learning a language entails (Scarino 2014, p. 299).

Vision-generating and vision-enhancing activities can also be utilized to encourage students to reflect on how the L2 that they are studying can be reconciled and/or can coexist with their main degree area through the creation of a homogenous future vision. A key characteristic of tertiary language studies in Australia is in fact the considerable diversity of the student cohort (see, for example, Schmidt (2012) in relation to German L2). While this diversity is to cherish as it enriches the language classroom (Schmidt 2012, p. 9), the students who have their main study area outside languages may be more likely to discontinue due to the perception that the language that they are studying is not relevant for their future personal or professional aspirations. Vision-centred activities can help students reflect on their future L2-related vision in relation to the imagined future communities of practice (Norton 2013) with which they may want to affiliate (Fukada et al. 2011) and may also increase their sense of agency in building a future as L2-speaking graduates.

A visionary approach can also be implemented to raise students' awareness of the out-of-class domains in which they can utilize the L2. In the case of community languages, these domains also include local networks and community resources that learners can access in the Australian socio-context (Group of Eight 2007, p. 7; Cordella 2016; Cordella and Huang 2015). Students could be encouraged to situate their L2 selves in the local socio-context and to view the learning process as conducive to more meaningful forms of local participation through the creation of community-engaged L2 selves (Amorati 2019).

The implementation of a series of learning activities that bring together psychological and motivational theories to increase students' motivation and positive attitudes towards the value of language learning is in line with cutting-edge proposals on the teaching of languages in tertiary education in Australia. The recent project, *Flourishing in a Second Language* (Strambi et al. 2017), set out to develop a language curriculum for first-year university students. The activities which have been devised to date are designed to “facilitate alignment between learners' interests, linguistic goals, and cognitive challenges posed by the tasks” (Strambi et al. 2017, p. 121), and have yielded promising results. In two of the prompts created, students are encouraged to visualize and describe an ideal future self and to set future goals. Extending such activities to second and third year students and developing additional resources to maximize the motivating potential of future self-guides (see Sect. 2) represents a fruitful research avenue which may significantly impact on students' motivation and thus on retention rates.

### 3.2 A Case in Point: A Semester-Long Motivational Program

This section presents a motivational program centred around three activities which operationalize the three visionary areas outlined in Table 1. The program aims to increase students' motivations, critical reflection and self-regulation skills and can be integrated into a semester-long language subject alongside the traditional language syllabus. The activities can be implemented entirely in the target language for students at the pre-intermediate level and above. Table 2 offers an overview of the program:

**Table 2** Proposed implementation of a motivational program for a semester-long language subject

Time of implementation	Classroom time	Visionary area targeted	Activities
Week 3	1.5 hours	Imaging identity	<u>Activity 1</u> (see Sect. 3.2.1) The texts written as part of Activity 1 are anonymized and uploaded online
Week 4	1 hour		Classroom debate about the most common L2 visions and the most common advantages associated with L2 learning
Week 5	2.5 hours	Mapping the journey	<u>Activity 2</u> (see Sect. 3.2.2) Students keep reflective journals (Week 5–12)
Week 6	10 min	Keeping the vision alive	Introduction to <u>Activity 3</u> (see Sect. 3.2.3)
Week 7–12	10–15 min per class, depending on the number of students		Classroom presentations about L2-speaking role models as part of Activity 3. The presentations can then be uploaded online



**Table 3** Phase 1: Imaging identity

<b>Time of implementation and length</b>	Week 3 + Week 4 (2.5 hours)
<b>Motivational aim</b>	(a) To create the vision (b) To encourage self-reflection (c) To help students situate and connect emotionally to their future personally relevant L2 vision
<b>Linguistic skills</b>	(a) To improve reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

As can be seen, although the program extends from Week 3 to Week 12, class time devoted to vision-centred activities is not excessive: 5 hours in total for activities 1 and 2 and 1–2 hours for classroom presentations. This program can thus be delivered in addition to the traditional syllabus without requiring considerable changes to the curriculum. The design of assessment criteria and the targeting of specific language content through the activities clearly depend on the overall aims of the subject in which this motivational program is integrated. As a result, an examination of these aspects goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is contended that the first two activities (see 3.2.1 and 3.2.2) lend themselves better to being implemented as an unassessed form of language practice and of student self-evaluation, as students' output is likely to be highly personal and idiosyncratic and thus difficult to assess. Conversely, activity 3 (see 3.2.3) could be assessed in terms of students' data collection and presentation skills. The following sections describe each phase of the motivational program and present the three activities.

### 3.2.1 Imaging Identity

As noted previously, helping students to create a vivid vision of themselves in the future and encouraging them to share this vision in the classroom are important strategies for increasing their motivation (see Sect. 2). The first part of the motivational program (Imaging Identity) is introduced in Week 3, once students are expected to have become familiarized with each other and with the teacher. This first phase consists of activity 1 and of a class discussion which is held in week 4. Key details are presented in Table 3:

**Activity 1** is loosely based on the activities “Future alternatives” and “My future L2 self” devised by Hadfield and Dörnyei (2014, p. 16 and p. 26 respectively).

#### Activity 1: Describing and situating future L2 visions

##### Warm up

Students are given prompts (short texts, interviews and/or videos) where current or former language learners discuss their L2 motivations. The activity is followed by reading and/or listening comprehension exercises (e.g., true or false, fill in the gaps, etc.).

##### Task 1

Imagine yourself in the future. Write a short text that covers the following points:

- 1a) Describe yourself. What will you be able to do? What will set you apart from others in Australia and/or in other countries where you see yourself in the future?
- 1b) What job will you do? Think about how the L2 that you are learning can be relevant to your job.
- 1c) What adjectives would you use to describe yourself as a person who has studied a language at university level and/or as a successful L2 speaker?

You will then give the text to your teacher. You do not have to include your name if you do not want to.

### Task 2

Try to envision yourself as a person who has studied an L2 for many years. Think about yourself in these possible scenarios:

- 2a) in your country and/or in the city where you are learning;
- 2b) overseas.

Describe yourself in these scenarios. What will you be able to do? What will others think of you?

Write two short texts. You will then give them to your teacher. You do not have to include your name if you do not want to.

As part of an initial warm-up, students can be presented with examples of possible future selves through prompts in the target language—see, for example, activity 1 in Hadfield and Dörnyei (2014, pp. 16–19)—, whose level of difficulty needs to be adapted to the level of the students. The prompts presented can target different grammar structures, depending on the language syllabus. As the cohorts of language learners are increasingly diverse in Australia, efforts should be made to present examples from current and former L2 learners with different backgrounds and base degrees, so as to reflect the diverse profiles of the L2 students in the Australian classroom. Findings from L2 motivation studies should inform the creation of these prompts, so as to present appealing L2 identities that students are likely to hold. The following text, for instance, was developed to account for the most common motivations and desired L2 identities of university students of Italian, as found in a recent study (Amorati 2019):

I'm Mark! I am Australian and I live in Melbourne. I completed a degree in medicine and I also studied Italian as an elective during my Bachelor of Biomedicine. Studying Italian expanded my worldview and made me feel more connected to another part of the world and to people overseas. It also made me grow as a person.

I often travel to Italy and I can use the language to communicate with Italians. I love to see their faces light up when they realize that I can speak Italian! I can also really experience Italy when I am there and not be restricted to touristy places. In Melbourne, I can keep up my Italian. I sometimes go to Carlton, the Italian suburb, and talk to Italo-Australians or to Italian tourists. I can also use Italian in my job to talk to Italian and Italo-Australian patients. I have become popular in the hospital where I work—my colleagues call me “the doctor who can speak Italian”. Having this skill makes me stand out from others!

Students can be invited to describe Mark's current L2 self and to discuss how it relates to his personal life, his travelling, his career and his engagement with local communities. This warm-up phase encourages reflection about the multiple realms

in which their L2 knowledge can become relevant in the immediate learning context and overseas.

Students are then prompted to write a short text along the lines of the one(s) provided, in which they describe their future L2 vision. They are explicitly encouraged to reflect on how this skill will set them apart from others (**Question 1a**) and on how their language proficiency can be relevant to their future career (**Question 1b**). Both questions require them to consider how they can integrate their future professional self into their future L2 vision. This is crucial for students who have their study focus outside languages and who could start to view L2 learning as part of their future identity rather than as a short-term academic pursuit. Students are also asked to use adjectives to describe themselves as people who have studied a language at university level (**Question 1c**). Their answers are likely to reflect their assumptions about the social value of L2 learning.

The second task aims to have students strengthen their vision of themselves as committed language learners. Students are asked to reflect about their future identity and to situate their future L2 vision in a local context (e.g., **Question 2a**) and overseas (**Question 2b**). Students could reflect on what they will be able to do in these contexts (e.g., interact with local communities and with tourists in the L1 context, interact with the locals when travelling to L2 countries, etc.) and are also encouraged to reflect on what others will think of them.

Students are then required to submit the texts that they have written as part of **Task 1** and **Task 2**. Anonymous submission should be accepted in case students are not willing to share their personal L2 visions with the whole class. The texts can then be uploaded online, for example, on an online space accessible to the whole student cohort and can be used for a classroom debate on the motivations for learning languages in the following week (see Table 2).

### 3.2.2 Mapping the Journey

The second part of the motivational program is presented in Week 5. Table 4 presents key details of this second phase:

**Table 4** Phase 2: Mapping the journey

<b>Time of implementation and length</b>	Week 5 (2.5 hours) Reflective journals are kept throughout the semester (Week 5–12, at least one entry per week)
<b>Motivational aim</b>	(a) To strengthen the vision (b) To identify goals, to break them down into sub-goals (c) To develop self-reflection and self-regulation skills (d) To consider ought-to L2 selves and feared selves
<b>Linguistic skills</b>	(a) To improve listening and speaking skills (pair work) as well as writing skills (reflective journals and goal setting)

**Activity 2** encourages students to think more deeply about their future vision (**Task 1**) and to develop strategies regarding how to reduce the discrepancy between their current self and their personally relevant future self (**Task 2**):

**Activity 2: Future L2 identities and roadmaps to their actualization**

**Task 1**

1a) Think again about the person that you would like to become by learning the L2 in light of the activities done in Weeks 3 and 4.

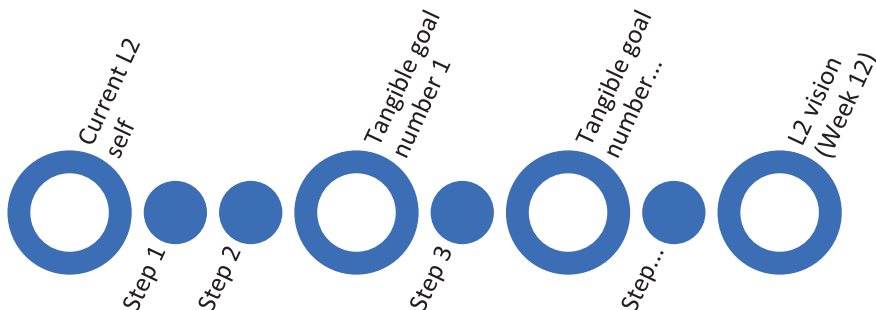
Draw an Ideal Self tree. This tree has two main limbs which represent (1) your L2 vision related to your personal life; (2) your L2 vision related to your professional life. You can add additional limbs depending on the domains in which you think that the L2 will be relevant to you. Draw small branches growing from each limb specifying your vision in more detail.

**Task 2**

- 2a) Note down what you want to learn/ what you will learn this semester and how this will help you come closer to your L2 vision. Then, try to envision yourself at the end of this semester. What will you be able to do? How will you feel?
- 2b) It is now time to set your goals! Map what you should/ought to do this semester to come closer to your personal L2 vision. Draw a timeline for this semester, ending with Week 12.
- 2c) Pair work! Share the goals that you have listed with the person sitting next to you and discuss if they are achievable or if they need to be further broken down into smaller steps.
- 2d) Keep a reflective journal throughout the semester (one entry per week) where you discuss how your learning is progressing and whether your goals are being met.

**Task 1** is loosely based on the activity “Identity tree” developed by Hock et al. (2006); see also Magid and Chan (2012) and Hadfield and Dörnyei (2014, p. 28). It acts as a transition between the phase “Imaging the vision” and “Mapping the journey”, allowing students to think more deeply about their future self and to represent it in graphic form.

In the second part of this activity, students are asked to brainstorm how L2 learning throughout the semester can help them come closer to their future vision. They are then asked to imagine themselves in Week 12 (**Task 2a**) and to set goals for the following weeks (**Task 2b** (Hadfield and Dörnyei 2014, p. 117). The goal statements can then be included in a timeline, as in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1** Timeline of goal statements

While listing long-term and short-term goals, students should be prompted to think about their ought-to L2 self (What should I do to achieve these goals and to avoid negative outcomes?) and their feared L2 self (What would happen if I did not succeed in meeting my goals?). They could then share their goals with their peers to receive feedback on their feasibility (**Task 2c**).

In the last task, students are invited to reflect on the progression of their language learning journey in relation to the timeline that they have created (**Task 2d**) for the rest of the semester (Weeks 5–12). This can be done by encouraging them to write reflective journals, where they can discuss whether the goals that they have listed in the timeline are being met. Reflective journals are a pedagogical tool already in place at university level to foster not only content integration and critical thinking, but also reflection on one's own personal growth and learning progress (e.g., Ryan and Ryan 2013). Since reflective journals require learners to consider the self "as a subject of critical study in relation to others and the contextual conditions of study or work" (Ryan 2013, p. 145), it is argued that they can be effectively employed to encourage self-monitoring of one's own progression towards a specific L2 vision.

### 3.2.3 Keeping the Vision Alive

An important way to help students activate and possibly strengthen their personal L2 vision throughout the learning process is to expose them to positive role models (Muir et al. 2019). The encounter with role models can occur both inside and outside the classroom. A case in point from a non-linguistic discipline is represented by the "Science Industry Week" organized every year by Monash University: the event is an occasion for science students to hear from employers, successful scientists and past graduates and thus acquire a better understanding of their future career options. Similarly, a "Languages Industry Week", could be organized by language departments to introduce students to successful L2-speaking professionals in different fields. Such events would allow employers from different sectors to share ideas about the advantages of possessing a linguistic skill set in the job market and would help students envision future identities which entail clear and tangible L2 visions within a range of professional fields.

Hadfield and Dörnyei (2014, pp. 220–223) propose a series of activities which revolve around the exposure of learners to role models, such as organizing interviews with successful language learners in a classroom setting (Activity 77, "Interview a Role Model") or having students research the characteristics of successful language learners on the internet (Activity 78, "Webquest").

**Activity 3**, which is based on the former ones, students are required to find their own role models and to prepare a presentation to introduce them to their peers. Table 5 presents key details about this last phase of the motivational program and is followed by a description of **Activity 3**.

**Table 5** Phase 3: Keeping the vision alive

<b>Time of implementation and length</b>	Week 6 (introduction) + Week 7–12 (classroom presentations)
<b>Motivational aims</b>	(a) To keep the vision alive (b) To further strengthen the vision
<b>Linguistic skills</b>	(a) To improve speaking and writing skills

**Activity 3: My L2-speaking role model**

Think about inspirational L2-speaking role models. You are encouraged to look for role models in a field in which you would like to work in the future or which you are interested in. The role models you choose do not have to be famous. They can also be people in your life.

Prepare a presentation. Your aim is to inspire your classmates and to create a motivational resource for other language learners in Australia. You have 5 min for presenting each role model. Cover the following points in your presentation:

1. Present your L2-speaking role model and explain why they are good role models (achievements, community impact, etc.).
2. What role does the L2 play in their personal and/or professional life?
3. What can you learn from them? (3 lessons to be learnt at least).
4. How does their story resonate with you and inspire the development of your L2 vision?

In this project-based activity students are invited to find their personally relevant role models and to create a presentation for their peers and for other language learners, where they discuss why they are good role models (**Question 1**) and to what extent the L2 is part of their personal and professional life (**Question 2**). Students are then invited to indicate at least three lessons that they can learn from them (**Question 3**) and to consider how their example inspires the development of their own L2 vision (**Question 4**). The resource can be created in the target language and can be further translated into English, so as to make it easily accessible to the wider language-learning community. By collecting information about role models, students may be brought to reflect further on, and reinforce, their future L2 vision.

## 4 Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the L2MSS offers a valuable approach to conceptualizing L2 motivation from an identity lens and that learning activities operationalizing the construct of L2 vision and future self-guides have a considerable motivating potential. A pedagogy rooted in visualization activities offers several benefits in the Australian context, as it ensures that the variety of linguistic and non-linguistic motives for which individuals pursue language studies are discussed in the language classroom, allowing students from different base degrees to reflect on how L2 learning forms part of their future personal and professional identity. In addition, it can represent an effective strategy to raise awareness about community resources by encouraging students to envision their personally relevant L2 selves in local contexts.

As a case in point, this chapter has proposed a possible implementation of a motivational program which can be integrated into the traditional L2 syllabus, paving the way for empirical studies which can validate its efficacy and determine whether it is welcomed by teachers and students. The activities presented as part of the program should be fine-tuned depending on the target language, the level of the students and the context(s) of implementation. Learning resources explicitly targeting the motivations and desired identities found in large-scale studies on language students in Australia need to be developed. Educators should then adapt them to the realities of the micro and macro-contexts of learning and align them with, and integrate them into, L2 syllabuses.

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# Promoting Collaborative Learning in the Spanish Language and Culture Classroom



Lorely Aponte Ortiz

**Abstract** Higher education is increasingly focused on collaboration and life-long learning. These institutional objectives have had implications for the classroom, inviting language scholars in particular to reflect on new approaches to language learning. This has been the case in the Spanish Language and Culture program at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), which has constructed a collaborative learning environment as a means of promoting the development of speaking, reading, writing and listening skills in Spanish and providing students with a deeper understanding of Spanish as a global language. This chapter describes the pedagogical choices made in order to construct such an environment, in which students negotiate information, share their knowledge and skills and contribute to shared meaning-making. I argue that exposing language students to collaborative learning environments can contribute to fostering openness to, and awareness of, other world views, as well as enhancing their language skills.

**Keywords** Collaborative learning · Life-long learning · Genre pedagogy · Meaning-making · Hispanophone societies · Knowledge sharing · Self-directed learning · Positive interdependence · Reflexivity

## 1 Background

Universities in Australia offer a range of language courses, some as stand-alone programs and others embedded in a combined degree. At the University of Technology Sydney, the School of International Studies and Education offers various degrees, namely the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, the Bachelor of

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Global Studies and the Diploma in Languages, which allow students to study a language and culture other than English. The Bachelor of Arts in International Studies can be combined with a range of degrees and offers students the opportunity of a year of study abroad. This year of overseas study allows graduates to give an international focus to their professional degree and to become active participants in their own learning. Therefore, language and culture programs at the University of Technology Sydney are constantly working towards the development of sociocultural and intercultural understanding in their students, in an attempt to facilitate global encounters amongst all agents involved.

In my role as a university teacher, I have observed increasing student interest in global issues and other cultural and historical contexts. Thus, in my position as a teacher in the Spanish Language and Culture program, I became interested in exploring and applying innovative pedagogies in order better to meet students' needs and foster sensitivity to other realities. This research led me to develop a collaborative learning initiative, discussed in this chapter, that engages students in interactions with peers that promote collective thinking and enquiry. Through this approach to language and culture teaching and learning, students participate in active collaboration with their peers to explore linguistic diversity and encounters with other cultures, and to investigate collaborative learning technologies. It is expected that through collaborative meaning-making, students will become aware of the challenging situations they may experience in their year of in-country study.

## **2 What Do we Understand by Collaborative Learning?**

Collaborative learning is a twenty-first century trend that responds to the increasing need of individuals to think and work together and emphasizes the shift from individual to community learning (Laal and Laal 2012; Laal et al. 2012; Domik and Fischer 2011; Klein 2008; Johnson and Johnson 2018). In a collaborative learning environment, learners are challenged as they listen to other viewpoints, articulate their own, and engage in a shared learning experience in which each participant supports the learning of others (Laal and Laal 2012; Laal et al. 2012; Johnson and Johnson 2018). According to Bruffee (1984), the term “collaborative learning” originated from the work of British researchers interested in studying the interactions of medical students. The aim of this study was to identify and address difficulties encountered by students entering university. The study showed that students were able to reach a diagnosis as a group faster than as individuals working alone. This suggested that the facilitation of collaborative learning situations could help students bridge gaps between the traditional classroom and the university context (Bruffee 1984), and further students' transition to higher education.

Although there has been extensive research on collaborative learning, a unanimous definition of the term is still to be reached. Some scholars use the terms cooperative and collaborative learning interchangeably and only differentiate them

according to the degree of division of labour—partners working in cooperation split the work and solve tasks individually, whilst partners working collaboratively do the work together. Further research suggests that collaborative learning is guided by sociocultural principles (MacGregor 1990; Laal and Laal 2012; Gokhale 1995; Oxford 1997; Dillenbourg et al. 1996; Dillenbourg 1999). For these scholars, “collaborative learning” is the umbrella term that describes the interdependent process in which learners work together in small groups to achieve a common goal, solve a problem, complete a task or create a product. This definition of collaborative learning supports the notion that when learners engage actively in interaction processes, they participate in iterations of discussion, negotiation, clarification, and articulation of new ideas. As they share and listen to different perspectives, learners challenge their own preconceptions in an attempt to generate new knowledge as a group. Considering that higher education is a social context where learning occurs through participation and communication with others, a collaborative learning approach can foster interactions between students, allowing them to develop strategies for understanding and transforming knowledge.

### **3 Rationale for a Collaborative Learning Approach in Language and Culture Programs**

In response to current global needs, those engaged in language and culture studies must necessarily come up against the world’s most important societal and environmental problems, and take on an active role in facilitating transcultural communication to address those needs (Hansen 2009; Kramsch 1995, 2012; Byram and Wagner 2018). Similarly, language and culture programs are well placed to meet the increasing need for collaboration and knowledge transmission—for example, by promoting interactions between the natural sciences and the humanities (Kramsch 1995, 2012). Language learning can be seen as a “global adventure that involves learning about, understanding, and (at least to some extent) identifying with another culture in which people use a different language” (Oxford 1997, p. 448). It is thus essential to adopt teaching and learning approaches that allow students to observe these differences and to understand how they are interconnected in global society.

### **4 Benefits of Promoting Collaborative Learning in Higher Education**

The complexity of our rapidly changing world is in many ways responsible for the shift from individual to shared meaning-making, as it has created an increased obligation for individuals to work together. In their research, McGregor (2015), Müller et al. (2005), Pohl and Hirsch Hadorn (2007), Neuhauser and Pohl (2015) and Stahl

(2006), suggest that the participation of people from diverse backgrounds in goal-oriented systems encourages collaboration as a social activity in which learners share viewpoints and meanings relevant to the given situation. As individuals participate in this social activity and work together towards the solution of complex problems, they engage in discussions, ask questions, ask for clarification, and embark on a collective journey of discovery. In this journey, different ways of thinking and doing lead learners to deep enquiry and critical reflection.

Collaborative learning situations in which students share their own world experiences in a space where these experiences are valued, foster the development of higher-order thinking skills such as discussion, negotiation, interpreting, organizing, application of learning in new situations, clarification, problem solving, creative critical thinking, taking risks, mutual accountability and self-directed learning (Klein 2008). Additionally, the acts of listening to other perspectives and discussing alternatives provide significant scaffolding to support learners' attempts to maintain a balance between what they know and what they learn in order to produce new knowledge and make meaning (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013; Oxford 1997; Bruffee 1984). This pedagogical approach enables the creation of social support networks in which each team member facilitates the learning of others and is accountable for the group's processes. These social networks lead to a positive environment in which students are actively involved in acquiring principles and practices that enable them to become self-directed learners. As learners become aware of different ways of doing and different values, they reflect on their need for developing and maintaining flexibility and adaptability (DeVoss et al. 2002) in order to carry out successful social interactions.

Consequently, universities have adapted their curriculum design to accommodate students' changing needs and the diversity in the student population. There is now an emphasis on blended learning environments that incorporate collaborative learning in order to promote higher-order thinking skills and the understanding of diversity among students (Laal and Laal 2012; Laal et al. 2012; Lin 2015; Oxford 1997; Scager et al. 2016). By working in diverse environments, students develop lifelong learning practices that support individual and community learning. To maximize students' knowledge building and interactions, appropriate learning technologies are adopted as tools to assist in the development of transferable skills.

Collaborative learning can foster capabilities needed in today's workplace and prepare graduates for increased mobility. By discussing and reflecting on current issues in Spanish speaking societies, such as immigration or indigenous rights, students learn to explore the limits of their curiosity and start making connections in a global context.

## 5 Working towards Collaboration in Diverse Settings

In 2004, the European Commission published an action plan aimed at encouraging language learning in graduates from all disciplines (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture 2004). This plan highlights the significant role of language learning in the facilitation of cooperation. In advance of the plan, the European Commission had called for projects that would further its goals. The European network for the promotion of language learning among all undergraduates (ENLU), which aimed to promote language learning in the university sector, was one of the seven projects retained. It stated that all graduates in Europe needed to “have first-hand experience in working and learning in other countries and in collaborating with other countries; and be familiar with other cultures and intercultural skills” (ENLU 2003).

To continue working towards the achievement of these objectives, it is important to underline the short-term and long-term benefits of language learning. Language and culture programs can provide learners with experiences that “stimulate students’ thinking through real world problems” (Gokhale 1995, p. 30), and extend their “ability to work collaboratively with teams of people from a range of backgrounds and countries” (Jones 2013, p. 100). As mentioned by Oxford (1997, p. 448): “In a community of L2 learners, cultural and linguistic ideas are best shaped through reflective enquiry with other people.” Additionally, Johnson and Johnson (2009, 2018) note that when learners move away from an individualistic learning approach, they develop supportive relationships with peers and greater social competence. In contrast with an individualistic approach, collaborative learning results in positive interdependence among team members (Oxford 1997; Johnson and Johnson 2018; Scager et al. 2016), through which learners become accountable for each other when constructing new information.

This study considers that collaborative learning experiences in higher education are an opportunity for learners with different learning styles to measure, adapt and regulate their level of interaction in order to engage more effectively in social collaborations. In this endeavour, peers’ cognitive processes are influenced by the frequency and degree of those interactions as they attempt to find appropriate practices and discuss more efficient ways to interact (Gokhale 1995). In a collaborative learning setting, peers learn not only because they are working together, but also because they carry out activities that prompt specific deep learning systems that develop higher order thinking skills.

## 6 Promoting Collaborative Learning in Spanish

A key component of the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies at the University of Technology Sydney is a year of study abroad or ICS (in-country study). During this time, students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in another language and culture. Students can choose from a range of six languages, namely French, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, German and Spanish. At UTS, the Spanish Language and Culture program is one of the largest language programs and offers students the choice of seven Hispanophone majors. In an attempt to prepare students to make deeper connections with the host culture, the program continues to work towards increasing students' engagement with the language and culture of Spanish speaking societies.

The collaborative learning approach I describe in this chapter was developed in an effort to extend current pedagogical innovations in the program and make more explicit its expected learning outcomes, such as the capacity to operate appropriately in intercultural contexts. This approach engages students in an iterative process of discussion of, and reflection on, cultural and historical situations in Hispanophone societies. Drawing on students' background knowledge and prior learning to expose stereotypical views and hypothesize about the various Spanish-speaking contexts, the initial stage involves students sharing their own standpoints and/or biases. Using a global Spanish approach, learners discuss their preconceptions and work together to create new paradigms. Boundary objects or artifacts, such as texts and/or audiovisual material, are used to facilitate learning interactions and prompt discussions and enquiry (Alexander et al. 2014).

To illustrate how I implemented this approach in the classroom, I provide an outline of the stages of student engagement and the description of a sample task.

### 6.1 *Students of Languages and Cultures*

At the University of Technology Sydney, the students enrolled in intermediate levels of language and culture subjects form a diverse population. While most of the students in this cohort have studied a language at UTS for at least three semesters, some students have studied it elsewhere and a few are heritage speakers. In addition, students come from different disciplinary backgrounds, making the languages and cultures context a varied environment in which students' own experiences are a valuable resource. For most, language and culture subjects are preparatory for their year of in-country study and they serve a crucial role in fostering other ways of doing that will prepare them to operate in intercultural contexts.

Students attend two-hour tutorials twice a week. Course notes, learning platforms and/or other audiovisual resources are used in preparation for face-to-face discussions and online contributions.

## 6.2 *The Collaborative Meaning-Making Activity*

The aim of this engagement learning activity is to support students' understanding of Hispanophone societies through the discussion of cultural, historical and/or societal situations, while extending their linguistic skills. I ask students to share their initial knowledge of a given topic. As these have been described in the subject outline, students are aware of the themes that will be discussed during the course. Once I have made their existing knowledge, ideas and even stereotypical perspectives relevant to the conversation, they are more willing to share their views and to engage in dialogue with one another. This peer interactive process makes students explore the limits of their curiosity and work towards shared meaning-making. Students become more confident in articulating their ideas, in Spanish, as they develop social support networks and experience conceptual change (Stahl 2006; Johnson and Johnson 2018).

### 6.2.1 *Situating the Collaborative Meaning-Making Activity*

The activities in this task are part of their preparation for class. This means that students are responsible for actively contributing to discussions and research in small and large groups. As students become more confident working with peers, they encourage one another to use the language and provide peer feedback in the process. These activities are used as scaffolding for other tasks such as their oral presentation and final written test. The final oral presentation requires students to present, in Spanish, one of the socio-cultural or historical topics studied, including its impact in Spanish speaking societies. The final written test asks students to write, in Spanish, about one of the topics discussed in class. Students' engagement in collaborative learning processes provides them with the resources and skills to complete other tasks in the subject while at the same time supporting the development of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in Spanish. Furthermore, students' ongoing participation in discussions enables them to continue developing their communication skills more generally.

Immigration, which is one of the cultural themes explored in the Spanish Language and Culture program, provides an example of a language engagement situation in which students are required to participate.

#### **Stage 1**

Students analyse and discuss immigration in different regions of Spanish speaking societies. During this stage, I give students a set of questions they will use to map their individual assumptions about immigration to Spain. These questions may include: What do you know about the current immigration situation in Spain? Where are immigrants to Spain from? As students attempt to articulate their initial



knowledge of this societal issue in Spanish, this stage allows them to reflect on their viewpoint and/or stereotypical notions. Moreover, students have the opportunity to think about the sources of information that have contributed to or influenced their standpoint. In preparation for the next stage, students map their ideas for further collaborative discussion.

### **Stage 2**

Students share their views with peers in small groups. During this stage they are encouraged to ask questions, ask for clarification, verify information and identify differences and similarities. As they work collaboratively towards meaning-making, students use a collaboration platform to track their ideas, negotiations, interactions and reframing of the given topic. Throughout the process the teacher acts as mediator by encouraging students to engage fully in the activities and facilitating the use of the Spanish language.

### **Stage 3**

Students work in groups and engage in research to re-evaluate collaboratively their answers to the original questions in Stage 1. Drawing information from the previous stage, they support one another as they build their own linguistic and topical repertoires as a group. I encourage students to find a variety of sources, in Spanish, to study the situation from different perspectives and by using multiple theoretical frameworks (Jahn et al. 2012). These can include journal articles, news reports, TV shows and films, social media and any other audiovisual resources. Students share these materials and thoughts in class and via the online collaboration platform. This is an iterative process where students, in groups, discuss, question and reflect on similarities and/or differences in their perception of the societal issue, tracking changes in viewpoint. It is at this stage that most students will experience an “aha” moment as their preconceptions are disrupted by new knowledge. Studying key societal issues through different lenses enhances sensitivity to different practices and promotes the integration of new learning.

### **Stage 4**

In the final stage, students share their journey and their “aha” moment with the larger group. They discuss their joint problem-solving efforts, and the strategies they used to collaborate towards shared meaning-making. Students approach language acquisition as a collaborative process that involves all agents in the language encounters. This stage may be used to explore immigration in other Spanish speaking regions or to scaffold the cultural and/or historical topics to be explored. Gradually students become more confident in participating in these types of activities.

To facilitate active work in groups I incorporated the following guidelines or principles into the design of the task to guide students’ reflection and assist them in their progress:

- Recognition of one’s own biases and preconceptions;
- Openness to sharing one’s own preconceptions and biases;

- Openness and tolerance toward other points of view and perspectives;
- Demonstration of an inclusive stance towards perspectives that are unfamiliar or different from one's own;
- Active participation in diverse contexts in order to arrive at new knowledge creation;
- Promotion of creative thinking with an inclusive vision;
- Engagement in critical thinking through self- and group reflection;
- Collaborative work to make meaning together;
- Sharing of resources, strategies and thoughts with others;
- Exploration of new technologies to create a pool of resources.

It is expected that as students operate in diverse contexts and work with peers from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds, they will become more confident working with diversity at various levels. Strategies employed by others to explore new knowledge can be shared in an attempt to propose collaborative ethical initiatives to address the view of language as a manifestation of culture (Kramsch 1993; 1995; Byram and Wagner 2018). I support the view that collaborative learning opportunities where students listen to different perspectives and engage in discussions allow them to share knowledge and obtain a further understanding of their own reality. When students participate in active collaboration with peers, they engage in social interactions that require them to develop their communication skills, challenge their thinking, build up confidence and self awareness, develop openness to, and respect of, other perspectives and increase their understanding of their own position within a global context. These are “interpersonal qualities which are independent of the field of study” (Jones 2013, p. 96) and which are essential for participating in lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world.

## 7 Curriculum Innovations

Taking into consideration current educational challenges, and seeking to maximize the input of student experience into language and culture programs, the Spanish Language and Culture program at UTS developed curriculum innovations in line with the UTS learning futures approach. In 2012, the program implemented the approach of “Genre Pedagogy” (Sheldon et al. 2013; Sheldon 2017), an approach which refers to language learning as a social activity and enhances the capacity of L2 learners of Spanish to progress. Genre Pedagogy integrates textual models that facilitate students’ learning and provides students with a continuous progression of language development, thus enabling them to improve their academic literacy skills in the target language (Sheldon et al. 2013; Sheldon 2017). Additionally, it incorporates collaborative learning activities to reinforce and promote literacy skills in Spanish and to increase engagement with other International Studies subjects during their year of in-country study. The program has continued to work on initiatives

to accommodate students' changing needs, align the course more closely with intended learning outcomes, augment students' curiosity about other cultural contexts, and equip graduates with team-building skills.

The collaborative learning approach involved using diversity in the student population as a resource. Through this approach, students are presented with situations that challenge their preconceptions and take them on a search for new knowledge as a group. In addition, students are immersed in an internationally focused form of practice-based learning where they can identify their own perspectives and biases. Once these have been identified, they develop openness to, and respect of, other standpoints. I argue that when students engage in discussions about other standpoints, they can make greater connections with the host culture during their year of in-country study. Through deeper connections with the host culture, students can perform a deeper critical analysis and develop reflexivity (Nuninger 2017; Bolton 2010; Edwards et al. 2002). Reflexivity enables students to question their own practices, ways of thinking, and biases, in an effort to "strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others" (Bolton 2010, p. 13), prior to and during their ICS. In this process, students negotiate common interaction practices and ways of communicating in Spanish with their peers and teachers.

By listening to others, students are faced with the possibility of "changing deeply held ways of being" (Bolton 2010, p. 14) as they attempt to develop flexibility, adjust to the unexpected and deal with sudden change.

The use of online collaboration platforms facilitates group work practices and acts as a useful resource for face-to-face or remote interactions. However, the emphasis is not on technology but on the processes that students engage in as they develop higher-order thinking skills. Thus, technology is used to maximize the collaborative learning experience (Laal et al. 2014a, b; Laal and Laal 2012; Hakkarainen et al. 2013; Domik and Fischer 2011; Resta and Laferrière 2007; Dillenbourg et al. 1996; Dillenbourg 1999) and to foster the development of the digital literacies needed to operate in the global workplace.

## **8 Benefits of Promoting a Collaborative Learning Approach**

The success of a collaborative learning approach depends upon the creation of support networks and the development of functional capabilities. Curriculum innovations of this type also need to be strongly taken up if they are to address current educational and social challenges, encourage change and promote knowledge creation. It is not difficult to argue the case for their wider implementation. In this chapter, I have underlined the importance of implementing practical approaches that empower students to operate responsibly in intercultural contexts and improve alignment between university learning and societal needs (Jantsch 1972). This

collaborative learning approach in language and culture programs also provides a safe environment where students facilitate peer learning and participate in team building processes. Since students enrolled in language and culture programs at the University of Technology Sydney come from different disciplinary backgrounds, they have an opportunity to engage in collaborative learning experiences that encompass different areas of the humanities and the sciences. Participation in trans-disciplinary environments, used as simulations of real life scenarios, permits students to appreciate the significant role that the humanities play in addressing societal needs, but also to identify links between industry and academia, and to create shared meaning (Nicolescu 1999).

The importance of teaching and learning strategies where students have the opportunity to rehearse and extend transferable skills cannot be underestimated. Through the development of higher order thinking skills, students can develop a critical analysis of a societal issue or “messy situation” (Dillenbourg 1999; Oxford 1997; Gokhale 1995; Byram and Wagner 2018) in other cultural and linguistic contexts.

## 9 Ways Forward

Collaboration between a larger number of scholars and professionals from different regions of the world would provide a means of responding to the “urgency and complexity of unsolved scientific and societal problems” (Stokols 2017, p. 328). It is thus important to prepare graduates with the transferable skills and digital literacy that will equip them for this task within the global workplace of the future. Innovative teaching and learning approaches will play a crucial role in their preparation. Further research needs to be undertaken to investigate the benefits of implementing collaborative learning experiences as a learning methodology within language and culture programs that facilitates dialogue and encounters in the global community. Questions to be further explored are:

- whether collaborative learning experiences contribute to cultural and social transformation;
- to what extent collaborative learning experiences facilitate encounters with others and support “the unlearning of intolerance” (United Nations n.d.) to create change;
- and whether students are able to identify connections between other cultures and their own.

Finally, more research is required to demonstrate the short- and long-term advantages that a language and culture education offers for addressing issues in a globalized context.

## 10 Conclusion

The approach to collaborative learning described in this chapter aims to provide students in language and culture programs with learning opportunities through which they become aware of otherness in an inclusive and safe environment. Collaborative learning experiences can be designed to take into consideration the diversity of the student population and the changing needs of students. I propose that language and culture programs should continue their efforts to work productively within the changing educational environment and to bring scholarly and practical information together in order to promote student awareness of the close interactions between academia and society. I suggest that a collaborative approach to language and culture learning provides students with an opportunity to pose questions and become involved in participatory environments that enable them to achieve a common goal as a group. I hope that if we can make collaboration between all agents in the learning process more explicit, students will develop an awareness of the importance of studying a problem from different perspectives and considering other sources of knowledge. By reflecting on the significance of the issues they discuss, students identify similarities and differences between diverse cultural contexts and engage in a critical analysis that prompts shared meaning-making. As students reflect on different cultural contexts, they are able to articulate and defend new ideas. Highlighting the importance of encouraging faculty and students to think in terms of moving across boundaries and promoting collaboration with other cultures and disciplines can lead to a holistic understanding of a societal problem (Alvarez et al. 2011; Byram and Wagner 2018).

In this chapter I have highlighted the importance of aligning societal needs with university learning in order to elicit a united effort from all stakeholders so that they can “prepare graduates with values and competencies conducive to social and ecological scholarship and practice” (Stokols 2017, p. 322). By implementing and promoting collaborative learning experiences that foster shared meaning-making and an understanding of diversity, we give students the opportunity to participate in social and intellectual interactions that allow them to observe and self-direct their learning. These active interactions can enable graduates to operate effectively in today’s mobile workplace and to participate in a deep transformation of society.

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## Part IX

# Revisiting the Languages and Cultures Nexus

The three chapters in this section illustrate ways of strengthening the languages and cultures nexus through the development of courses in which different cultural contexts open new pathways to language learning and to student and teacher reflectivity on that very process.

The first chapter by Absalom and Anderson details initiatives taken at the University of Melbourne to introduce the study of the food and food cultures of Italy and Spain into language curricula. The authors assert that food culture provides a medium for engaging the current student cohort that is more accessible to them and relevant to their own experience than traditional cultural content. They maintain that the familiarity of food can serve to diminish language “anxiety” and hence to enhance student motivation, while further skills in intercultural competency can be delivered through related in-country study.

The second chapter discusses how teachers at the University of Western Australia introduced theatre performance into German Studies curricula to encourage in-depth learning of German culture through authentic language learning experiences. Ludewig, Benstein and Ludewig-Rohwer applied the pedagogy of “flow” and the principle of “real world learning” to the classroom in order to facilitate the writing and performance of a play in German. The authors confirmed the efficacy of the approach, noting that their students reported not only the linguistic achievements they had made but also the feelings of empathy and solidarity they derived from their collaborative efforts.

In the third chapter, Ducasse and Maher reflect critically on assessment practices in the teaching of translation in a course where students come from different language disciplines, and where both English and other languages are used as the language of instruction. The authors discuss not only how students in this course deal with the linguistic transfer in translation, but also how they engage with the cultural content, and issues such as genre or register. Their study explores the intersections between teaching language, culture and translation, while providing insights into the way assessment tasks anchored in culture can be employed in a language-teaching context to the benefit of students and teachers alike.

The three studies all involve the development of reflective and collaborative practices in students and teachers. From such collegial learning spaces where the languages and cultures nexus is realized, students were thus seen to emerge not only with enhanced linguistic skills but also as confident and responsible citizens.

# The Language of Food: Carving out a Place for Food Studies in Language Curricula



Matt Absalom and Lara Anderson

**Abstract** This chapter argues for the place of food studies in tertiary language studies programs. With a myriad of changes to education throughout the twentieth century, language study lost its eminent position as a gateway to higher learning, which means we are required to articulate our relevance to students and university governance. Food and food culture have great appeal amongst students and carving out a place for food studies in our language curricula allows us to generate a new interest amongst a changed student cohort. As well as providing students with an enriching way of learning about other cultures, the non-canonical and universal phenomenon of food or food discourse has the advantage of being immediately accessible to our students who all have their own experiences of food. The study of food also provides us with an opportunity to enhance students' intercultural skills, which have increasing value in the global workplace. Understanding the multiple layers of meaning attached to food and food culture helps students to develop a sensitivity to the importance of the everyday in their interactions with other cultures. We will discuss this synergy between languages and food studies in the context of tertiary language studies in Spanish and Italian, detailing some of the initiatives in this area.

**Keywords** Food studies · Tertiary language studies · Food culture · Food discourse · Intercultural skills · Global workplace · Spanish · Italian

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## 1 Introduction

Everyone has an experience or story to tell about food and culture—consider for a moment your own experiences eating a dish for the first time, sharing a meal with the neighbours who speak different languages from you, ordering a well-known specialty for the first time in the country of its origin. The everyday experience of food means that even the most reticent or reserved of students willingly opens up to share such stories or memories about food. According to Deutsch and Miller in *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, “[f]ood is a tool that is understood, and can be accessed by every student in a classroom” (2012, p. 199).<sup>1</sup> This is emphasized by Lucy Long in relation to her own popular culture courses at Bowling Green State University. Long argues that food provides a solid grounding “from which theories can be critiqued and explored” (2001, p. 236), as well as a means for discussing the significance of the everyday. Food makes for an excellent teaching medium because of how familiar and comprehensible it is “compared to art or music, which require a certain amount of experience and skill” (Long 2001, p. 235). Implicit in Long’s discussion is that studying food somehow levels the playing field; it is a domain of activity that we all participate in regardless of competence, personal history or socio-economic status.

Of significance to tertiary language instruction, these experiences of food are intrinsically tied to culture. In his recent book, *Il riposo della polpetta e altre storie intorno al cibo*, Italian historian Massimo Montanari (2011) writes:

[q]uando parliamo di cibo e cultura, non parliamo di due realtà diverse, separate o magari contrapposte, ma di una realtà unica: il cibo è cultura (p. 4).<sup>2</sup>

In a similar fashion, nineteenth-century Spanish intellectual and writer, Emilia Pardo Bazán (1913), describes the links between food and culture, identifying the culinary as an important ethnographic document: what people eat tells us more about them, she writes, than other “indagaciones de carácter oficialmente científico” (p. 16).<sup>3</sup> If food is culture, then the teaching of it implies the teaching of its cultures.

Culture is arguably one of the most neglected aspects of language instruction, with the integration of language and culture being particularly difficult in the case of beginners and intermediate level subjects. As has been discussed at length elsewhere, a university-level language course cannot be separated from the culture of the target language (see, for instance, Freadman 2012; Hajek et al. 2012; Ros i Solé 2003; Starkey and Osler 2001). Despite this rhetoric, culture remains among the most problematic components of languages teaching (Sercu et al. 2005). As we argue here, food studies has the potential to be a powerful lens through which we

<sup>1</sup>There are multiple interpretations of the language of food, from the purely linguistic, to the idioms that cultures/families/people use to talk about food.

<sup>2</sup>Food and culture are not “two different realities, separate or even opposite, but of a single reality: food is culture” (own translation).

<sup>3</sup>“investigations of an officially scientific nature” (own translation).

can focus students' attention on language and culture. Food, we argue, often provides a more immediate or accessible manner of engaging student interest than other more canonical or highbrow cultural texts.

Our chapter contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the teaching of or with food. According to Deutsch and Miller (2012), "the diverse approaches to teaching food are matched by a wide range of disciplines in which food matters, running from history [...] to performing arts" (p. 274). While these scholars look at the ways in which food can be taught in an array of disciplines, they similarly consider the importance of teaching with the material object of food. Although *The Food Book* (Compton 2010) considers a wide range of pedagogical settings for food, there is no sustained discussion of the language classroom. We are thus pleased to contribute our chapter to this broader discussion. Two scholars who do set out a case for integrating food studies into university languages programs are Anderson and Rose (2016). Their argument is multifaceted and addresses many of the imperatives that languages face in the current university climate. Importantly, food studies has an accessibility and universality to which all students can relate. Building on the conclusions of Anderson and Rose (2016), our chapter focuses on how students can be given the opportunity to develop skills in intercultural competency when they take part in food-related subjects, especially ones that are taught intensively in a foreign location.

Representing a further point of difference with Anderson and Rose (2016) is the way in which we argue for the use of food in tertiary language instruction in terms of the great appeal of food and food culture amongst our students. The ubiquity of food in mainstream popular culture and the rise of "foodie culture" have led to what Desjardins et al. (2015) describe as food studies' current "moment in the limelight" (p. 258). They note, firstly, that interest in food is widespread and that the "presence of food on online social media (OSM) is particularly evocative" (2015, p. 258). Citing such influences as food television, celebrity chefs, food blogs, the "glossy food-porn" (Johnston and Bauman 2010, p. 2, cited in Desjardins et al. 2015), and a generalized obsession with all things culinary, the authors maintain that "[i]t makes sense, then, that food is becoming an academic centre-piece, if only because of its universality" (p. 258). Hamada et al. affirm that food studies is "no longer an emerging field of academic inquiries" and that it has "quickly developed and expanded in the last three decades" (2015, p. 168). Secondly, and crucially for language programs, "it is also food's ostensible versatility as an object of study that makes it an academic darling: to talk about food and to study food is to inevitably *also* talk about history, identity, power relations, art, policy, the environment, and so on" (Desjardins et al. 2015, p. 258).

In the School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne there is a growing number of content electives dedicated to food.<sup>4</sup> In the Spanish and Latin American Studies program, for example, "Cooking up the Nation" explores

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<sup>4</sup>There are no cultural electives dedicated entirely to food in the Asian Institute at the University of Melbourne. However such subjects do exist in North America. One Asian Studies program at the University of Hawai'i offers a subject entitled "Food, Politics and Culture in Asia".

key moments in the formation of modern Spain through gastronomic texts, cookery books, film and food/travel television series, as well as offering a number of points of comparison from Peru. French Studies at the University of Melbourne also offers a food-focused option entitled “Matters of Taste: French Eating Cultures”. Another University-wide offering within the School of Languages and Linguistics, “Taste of Europe”, a summer intensive subject taught on campus, has doubled its enrolments in the space of four years. As co-coordinators of the recently inaugurated overseas intensive subject, “Experiencing Foodscapes: Italy and Spain”, we were thrilled to see so many students from outside the Faculty of Arts study with us, some of whom had never travelled overseas or studied additional languages. This final example demonstrates the power of food to attract students to subjects. In arguing for the place of food studies in language instruction, we reflect on some of these subjects, articulating not just how they increase student motivation but also provide students with opportunities to develop intercultural competency.

It is important, however, to highlight risks associated with teaching through the lens of food. Food, if not theorized properly, can easily be reduced to clichés, stereotypes and/or anecdotes. It is important therefore to theorize food rigorously from the outset so that students engage in, for instance, a discussion about the discursive codification of national cuisines rather than in simplistic commentary about which foods are eaten in a particular country. Food studies has the potential to cover a breadth of facets of language learning from the linguistic (e.g., our linguistic landscaping project) to the cultural, to the literary (across genres), to the textual (film, art works, etc.). Any attempt to integrate the “language of food” into tertiary language instruction would be feasible, in our view, as it relates to, and is represented in, this broad gamut of cultural texts and literary genres. Most language programs around Australia, including those which do not have a curriculum model like the University of Melbourne’s that includes breadth subjects, do offer a mix of subjects which have a stronger language focus and those which are content options. This would allow food studies units to be integrated into the language subjects or whole subjects to be developed as options.

## **2 What Are the Ingredients of Language Learning in the Twenty-First Century?**

In the early twenty-first century, we can identify a series of ongoing factors which have strongly impacted on the viability and uptake of languages in universities. Firstly, the continuing decline of students reaching the end of secondary school with an additional language as part of their studies affects the number of non-ab initio language students that populate our language programs. In a recent paper, Wilks-Smith et al. (2018) detail the by now well-known dismantlement of languages as a university prerequisite in the Australia of the 1970s, which led to a steady decline in

enrolments and today's low participation rates at senior secondary level, regularly cited as a major crisis (Group of Eight 2007). In their own words:

Current student enrolment figures in languages subjects in senior secondary years are in stark contrast with the 1950s, when the study of an additional language was a pre-requisite for university study in Australia, and acted as a major incentive for students in secondary schools to study languages. At that time approximately 40% of Australian students in the senior secondary years studied a language [...]. In the 1970s and 1980s, the removal of the university requirement to have studied a language in the final years of schooling resulted in a substantial reduction in the proportion of secondary school students studying languages, falling to 16% by the 1980s [...]. Another possible influence on this decrease was the publication of the Wyndham Report (1957), which deemed language study to be elitist, and argued for removing the mandatory study of languages as a prerequisite [sic] to university studies. [...] [T]he latest national data available (2016) shows that enrolments have further declined with just over one in ten students completing their secondary schooling with a language subject (Wilks-Smith et al. 2018, p. 30).

In practical terms, what this means for university language programs is that a high proportion of students will necessarily come to languages study as beginners. While it is very difficult to assemble an adequate picture of the current state of enrolments in languages at any level of schooling in Australia, we do have some informed glimpses of the situation. In *Beginners' LOTE (Languages Other than English) in Australian Universities: An Audit Survey and Analysis* (2007), the authors paint a clear picture of the importance of beginners students for university language programs.

There is considerable variation, from institution to institution, among commencing students, in the proportion of beginners' enrolments to enrolments in other entry-point streams. In a number of institutions, beginners' courses constitute almost the entire language offering, while in a minority of cases they account for less than 50% of commencing enrolments. It is reasonable to assume that part of the explanation for this variation lies in factors that are independent of the programs themselves. Thus, for instance, the large size of beginners' Spanish courses probably reflects the relative lack of availability of Spanish in secondary schools. From another angle, the high proportion of post-beginners and advanced enrolments in languages at the University of Melbourne can be partially explained by a combination of the demographic of the institution's feeder schools (a strong majority of private institutions where languages are strongly promoted) and the university-entry bonus given in Victoria for students successfully completing a VCE LOTE. In every case, however, it is clear that beginners' programs are a crucial part of the overall economy of university-level languages offerings (Nettelbeck et al. 2007, p. 11).

A clear imperative, then, is to attract students to beginners language programs.

Second, and in hand with the declining study of additional languages, we can point to the rise of English as a global language. Since Michael Clyne's prescient observation of Australia's "persistent monolingual mindset" (2005), the juggernaut of global English and "Anglocentric monolingualism" (Nettelbeck et al. 2012) has continued to grow and, with it, the view that learning additional languages is no longer an imperative.

Third, the issue of challenge or difficulty in languages seems to, more than in other areas of learning, create ongoing problems for engagement with language

studies. Indeed, the notion of language anxiety has been coined to cover this phenomenon. Martín et al. (2016) note:

Second language anxiety—defined as the feeling of tension and the apprehension associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening and learning [...] and closely linked to performance in oral examinations or other forms of language production in the classroom—is considered one of the major factors in foreign language attrition (p. 24).

Boudreau et al. (2018) remind us that the “role of emotions in language learning has been severely underestimated” and that “the most commonly studied emotion in second language learning is anxiety” (p. 150). An important consideration for language programs is that “anxiety has been described as the strongest predictor of success or failure for second language students” (Boudreau et al. 2018, p. 151). The negative effects of language anxiety produce a similar outcome to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis—one of the five hypotheses of Krashen’s original language acquisition theory. According to Krashen (2013):

If the acquirer is anxious, has low self-esteem, does not consider himself or herself to be a potential member of the group that speaks the language, he or she may understand the input, but it will not reach the language acquisition device. A block—the affective filter—will keep it out (p. 4).

A fourth concomitant aspect to consider is the changed demographic of today’s language students and its effect on student expectations. There are a number of major currents to take into account here. First, Australian secondary education offers students a wide selection of study possibilities with little compulsion in terms of content studied. This means that the student body is extremely heterogenous regarding the types of knowledges and understandings they bring into the languages classroom. As Kelly et al. (2017) recently noted in a piece in *Times Higher Education* entitled “Do we need modern languages graduates in a globalised world?”: “The price for academics will be to find ways of inspiring students who are more familiar with the Baudelaire family of children’s author Lemony Snicket than with the author of *Les Fleurs du mal*.” (para. 10) Second, today’s students engage with knowledge in a more complex and nuanced way than was possible in the twentieth century. Not only do we have the disruptions caused by technology, with students being bombarded contemporaneously by information from different electronic sources, but, arguably, a student’s approach to accessing academic knowledge is much more rarefied and idiosyncratic than we might imagine—it is not simply the case that they go to the library and borrow a book as once may have been the norm. Third, due to changes in university curriculum offerings, languages students may now come from anywhere in the university—for an account of a recent change at the University of Western Australia, see Brown and Caruso (2016). In today’s languages classroom it is very possible to find more students whose major degree is not Arts, which also impacts on the way these students view languages. Finally, with the shift towards communicative approaches to languages education since the latter half of the last century, as well as a general move away from the study of the literary canon and the



embracing of a wider, intercultural view of languages, students' expectations of language programs often involve more practical and less content-oriented objectives.

When viewed together, these four factors exemplify the challenging environment for language studies in the contemporary university. Perhaps the most compelling problem is how to bring such a diverse body of students with very different educational backgrounds, as well as contrasting educational needs and aspirations, to an appreciation of the intricacies and delicacies of the languages and cultures that we as scholars are passionate about. We would propose that food studies provides a perfect entrée into this world. Due to its seeming familiarity, food provides an ideal vehicle precisely because it will not necessarily provoke anxiety in the way other more traditional aspects of language-culture study may. Leonini (2014) reminds us that:

Much of the importance and valuation of food is cognitive: it has a symbolic function that extends beyond even the most sophisticated savoring. Beyond any personal preferences and class distinctions, taste is culturally specific (p. 778).

### 3 Creating an Appetite for Languages

In relation to the teaching and learning of languages, the familiarity of food can be leveraged both to provide positive learning experiences and to enhance student motivation. In terms of student engagement and motivation, scholars point to the importance of students being actively involved in the process of learning. Chatterjee et al., for instance, write that “in order to gain real knowledge, the learner must go through a cycle of learning by being actively involved in the experience. Next the learner must reflect on the experience” (2015, p. 2). Food is something that students get to be part of—either experiencing food as a material object or reflecting on it as a cultural text or as discourse. Innovative assessment that draws on the popular appeal of food and its ubiquity in the media has proved motivating for students. We give examples here from two current subjects.

“Cooking up the Nation” is a later year cultural elective in the Spanish and Latin American Studies program in the School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne. This subject focuses on the interaction between cuisine and nationalist discourses in Spain and Peru, exploring how food can function as a site of control and/or a vehicle for the construction of nationhood. Food is engaging as a topic of enquiry, particularly so following the decision that 50% of the assessment for this subject would consist of the production of a podcast. Topics were presented to class at the start of semester, such as food talk, food history and food and government. In pairs, students selected a topic to research for the first half of the semester. Pairs split their research findings and presented to class mid-semester. The class voted for the best six topics to go into “podcast production”. Students whose projects missed out joined the six selected projects, making six groups of four. The 10-min podcast was aired in class in week 12, followed by a question and answer session (Q&A).

This was a positive experience for students who were encouraged to be creative and find innovative ways to produce a podcast that was informative and compelling. The idea proved popular with students, many of whom were avid podcast listeners. There was a high level of engagement. The podcasts brought together ethnographic elements (in the form of semi-structured interviews) and theoretical approaches, resulting in a deep learning experience. The potential for this activity to extend beyond the classroom through collaboration with relevant online platforms and media broadcasters like the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) is a novel consideration that is occurring with similar podcast projects in the Italian Studies program in the School of Languages and Linguistics.

In our recent in-country intensive subject, “Experiencing Foodscapes: Italy and Spain”, an ethnographic approach was again incorporated into the assessment scheme for the program. It yielded two different types of tasks which asked students to engage with food in the public space. The first task took the traditional oral presentation and gave it a twenty-first century refresh. Each student chose a food-related site in either Spain or Italy—this could be a restaurant, delicatessen, market, wine bar, street stall, supermarket, etc.—and was required to research their chosen locale in terms of the following:

- the name and location (including some information on the area in which the site was found);
- a brief history of the site including any significant details;
- why they chose this site in relation to the themes discussed in “Experiencing Foodscapes”;
- how the site represented key aspects of the foodscape of the country in which it is located and what these key aspects are (e.g., regionalism, identity);
- how the site challenged representations of the food nation (e.g., for a restaurant, the menu showed international influences; for a market, there is an Asian food section).

Students were supported with a range of scholarly readings on a breadth of topics relating to culinary tourism, food adventurism, identity, food nation, the notion of national cuisines, regionalism, etc. The oral presentations were filmed and needed to include some footage on location. The final aspect of this task was to upload the presentations to a dedicated map using Google MyMaps to form a sort of digest of our in-country experiences. The range of the oral presentations was astonishing, with some very illuminating analyses of food trends in the two countries: for instance, one student reviewed “Cereal Hunters” in Barcelona, which is a whole restaurant dedicated to breakfast cereal. The student noted how the largely local clientele subverted the intended paradigm by eating cereal in ways and at times that were completely at odds with the typical foreign norms of cereal-eating, e.g., eating it as dessert at night. She also reflected on the playful interplay between Spanish, English and Catalan on the menu. Three of the students enrolled in this subject chose to complete their oral presentation in Italian, with one student particularly able to capitalize on her linguistic abilities by engaging meaningfully with a local restaurateur.



Photograph by Matt Absalom

**Fig. 1** Example of linguistic landscape

The second ethnographic task was a linguistic landscaping group project. In groups of four, students had to compare two similar food-related linguistic landscapes, one from each country. Students had a series of readings on linguistic landscaping to support this task and, although the majority of students were not language students, this task offered a chance to engage with issues around languages, globalization and food tourism. Students were asked to compare and contrast the entire shop front of the types of food establishments they chose to explore (these could be any food-related entities: restaurants, fruit shops, supermarkets, wine bars, street food stalls, etc.). For example, in Fig. 1, they would consider all of the text from the sign (“Over 200 dishes for you to choose”), to the writing on the windows, to the menu placed out the front, etc.

Students were able to explore the way languages relate to one another in the public foodscape, highlighting issues such as the dominance of English, particularly in urban contexts, and the relationship between Spanish and Catalan in Catalonia. This task, then, opened up questions of identity as well as contemporary history. One group analysed Chinese restaurants in Madrid and Rome and came up with subtle differences in the positioning of migrant communities in the two capital cities. While this subject was not an explicitly language-oriented subject, it was clear that food studies offers a powerful frame in which to bring students close to issues of language and culture in a rigorous intellectual fashion. By contrast, in a languages-oriented subject, both of these tasks provide a range of possibilities for real-world language learning and use.

## 4 You Are What You Eat

We have been describing the way a focus on food can give us the means by which we can meaningfully explore culture, as if this latter notion were somehow uncomplicated. In her exceedingly valuable handbook on intercultural communication, Pillar (2017) explores the idea of culture in a sensitive and insightful manner—the dichotomous nature of its representation in the academy is summarized in the following quotation:

If we treat culture as something people do, then its status changes from an entity to a process. The entity understanding of culture is essentialist: it treats culture as something people have or to which they belong. The process view of culture is constructionist: it treats culture as something people do, which they perform, and, crucially, compete over (p. 9).

The idea of culture as something which people play with and instantiate through action is perhaps most compatible with food studies. Leonini (2014) tells us that:

Food culture constantly changes, and it is obviously involved in globalization, which causes a rapid and large movement of people with their food habits, and of goods which spread far beyond the countries of their original production and use (p. 778).

Food is therefore not simply an artefact, frozen in time, but is something which evolves its discursive dialogue with players in different spaces and times. This parallels the notion of intercultural competence—here understood as an attuned sensitivity to other cultures and the capacity to understand and navigate cultural differences. Increasingly in tertiary language instruction, and indeed more widely, we articulate our learning outcomes in terms of intercultural competency and we ask our students to reflect on how people might understand each other when they do not share a common cultural experience. We also ask students to be mindful about not making broad-brush statements about different cultures or capitulating to stereotypes. According to Elspeth Broady (2004), one of the main problems of teaching cultural knowledge is that it is often static, stereotypical and reduced—culture as entity. By way of contrast, cultural awareness “is an approach to culture which emphasizes not information about a culture but skills in exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness” (Broady 2004, p. 69)—culture as process.

Experiences of food, as we argue, provide students with a unique opportunity to develop intercultural competency. Desjardins et al. (2015) highlight an interesting conundrum: while there are clear transnational flows in relation to food trends, there has been only a very slight intersection between food studies and translation. They describe this situation as follows:

Translation in food contexts is chiefly about accessing knowledge, but it is also about sharing and disseminating this knowledge, and, by extension, contributing to a larger discourse that shapes identities. Therefore, translation is an essential component in all areas of FS: it is integral to the production, transformation, distribution, labelling and marketing of food, to name only these examples. How else would culinary, agricultural, and nutritional discourses be disseminated on a world-scale? How else would this knowledge circulate between culinary cultures that would have otherwise never been in contact? (Desjardins et al. 2015, p. 259)

This is an eloquent example which highlights the very real connection between food studies and languages teaching and learning.

In their article on an academic in-country course on food culture in Spain, Stowe and Johnston (2012) address the role of food in intercultural pedagogies. In particular, this article is concerned with the processes of othering that are often enmeshed in encounters with other cultures. A hallmark feature of othering is to make broad-brush statements about other cultures with little sensitivity to, or awareness of, the profound differences that can exist amongst different groups of people within, for instance, the same national borders. Attuned to this problematic, Stowe and Johnston are clear that one of their aims is to discourage students from “painting the Other with broad strokes” during their time in Spain (2012, p. 466). As well as offering an insight into the target culture, food studies—especially when part of a language major—develops students’ ability to avoid the risks that can arise in any instance of culinary tourism. For Stowe and Johnston, enhancing their students’ intercultural skills in the context of a foreign food tour involved making them aware of the danger of “slipping into patterns of colonialism and cultural appropriation that can often accompany a desire to [...] eat the other” (2012, p. 464).

Our direct experience with students of our recent in-country subject highlighted an aspect of intercultural interaction which was unexpected: the handful of students on the course who were also languages students, as well as the multilingual students, had naturally developed intercultural competencies which went beyond the simple capacity to show interest in other languages. Essentially, the monolingual English-speaking students in the group exhibited behaviours which lacked the intercultural sensibilities that the other multilingual students demonstrated. Our informal assessment of this difference would come down to the fact, reported time and time again in both academic and popular channels, that those who had experienced language learning were better intercultural communicators.

## 5 Conclusion

We have argued here for the place of food studies in tertiary language programs. Food, as material object, embodied experience, and discourse, is something that all students are familiar with and even the most taciturn of students will share stories or opinions about food. Because food, as we have argued here, is culture, then teaching through food allows for a greater integration of culture and language in the university language classroom, something which proves to be especially challenging for lower levels of language instruction or for languages like Spanish, with few post-VCE (or year 12) students. Another advantage of teaching through food is its immense popularity with students, as we have outlined here in relation to subjects like “A Taste of Europe” and “Experiencing Foodscapes”. Given the precarious situation of some tertiary language programs, it is our contention that language programs across the country could benefit from greater recourse to the “language of food”. Indeed, it is not just to our language students that we should direct such

instruction; students from across the university could be offered, also, the opportunity to develop necessary skills with us in intercultural competence, either through the direct experience of culinary tourism in a far-away land or through learning about other food cultures in on-campus subjects. If languages programs often find themselves needing to articulate their academic relevance to the academy, beyond language instruction, then let us also point to areas, such as culinary tourism, intercultural competence, food cultures and food histories, as intrinsic aspects of our teaching and research.

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# Language Learning with Performance Techniques and Flow



Alexandra Ludewig, Patricia Benstein, and Iris Ludewig-Rohwer

**Abstract** Theatre productions form an integral part of the German Studies curriculum at the University of Western Australia. Every semester, advanced learners are required to research, write and perform an original play, immersing them in the material and linguistic world of the target language. By providing intrinsic motivation best described by the theory of “flow”, this method of study encourages authentic learning experiences or “real world learning” (Csíkszentmihályi 2014). In Semester 2 2016, students wrote a play about German settlers in Western Australia. In Semester 1 2017, a different cohort examined Clara Schumann’s life and love in words and music. Data collected over the course of these two theatre projects was analysed and triangulated to ascertain if and how the pedagogy of “flow” could enhance students’ learning experiences during the creative process of writing and performing a play. This chapter argues that the pedagogy of flow is an effective approach to teaching drama in the second language classroom.

**Keywords** Theatre production · German studies · Theory of flow · Real world learning · German settlers · Western Australia · Clara Schumann · Pedagogy of flow · Second-language classroom

## 1 Introduction

At the University of Western Australia (UWA) students at an intermediate or advanced level are required to participate in a German language theatre unit as part of a major in German Studies. Most of these students are concurrently enrolled in

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another major, typically in the sciences and, for many of them, theatre is not a natural interest or inclination. Because the theatre unit must be passed, students are often only extrinsically motivated to learn the necessary material. This can lead to negative emotions and perceptions about the value of the unit and more broadly about the learning experience, and can further result in disengagement or problematic group work behaviour (Dörnyei and Schmidt 2001, p. 363).

The German Studies theatre unit focuses on a different topic and era every semester, eliciting a variety of approaches to the task of staging a play in the target language. For instance, in 2016, the students examined the lives of German settlers in Western Australia and produced individual performances that involved audience interaction and improvisation. The 2016 unit inspired the research questions around the application of the theory of flow that we sought to answer in the next iteration in 2017. In 2017, the students explored and dramatized the struggles and triumphs of the German musicians Robert and Clara Schumann. The final theatrical performance fused vignettes from the couple's life with complementary musical interludes: 16 musicians from UWA's School of Music were brought in to perform Robert Schumann's famous cycle of songs, *Frauenliebe und -leben*. The production was well-attended and appealed to those interested in music as well as the German language play.

In both semesters the students faced significant challenges. These included not only the logistical issues of producing a play, but also the depiction of characters from different social and historical contexts, the apprehension that many students felt towards public performance and therefore towards the unit itself. This latter factor was especially an issue for naturally shy students and those lacking confidence when communicating in German, particularly in public. Due to these challenges, the teaching staff were faced with helping students to transition from uneasiness to commitment and from an extrinsic to an intrinsic motivation for participation and learning.

In the 2017 case study, there were ten German Studies students and two members of the teaching staff, who were also embedded in the project as researchers. Only 10 weeks were set aside for the unit. Contact hours increased from two hours per week at the beginning of the semester to eight hours per week when extra rehearsals were scheduled in the lead up to the performance. This workload exceeded the hours officially allocated to the unit in the timetable and required heightened levels of engagement and flexibility from both teaching staff and students.

## 2 Theory

In order to engender motivation within this second-language drama unit, our teaching approach incorporated the "flow" pedagogy popularized by Csíkszentmihályi (2000, 2014). Csíkszentmihályi developed his theory of flow during four decades of research in psychology and the human sciences. He defined flow as a state of intense concentration or complete absorption in a situation. It is a state in which people are so involved in an activity that everything else fades into the background. During analysis of the theatre project, we investigated the suitability of Csíkszentmihályi's

pedagogic model for the foreign language classroom. Although it is derived from different disciplinary contexts, the model explained the dynamics at play in our project. Csíkszentmihályi's main research question was: why was it possible for people to feel most alive when they were doing things that were not important in "real" life—such as singing, playing chess, hiking in the mountains—while they often felt bored or restless at home, at work, in other words, during most of their lives? (2014, p. xix).

Csíkszentmihályi researched "autotelic" activities (1997, p. 117), or activities that people engage in solely for the pleasure they experience during participation, such as sports or artistic and/or creative pursuits. He remembered "many years spent in terror and in boredom sitting on the coldly abstract benches of so many classrooms", and questioned whether the education he had received during those years was worth the consequential "suspended animation" (1997, p. 117). He was motivated to seek a deeper understanding of the causes of what he called "flow", with the aim of helping to design teaching environments that could "inspire children to learn because they have learned to enjoy learning" (1997, p. 117).

His research also examined optimal experiences reported by people involved in non-verbal and at times solitary pursuits, such as sports or artistic endeavours like music and dancing. His understanding of self-psychology, as well as an interest in human potential and intrinsic motivation, culminated in the flow model, which delineates the characteristics of these enjoyable experiences, namely, a relationship between the level of skill and the level of personal challenge. In order to create or experience a feeling of flow, the level of skill needs to match the level of the challenge. If the skill level is perceived as low and the challenge level perceived as high, the learning experience is more likely to induce anxiety. This can hinder learners at higher levels from reaching their full potential.

Ideally, flow learning experiences move from a motivation to meet new challenges, to the satisfaction of mastering them and increasing skills, to a renewed motivation to meet further challenges. In this way, flow experiences lead learners along an upward spiral that is characterized by a feeling of wellbeing. Flow learning therefore ties in with a large body of work on intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985; Amabile 1985; Gottfried 1985). The conditions for flow to occur are that:

- (1) people are moved by curiosity and novelty;
- (2) people need to feel in charge of their own actions; and
- (3) autonomy and self-determination will lead people to act in ways that often override the instructions built into their nervous systems by genes and by learning (Csíkszentmihályi and Nakamura 1989, p. 48).

### **3 Applying Flow to Teaching and Learning in the Foreign Language Classroom**

An effective flow classroom incorporates the practices involved in mastering any new skill, such as learning to dance. Although the initial steps might feel awkward and clumsy, once they have been practised and the level of skill rises to be more in

line with the perceived difficulty of the challenge, an enjoyable flow experience results, encouraging students to seek out new challenges to continue the enjoyment. Teachers must be aware of the appropriate times to intervene without disrupting the dance, and may thus be considered “flow teachers”.

Flow teachers do all they can to centre students’ attention on the challenges and inherent satisfactions of learning something new. Flow teachers often have high expectations of their students, but they translate these expectations into modes of practice that model critical reflection and account for personal accomplishment (Benstein 2017, p. 291).

## 4 Methodology

At UWA there is a focus not only on research-led teaching but also on encouraging students to be research participants. We used participant observation, interviews and surveys to collect our data during and after these units. Our initial research question about how to encourage students to transition from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation was generated from observations based on the 2016 production.

Any second-language theatre unit requires a heightened engagement and flexibility from the teaching staff as well as from the students, especially when the production exceeds the official hours allocated, as was the case in our study in 2016 and 2017. In 2016 we perceived that teaching needed to focus on engendering motivation. To realize this aim, in 2017 we generated a second question considering whether the flow pedagogy popularized by Csíkszentmihályi (2000, 2014) would assist in the interpretation of data suggesting when it was opportune for teachers to intervene in order to create an experience of flow. The case study thus focuses on the findings from data collected and analysed in 2017.

The theatre productions and the data collection processes coincided at all times. While the students collaborated during the research and writing of their scripts, we simultaneously collected data and generated relevant questions.

## 5 Research Questions

In line with this, our research questioned:

1. whether the pedagogy of flow could be applied to theatre productions in second-language contexts;
2. what interventions by a teacher would be conducive to extending the period of flow from a passing phase to a prolonged learning experience.

In order to answer these questions, we used an applied drama set-up (Nicholson 2005), as well as a Grounded Theory Approach and formulated a theory “grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed” (Corbin and Strauss 1990; Strauss and Corbin 1994; Grbich 2012). We systematically evaluated the correlation

between our data and the eight conditions that Csíkszentmihályi considers necessary for flow to occur during rewarding learning experiences (2014, pp. 182–184):

1. Clear goals;
2. Immediate feedback;
3. Challenges and skills must be balanced;
4. Concentration is essential;
5. Distractions must be avoided;
6. Control by the students must be made possible;
7. Growth and self-transcendence must be enhanced;
8. The autotelic nature of true learning must be highlighted.

## 6 Participants and Data Sets

There were ten students (eight females and two males) enrolled in this unit in Semester 1 2017, with different linguistic skill levels: three were native or near-native speakers and the others were ex-beginner students who had studied German at university for five to seven semesters.

All students completed a written questionnaire at the conclusion of the unit that reflected on their personal learning experience and critically reviewed their interactions with other individuals and the group as a whole. The self- and peer-evaluations by the students formed a part of their assessment which was marked. Students identified what they learned and provided valuable feedback for pedagogical improvements. They were unaware of the aim to create flow learning, as we decided there would be no benefit in making this intention explicit. However, their evaluations helped ascertain whether these aims were achieved and, if they were not, what could be improved in the next iteration of the theatre unit for the benefit of future students.

This corpus, together with the field notes from class observations and rehearsals, the performance notes compiled by the two lecturers acting as embedded researchers, and the students' posts as members of the German Studies theatre Facebook group, formed the basis of the data set under scrutiny and was analysed qualitatively against the eight criteria listed.

## 7 Background of the Play

During the 2017 theatre unit the students were tasked with creating a play about the life of Clara Schumann (1819–1896), a famous composer and pianist who was married to a fellow composer and pianist, Robert Schumann (1810–1856). They were a congenial couple as both dedicated their lives to music; however, of the pair, Robert is the more famous. Despite his early death and debilitating mental health issues, Robert's *œuvre* tends to outshine Clara's in popular reception.

Robert's *Frauenliebe und -leben* provides musical accompaniment to a cycle of lyrical poems written by Chamisso (1781–1838), and is dedicated to Clara. The song cycle expresses a form of marriage and romantic love that Robert idealized. He met Clara when he was taking piano lessons from her father and was clearly impressed by Clara's musical gifts. Initially he had no intention of hindering her budding and increasingly lucrative musical career, which was carefully planned and supervised by her father. However, when they eventually got married after a long legal battle with Clara's father, Robert's idealized vision of Clara's role as a wife and mother clashed with her desire to become a world-class pianist in Europe. They had eight children, which often kept Clara from practising her music. Robert died at the age of 46 after a difficult last few years in the marriage, which suggests that the song cycle composed for and dedicated to his wife expressed a dreamy version of married life that hardly resembled the reality of their relationship.

## 8 Different Stages of Drama Production and Applied Interventions

In the first class of the unit, the students were introduced to the Schumanns and to Chamisso's poems, and were given Nancy Reich's English language biography of Clara. They were tasked with thinking about ways to bring her struggles to life. The introduction to a completely new topic and the realization that 10 weeks later they would have to perform their script in front of a critical audience in a foreign language had the potential to provoke a high level of anxiety and paralyzing worry for the students. At this initial stage the linguistic and thespian challenges were perceived to be high, while the skills in those areas were perceived to be low, which hindered the experience of flow. The teachers needed to be particularly aware of fluctuating emotions and show empathy in these moments. This enabled the teachers to pacify some of the naturally arising tensions and convey trust and confidence in the students' capabilities, while also encouraging and keeping a close eye on anyone who might have felt too overwhelmed to stay engaged.

Caleb Gattegno, best known for his innovative teaching methods both in mathematics and the foreign language classroom, has shown that the first stage of learning is always the hardest because it requires the highest investment of energy. He states:

The first stage involves the initial awareness that there is an unknown that needs to be explored. This encounter may make one hesitant, timid, cautious, clumsy, patient, indifferent to opinion, self-righteous, unimaginative, and determined (Gattegno 1987, p. 144).

In our particular case study the potential for initial panic was heightened because the students had to perform outside of a safe classroom setting in front of a large public audience. According to the reflective reports by the students, the majority initially perceived their skill levels as foreign language actors to be inferior and felt that the theatre project demanded more from them than they would be capable of providing. Doubts regarding their linguistic aptitudes as well as their creativity, acting skills and general ability came to the fore.

When students are facing moments of mental paralysis, it is particularly important for teachers to express confidence in their abilities and reassure them that they can master the challenge. This is not to downplay the natural apprehension that may be experienced by students regarding public performance or the terror of performing with a script that had not yet been written. Once students have accepted the challenge and feel motivated to engage with the task, teachers can focus on increasing their skills and thereby decrease the gap between the perceived magnitude of the challenge and supposed lack of skill.

### ***8.1 Intervention 1: Foregrounding Relevance***

In the 2017 theatre unit, initial anxiety was quickly reduced once students began to draw parallels between Clara's life and their own. Without prompting, students found ways to relate their own circumstances to Clara's dilemma over her work-life balance two centuries earlier. By building a bridge between then and now, they found that the topic immediately became more accessible, and anxiety about the enormity of the task was replaced by empathetic curiosity. The students were motivated to find out how Clara managed to reconcile her passion for music with the expectations placed on her by her husband and society at large in regard to her role as a mother and a dutiful wife.

### ***8.2 Intervention 2: Collective Brainstorming and Sharing of Ideas***

Several other steps were implemented to facilitate experiences of flow and to reduce negative emotions of boredom and debilitating anxiety. For instance, in Week 2, after students had a chance to read Nancy Reich's biography, to conduct some of their own research and to think about the task, a collective brainstorming took place, which resulted in a rough outline of the script for the play. Continued communal brainstorming was part of a creative process that encouraged everyone to articulate their ideas and share their impressions, regardless of how well they were developed.

### ***8.3 Intervention 3: Optional Pairings, Acknowledging Different Learning Preferences***

We encouraged writing the script as a series of vignettes that focused on key events in Clara's life. This was done in pairs to reduce feelings of isolation and combat potential anxiety. We also gave the more introverted or the more independently ambitious and confident students the option to write a part by themselves. The

freedom the students had to choose their preferred learning style while cooperating with the others was an important factor in turning them into flow learners.

#### ***8.4 Intervention 4: Online Discussion Group to Extend Flow Outside the Classroom***

In order to incorporate social media we created a private Facebook group in which students could express concern and excitement outside of the classroom. The contributions were voluntary, not marked, and only monitored by one of the two teachers. Many of the students noted that this created a safe space. In this space, they discussed content-related and organizational topics, including the locations of second-hand shops for finding costumes and the hairstyles that were in fashion 200 years ago. They also posted excerpts of the marriage diary that Clara and Robert kept together and commented on their reactions to the entries.

#### ***8.5 Intervention 5: Encourage Collaboration/Buddy System***

Wherever possible, we tried to nurture collaboration so that students did not feel isolated. One means for this was to establish a “buddy system”. For example, to prevent anxiety over forgetting a line or particular body language, we encouraged students to have a “buddy” offstage who could act as a prompter.

#### ***8.6 Intervention 6: Allowing Tensions***

The tasks were broken down into micro-segments and constructive feedback was given at several junctures in the unit so students always knew where to focus their attention. As a result, tensions in the room were mostly productive and everyone was encouraged to challenge themselves, becoming more confident in taking risks and being willing to think outside the box. Less helpful tensions arose when students were upset with each other for forgetting a line or not remembering to bring a prop. Tension between curiosity and frustration, and excitement and anxiety ebbed and flowed as students experimented with the conceptual staging of characters. When students were in creative states, the teachers could step back and allow the dynamism and open-endedness of the task to carry over into the writing and planning processes. At other times, self-doubt and frustration were more prevalent, requiring active intervention from the teaching staff, who, as teaching staff-cum-embedded researchers, were also intermittently torn between frustration and enthusiasm.

### ***8.7 Intervention 7: Continuously Setting New Challenges and Acknowledging Achievements***

Our main aim was to create positive learning experiences in order to motivate students to take on increasingly demanding challenges. This happens when learning “produces an experience of growth and of mastery, a feeling that the person has succeeded in expanding his or her skills” (Csíkszentmihályi 2014, p. 142).

To facilitate the experience of flow over extended periods, teaching staff need to keep adjusting the challenge to skill ratio. We attempted to keep this upward spiral going from one week to the next by giving students feedback on their achievements and holding back tensions in difficult moments while interfering as little as possible in their creative process.

The various scenes conceptualized and scripted by the students depicted Clara’s life as a pianist, composer, wife and mother. Despite the period costumes she wore, she was presented as timeless. A connection between the historical Clara and the contemporary woman was made explicit in the final scene when Clara hands a modern woman her piano notes and the modern woman closes the book she is holding, revealing it to be Clara’s biography. This arch between historical and contemporary was created by the students, who initially worked exclusively with one partner, but later negotiated the writing and performance project with the whole group.

### ***8.8 Intervention 8: Peer Feedback***

The group workshopped every idea and created the first draft of the dialogue together. Teaching staff offered constructive comments but emphasis was placed on feedback between the students themselves, who expressed feelings of solidarity and offers of assistance. A very communal and collegial atmosphere developed, which was only marred by the fact that students needed to be given individual marks as stipulated by the university framework.

Criticism veiled as suggestions was often readily accepted by the students when it came from their peers, as it was perceived to be genuine, well meant and non-judgmental. Feedback from teaching staff was instead seen in the context of “marking” and a judgment of the final assessment. The good will amongst the students developed easily because they perceived themselves to be part of one large project and one creative process as a whole.

### ***8.9 Intervention 9: Create a Shared Goal***

Varying linguistic levels led to perceived imbalances and insecurities amongst the students whose language level was obviously lower. With lower-level skills, the potential for anxiety in view of a challenge is higher. In these situations, we felt it was only possible to reduce the tension and address the imbalance in linguistic



capabilities by focusing on the greater goal and fostering a creative atmosphere of solidarity and cooperation. Directing the focus towards generating a successful group performance meant that rather than emphasizing any discrepancy between language skills, the students concentrated on the challenge of finding creative solutions to perceived problems. As a consequence, the linguistically weaker students were assisted by the stronger ones who were happy to correct pronunciation and grammatical errors so that the performance would be successful for all of the students.

Flow processes permeated the entire project, transcending boundaries and university structures, competition and grades. This aligns with Csikszentmihályi's theory:

The experience of enjoyment, or flow, as we came to call it, is characterised above all by a deep, spontaneous involvement with the task at hand. In flow, one is so carried away by what one is doing and feels so immersed in the activity that the distinction between "I" and "it" becomes irrelevant. Attention is focused on whatever needs to be done, and there is not enough left to worry or to get bored and distracted. [...] In flow, a person usually does not worry about the consequences of his or her performance. [...] The ego that surveys and evaluates our actions disappears in the flow of experience. One is freed of the confines of the social self and may feel an exhilarating sense of transcendence, of belonging to a larger whole (Csikszentmihályi 2014, pp. 181–182).

The theatre project emphasized that when the time is right, teachers should retreat, trusting the students and their abilities, collegiality and creativity. A deliberately hands-off approach allowed the students more autonomy and letting the project develop according to their own creative ideas expressed our trust in their ability to partially self-direct their learning. This attitude should not be confused with a *laissez-faire* approach to teaching. The teacher needs to be mentally and emotionally present and available at all times. When the tension between challenges and perceived or real skills becomes too pronounced, it is the teacher's task to either reduce the challenge or to support students' improvement of their skill set. The art of teaching lies in knowing when to guide the learning process and when to step back and allow the group to determine the pace of learning.

## 9 Student Evaluations

Did the application of the pedagogy of flow encourage or trigger intrinsic motivation and deepen the learning experiences of the students? In the following section, Csikszentmihályi's eight conditions for generating flow will be correlated with the comments made in the Facebook group and in the self- and peer-evaluation questionnaires. We have chosen individual comments that are representative of the majority of the course participants. All comments were translated from German into English and anonymized.

Because students were asked to reflect in general about their learning experience and not prompted to respond to the eight conditions regarded as ideal for an experience of flow, there is some overlap between student comments and possible

categorizations. To allow for these blurred lines and to showcase how many of these conditions interact with others, student comments are categorized under the condition we felt most applicable. However, the distinctions are artificial and bleed into one another.

### ***9.1 Clear Goals Set by Teachers and Students***

Although students were not initially certain about what to expect, all students set themselves goals, such as to “improve [my] German language skills” and “become more self-confident in speaking before other people” (Student A).

During the course of the unit some students started to set themselves more specific goals, as expressed by Student F:

At the beginning I didn't really know what to expect so I set no immediate targets. But during the 10 weeks I set small goals for myself to steadily improve my skills. My first goal was to write the script. It took about 2 weeks to write the script and finish it. We were unsure how it would connect with the other scenes, but all scenes came together perfectly. [...] Another goal, which I later set for myself, was to learn my lines perfectly, so that I could focus on expression and clarity. I achieved this goal because I used every free minute to practise my lines.

### ***9.2 Immediate Feedback***

The students confirmed that they appreciated the immediacy of the feedback they received and the manner in which it was provided.

Student E: At the beginning of this theatre unit I would never have imagined that our play would turn out this well. Our theatre play could not have been such a great success without the participation of all students, and without the ongoing feedback that we received from our tutors. I learned something new each week and each week I improved my German pronunciation and my written expression.

Our two tutors this semester were efficient, helpful and were always ready to give us feedback and constructive criticism. Every week it was obvious that their attention was 100% on us. For example, they offered to record our scripts to help us with our pronunciation. This is not something they had to do, but they really wanted to help us and they wanted us to succeed.

### ***9.3 Challenges and Skills Must Be in Balance***

The students realized that their linguistic macro-skills—especially speaking and writing in German, but also their performance skills—were honed during the unit, as noted by these three students:

Student A: First of all I have to say that our performance was much better than I would have thought at the beginning of the semester. Having to write the script for our scene ourselves was very helpful for me, and I believe that by doing this my German has improved quite a bit. Mainly, I spent much time on understanding the grammar and on learning new words.

Student B: I was unfortunately not born with a supernatural talent for theatre. I already knew this when I started this theatre course, although I was, of course, hoping to hide my lack of abilities and the associated lack of confidence and to give it my best.

Student E: At the beginning of this unit, I was afraid that all the others could speak better German than me, and that I would be judged by everyone! [...] But during the course, I became more confident and I've learned how important it is that when learning German, you must speak German! But it was for me maybe (probably) also a good experience to learn to think about what you want to say! I really enjoyed the challenge and how much I learned.

#### ***9.4 Concentration Is Essential***

The concentration, commitment and focus within the class was clearly observable to the teachers, and also noticed by the students:

Student C: During the course I have definitely learned to completely devote myself to a performance. I can transfer this lesson to various aspects of my studies and my career to get rid of my inhibitions and to communicate effectively.

Student D: It was great to spend a semester on something to which we all were very committed. We managed to concentrate on our task together with a good group of people.

Teacher's field notes: Today the time passed very quickly again. The students were so focused on the task at hand that they agreed to continue the meeting after class.

#### ***9.5 Distractions Must Be Avoided***

Active intervention to create a shared goal and the absence of negative comments illustrate that the tutors successfully encouraged students to avoid distractions. Concentration and commitment from the students were aided by the fact that they, as well as the teachers, did not allow for excessive chatter after the warm-up exercises. Students commented that they were proud that they had applied themselves in earnest and with deepfelt sincerity:

Student F: The most important thing I learned during this course is that I am able to achieve things if I concentrate on them. I improved many things this semester and I am very proud of the final product that I and my classmates have created. I was also very proud of my past performances.

## ***9.6 Control by the Students Must Be Made Possible***

Students appreciated the teaching approach because it gave them a degree of independence and the ability to control how the production unfolded:

Student E: There are not many possibilities to design, write, and also perform (unless one is a theatre student) a theatre piece at university. For this reason, I found this course particularly enriching. I found it challenging to design the script ourselves and to write it in German. It gave us freedom and control, but it also required close cooperation, and this will ultimately help us with other projects in the future.

Student G: The theme for this theatre unit was interesting and enjoyable. The life of Clara Schumann could be explored in so many ways, but we were able to select specific events in her life and create our scenes from there.

## ***9.7 Growth and Self-Transcendence Must Be Enhanced***

All of the students reported linguistic improvements as well as a growth in confidence and overall maturity. This assessment was also evidenced in our observations and pedagogic interventions:

Student C: It was interesting to step outside my comfort zone. [...] I really enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the class. There was an environment in which we were free to explore ideas without criticism. It has occurred to me that we had two tutors and they were both supportive and encouraging, but they also had some good suggestions and constructive criticisms.

Teacher's field notes: Linguistically and psychologically it feels as if the students have really stretched themselves. Today, we began with a trust-building warm-up exercise and during the session the students became more comfortable with gestures, physical contact and facial expressions.

## ***9.8 The Autotelic Nature of True Learning Must Be Highlighted***

The teachers used their own enthusiasm and enjoyment as catalysts to inject fun and indirectly spark student enjoyment. The fact that this unit was assessed as part of the final year of an undergraduate degree meant that students did not approach it as a purely pleasurable pursuit. Nevertheless, the frequent fun and laughter bore testament to the fact that they derived some enjoyment from the unit. However, their comments underscore that the learning experience itself impacted students the most.

Student C: Overall, I was really surprised about the collective enthusiasm and motivation of all participants in the course. Usually with a course that includes a public performance at least one or two participants would be less enthusiastic, but this was not the case. I think, however, that the enthusiasm of all participants is essential for the success and the end result was great. I'm pretty proud of our German performance.

Student E: The theatre course was an enjoyable and pleasant experience, and the cooperation of the entire class to design a play, to write it and perform it was rewarding in every way.

Student F: I have the impression that I learned a lot from this course. I learned how to come up with my own ideas, which is normally a difficult task for me. I learned much about the life of Clara Schumann. It was a very informative insight into the life of a composer and pianist of the 19th century. She is such an inspiration and I can take many things from her story and use them in my life today.

## 10 Findings

Analysis of the students' statements confirms that the pedagogy of flow can be effectively applied to theatre productions in second-language contexts and illustrates that interventions by a teacher can extend the period of flow from a passing phase to a prolonged learning experience.

The data sets from which the quotes were taken provide insight into the extent to which (1) the pedagogy of flow is an effective approach to teaching drama in the second language classroom; and (2) teachers' interventions are integral to creating an experience of flow.

Both students and teachers identified the existence of several preconditions necessary for moments of flow. These included the productive tension between feeling overwhelmed and feeling liberated by the freedom, opportunities for self-control and challenges offered within the German Studies theatre unit. Students conveyed feelings of uncertainty but also of empowerment, particularly when noting the collegial and supportive atmosphere of the unit and an overall delight in the tangible results and improvements to their skills. Teacher interventions in response to tensions were vital to the facilitation of flow experience. Interventions included helping students set clear goals; providing immediate feedback; keeping challenges and skills in balance; ensuring concentration and avoiding distractions; allowing students certain levels of control; enhancing growth and self-transcendence; and, lastly, modelling and highlighting the autotelic nature of true learning.

The rich interdisciplinary learning environment in this unit, which coupled language learning with exposure to historical and cultural themes through music and performance, was conducive to enhancing students' motivation and maintaining their levels of curiosity. The students' self-reporting, observations from their peers, Facebook posts, and the field notes recorded by the two teaching staff, show that flow pedagogy is applicable to the foreign language classroom and particularly to

group projects, such as theatre productions. The teachers' notes were also conclusive in relation to the extent and longevity of the flow experiences observable in the classroom and in the performance settings. These embedded researchers, whose interventions were designed to encourage pre-conditions which enable experiences of flow for the students, also recorded instances of successful flow experiences in which they themselves felt swept up in the activities and carried forward by a wave of enthusiasm.

## 11 Conclusion

The German Studies theatre project in 2017, confirmed that the theory of flow can help to enable a transition from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. Admittedly a small scale study, it nevertheless was able to show conclusively that flow could be encouraged and utilized and how this could be achieved. Indeed, the teachers' interventions were shown to be integral to achieving flow experiences. The pedagogy of flow was proven to be an effective approach to teaching drama in the second language classroom. Our students reflected on the experience of several characteristics of flow, derived from feelings of freedom, control and challenge, resulting in solidarity, tangible results and the enjoyment of sharing the fruits of their study with friends and loved ones. In terms of transferable "soft" skills, many described increased accountability and empathy; an awareness of the need to engage through personal investment; the joy of realizing one's potential; an increased sense of self-confidence; and the tangible experience of working in a team. Students commented on having improved all four linguistic macro skills (especially listening, speaking and writing) during the 10-week program. In summary, flow as a pedagogic concept enhanced the students' learning experience and guided specific interventions by teachers or tutors during the theatre unit and in the second language classroom more broadly.

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# Teaching and Assessing Language and Culture Through Translation



Ana María Ducasse and Brigid Maher

**Abstract** Student retention in university language programs remains a challenge. This is addressed at one university by combining students from different language disciplines into a single translation unit, with a mix of English and foreign language instruction. Our study outlines how this unit uses a collaborative model of teaching and learning to combine language, culture and translation, and documents the development of parallel translation assessment tasks. The lecturers reflect critically on assessment practices through the lens of a Classroom Based Assessment framework (Hill 2017) to make our experience explicit and thus guide future practice. The focus is on a translation project that promotes learner agency, risk taking, collegiality and the development of academic and vocational skills. The collaboration has uncovered a gradual shift in assessment practice towards using context and learner characteristics in reframing assessment. This model could be adapted and applied to other tertiary contexts.

**Keywords** Translation · University language programs · Cultural competence · Classroom-based assessment · Collaborative learning · Learner agency

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## 1 Introduction

Translation in the language classroom fell somewhat out of favour last century, particularly translation of the sort deployed in the much-maligned Grammar Translation method.<sup>1</sup> That method was superseded by approaches using L2 as the language of instruction and emphasizing communicative skills. More recently, the conceptualization of language teaching and learning goals has been expanded to include:

- (a) re-affirming the multilingual character of communication and learning to communicate,
- (b) (re-)inserting the importance of personal development and aesthetics, and (c) recognizing the centrality of reflectivity and reflexivity in communication and in learning to communicate (Leung and Scarino 2016, p. 81).

Yet translation is itself a kind of communication, and can be immensely useful to language learners if taught in a way that emphasizes not only lexical and grammatical features, but also context, culture and audience, and many scholars have once again come to see what is known as Translation in Language Teaching (TILT) as a very worthwhile component of the language curriculum (Cook 2009; Lems et al. 2010; Schjoldager 2004). One reason for this is that translation is dependent on both receptive and productive skills and requires deep thinking (Malmkjær 1998, p. 8). Moreover, “the ability to move back and forth between two languages, to have explicit knowledge of each language and the difference between them, to operate in the new language while not losing one’s own language identity” is central to proficiency in a foreign language (Cook 2010, p. 100). In fact, Brooks-Lewis (2009) challenges the exclusion of the students’ L1 from the classroom and Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) argue that translation should be regarded as a further learning outcome in language assessment. Language teachers who have successfully used translation for learning and assessment have reported on its efficacy and popularity with students (Carreres 2006; González Davies 2014; Incalcaterra McLoughlin and Lertola 2014; Sewell 2004), and provided suggestions for how to design translation tasks for use in the language classroom (Colina 2002; Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez 2011; González Davies 2004; Laviosa 2014). These findings highlight the importance of incorporating assessed tasks involving translation in language teaching.

In language learning, a “task” is distinct from a “language exercise” (e.g., verb conjugation exercises, cloze activities). A task has set boundaries and four essential criteria (Ellis and Shintani 2013, p. 135):

- (a) The primary focus should be on “meaning” (i.e., learners should be mainly concerned with encoding and decoding messages, not with focusing on linguistic form).

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<sup>1</sup>At its most extreme, the Grammar Translation method used translation of individual sentences (exemplifying specific grammatical points), or of texts (mostly religious or literary), as the foundation of foreign language instruction (Malmkjær 1998, p. 3); see also Colina (2002), Cook (2010), Laviosa (2014, pp. 4–6). However, Pym (2016, and this volume) has found evidence of more nuanced uses of translation in language teaching over past centuries.

- (b) There should be some kind of “gap” (i.e., a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning).
- (c) Learners should largely rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) to complete the activity. That is, learners are not “taught” the language they will need to perform the task, although they may be able to “borrow” from the input the task provides to help them perform it.
- (d) There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e., the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right). Thus, when performing a task, learners are not primarily concerned with using language correctly but rather with achieving the goal stipulated by the task.

While there is some contention over the precise interpretation of the above criteria, it is clear that in a TILT classroom, a close match is achieved on all four counts since the focus of a translation task is on conveying the original text’s meaning to the new language, culture and audience. The “gap” is the transition to the target language, learners use many and varied resources to this end and the outcome is a new text in the target language.

Using translation tasks in the language classroom requires careful consideration of the aims and objectives of the task and of the assessment criteria. However, few researchers have explored the assessment of translation in a language-learning context, and those who do so look primarily at formal testing, rather than take-home assignments (e.g., Elatia 2013; Sun and Cheng 2013; Turkan et al. 2013). So, while language teachers confidently assess students’ lexical and grammatical proficiency, assessing other features of successful translation—for example, language for a context, culture and audience—is difficult because it requires different judgments and criteria, about which there is little in the literature. As noted by Scarino (2014), when combining “culture and assessment” in language learning, we must capture, give value and do justice to the learning achievements of our students. However, this is strongly tied to each learning context.

Context is considered central in Assessment for Learning. Language teachers’ implementation of assessment has been found to be closely linked to their specific institutional contexts, characterized by practices compatible with their assessment culture (Inbar-Lourie 2008). Recently, studies on teachers as assessors have shone a spotlight on their perceptions and knowledge about learning and assessment (e.g., Scarino 2013, 2014; Tsagari and Vogt 2017) and found there are many relevant contextual variables (e.g., Turner and Purpura 2015; Carless et al. 2011). Turner and Purpura (2015) divide these into “macro variables” comprising the socio-political context of education and accompanying sociocultural norms (e.g., parental and student expectations) and “micro variables” comprising institutional assessment cultures, infrastructure (curriculum, timetabling, etc.), teacher, student, the task and performance in it. Unpacking how these variables impact upon assessment culture within each context enables an understanding of diverse assessment cultures.

## 2 On the Task in TILT

Kiraly has observed that assessment is a way of modelling for students something they must ultimately learn to do for themselves (2014, p. 140), and Orlando writes of the teacher's role in "effecting [...] his or her own 'disappearance'" (2014, p. 297). While both are referring to the training of professional translators, there is some truth to this, even for novices. University assessment tasks seek to promote skills of self-reflection and critical thinking that students can apply to any future professional endeavour, and the task discussed in this article is no exception.

Teaching language is inseparable also from teaching culture. As Kramsch et al. state, for example:

By choosing to say things one way rather than another, even a first-year learner of a foreign language makes a cultural decision, because he/she adapts her language to the perceived needs of the situation. This tailoring of the text to meet the demands of the context, and this shaping of the context through the expectations raised by the text, is precisely what we call "culture" (1996, p. 106).<sup>2</sup>

One way to provide students with access to a range of voices from the culture of the L2 is through texts for translation. In addition to building language proficiency and access to culture, translation activities have been found to contribute to many important graduate capabilities, including teamwork skills (González Davies 2014, p. 25), intercultural competence (Beecroft 2013, p. 156; Cook 2012, p. 256), and life-long learning (Laviosa 2014, p. 91). For Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez it is a question of "not whether but how" we incorporate translation into language learning (2011, p. 282). They advocate a task-based approach, focusing on *process* and not just *product*. This allows the development not only of translation skills, but also of students' research, reading, writing and analytical capacity. Translation can be taught in a learner-centred way that emphasizes "interaction and collaboration, as well as autonomy" (Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez 2011, p. 288) and permits a flexible methodology that provides room for a range of learning styles (Kelly and Bruen 2015), including those not typically favoured by the communicative method (Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez 2011, p. 289; Sewell 2004; González Davies 2014, p. 25). In fact, there are several advantages associated with its use, particularly in a context where students and lecturer share a common L1. While it is true that translation activities can cause L1 interference (or transfer), "bilinguals at whatever level experience interference [...], and practice in translation encourages awareness and control of interference" (Malmkjær 1998, p. 8; Cook 2010, pp. 95–97).

As noted by Scarino and Liddicoat (2016), the move to reconceptualize the learning of additional languages to embrace the intercultural "permits an understanding of the linguistic and cultural construction of knowing and learning as acts of meaning-making" (p. 33). Translation puts learners into another cultural context because of the reflection required when exploring a text's meaning(s) across languages and cultures. This reflection entails "learn[ing] how to more effectively

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<sup>2</sup>See Scarino (2014) for a summary review of language teaching and culture.

‘move between’ and negotiate the diverse linguistic, cultural, and knowledge worlds that their learning brings together, and to develop meta-awareness about notions of language, culture, knowing, and learning” (Scarino and Liddicoat 2016, p. 33).

### 3 Research Question, Approach and Study Context

This leads us to a reflection on Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) practices in the context of a multilingual translation unit taught to third-year undergraduates. Our aim is to make explicit the teacher perspective on assessment (in our context) and to guide future practice by contributing to research on assessment tasks for translation skills in a language-learning context. We focus particularly on the multi-part translation assignment that is the culmination of the semester’s work, using Hill’s (2017) framework as a guide. The approach was inspired by two separate studies. In the first, a team of researchers used classroom documents and transcripts to facilitate a dialogue with school language teachers about their assessment practices (Scarino 2013, 2017). In the second, a framework designed to help teachers identify and analyse their existing CBA practices facilitated a collaborative dialogue (following Scarino 2013) between teacher and researcher (Ducasse and Hill 2020). From among the questions comprising Hill’s (2017) reflective framework for understanding CBA practices, we have opted to focus on “How does the context for teaching shape your assessment practices?” However, before undertaking our reflection on this question, we begin by describing the context for this unit.

#### 3.1 Unit Description

Our focus here is a semester-long third-year undergraduate unit known as “Trans European Translation” (TET). It was devised at La Trobe University (Melbourne) in 2010 and has been further developed in the intervening years. Each week students attend a one-hour lecture in translation theory taught in English, and a two-hour language-specific workshop conducted in the Language Other than English (LOTE) (but with English also featured to a greater or lesser degree). Typically, the options have been French, Italian and Spanish.

TET was introduced in part to meet student demand and match staff research interests, but also because of management concerns about under-staffing and low enrolments. Student retention at higher levels of language study is a challenge at many universities; this was addressed by consolidating students into one unit, pooling staff resources and expertise. Subsequent changes to university structures and degree requirements have meant the unit continues to be a key part of the major sequence in those three languages.

The unit—and particularly the major assessment task discussed here—seeks to promote a wide range of skills, including translation skills (primarily from L2 to L1,

**Table 1** Assessment in “Trans European Translation”

Task	Weighting
Short translation (250 words, LOTE>English) with comment (250–300 words, in English)	20%
Leading class discussion of readings and weekly topic (in pairs)	10%
Test (one 200-word LOTE>English translation task; short-answer questions regarding translation strategies and approaches)	20%
Major translation assignment (three stages)	
– Introductory note	5%
– Presentation at mini-conference	10%
– Translation (800 words, LOTE>English) with analysis and commentary (800 words, in English)	35%

but also vice versa for certain in-class activities), written, research and oral presentation skills, teamwork and time management. Assessment in the subject can be seen in Table 1.

While by no means ignoring lexical difference, dictionary skills and grammatical features, classes also focus on the bigger picture: cultural content and context, genre and text types, and audience needs. Although students complete several assessments during the semester, the major assignment, assessed at different points, allows them to concentrate most of their energies on one main project. It is appropriate, in their final year of study, for them to have a degree of freedom and responsibility in planning and undertaking it. In line with learner agency criteria underpinning the assessment, students are expected to choose their own text for translation—a literary text that has not previously been translated into English.<sup>3</sup>

Complementing practical skills development with translation theory increases learners’ capacity to detect and solve problems and encourages them to move from a notion of translation as lexical transfer, to an expanded understanding which brings an awareness of more complex linguistic levels, a key element of translation competence (Cintrão 2010, p. 179). The goal is not to give students a solution for how to translate, but rather to help them develop reflective skills: a capacity for critically reflecting on their own translation practice by developing ways to think about, write about and justify the way they translate. Cintrão (2010) aptly describes the use of declarative knowledge like translation theory as “a sort of ‘magnifying glass’, allowing the learner to see what could, without the tools provided by conceptual and metacognitive work, go unnoticed indefinitely” (p. 168). Hence, although we are not training translators, we draw on research in translation studies and seek to equip our students to do the same.

<sup>3</sup>This stipulation spares students the anxiety of influence that comes from encountering a published translation during the research or translation process, and provides a degree of protection from any temptation to adapt (or plagiarize) another translator’s work.

### 3.2 *Cohort Description*

Our students are all in their sixth semester of tertiary study of French, Italian or Spanish. Advanced cohorts such as these have not been extensively researched. Skills vary greatly within the group, as some entered university with prior knowledge of the language, while others did not.

Students sometimes arrive in the class with a naïve understanding of translation as little more than the replacement of source words and structures with target ones. The translation theory lessons focus their attention on such questions as voice, register, style and cultural references in order to equip them to read and translate from accessible works of contemporary fiction, though other creative texts such as advertising, graphic novels, and film are also discussed in class. Our students do not necessarily have a strong grounding in literary studies or much familiarity with literary texts in the L2, so with this mix of text types we aim to balance literary and non-literary, while always emphasizing the cultural alongside the linguistic. We avoid specialized texts and those with minimal interesting cultural content (e.g., instruction manuals).

### 3.3 *The Task*

The assessment in TET is largely centred on translation into L1 (English), though some non-assessed in-class activities involve translation into L2. The task to be discussed here, the Major Assignment, aims to be an authentic task, assessing a range of skills with feedback in stages and some flexibility. It is a multi-part assessment comprising: an introductory note of some 200 words submitted mid-semester (worth 5% of the final mark for the semester); a 5-min presentation at a student Mini-Conference at the end of semester (10%); and a translation with analysis and commentary submitted some 10 days later (35%).

#### **Step 1: Introductory Note**

The early deadline for the introductory note aims to encourage and reward planning ahead, and avoid last-minute problems. This short piece is a kind of abstract in which students state which text they have chosen to translate and why, and what challenges they expect it to pose. The teacher provides prompt feedback and can then check in with students in subsequent weeks.

#### **Step 2: Presentation**

The presentation takes place at a 1-day Mini-Conference at which all students present in English. Typically, there are parallel sessions, a booklet of abstracts, a key-note speaker, and a catered lunch during which students mingle and talk further about their work. Presentations are short (5 min), encouraging students to pinpoint two or three key aspects of their translation approach and the challenges they faced, followed by 5 min for questions, comments and advice from the audience, including teachers and fellow students.

### **Step 3: Translation with Analysis and Commentary**

The final component is the translation of an 800-word excerpt of the selected text, accompanied by an 800-word analysis and commentary in which students reflect critically upon the text and their translation approach, giving the reasoning behind their translation decisions and drawing on research in translation theory. This piece of reflective writing provides students with an opportunity to explain and justify their choices and gives teachers an insight into the students' learning process (Gile 2004, p. 3) and the nature of the difficulties that might have arisen. Gile (2004) finds that this kind of reflective writing gives students a better sense of the complexity of the task of translation, and posits that it can have psychological advantages, improving motivation and self-esteem (p. 11). This is especially important in the case of our unit, as students' language (and confidence) levels tend to vary greatly.

### **3.4 Assessment Criteria**

In keeping with the inclusion of a translation commentary, the assessment criteria for the final stage of the Major Assignment (see [Appendix](#)) explicitly acknowledge the importance of the translation *process* as well as the translation *product* (cf. Gile 1995), weighting the two equally. The marking rubric was inspired by the evaluation grid created by Orlando (2014, p. 299), but is greatly simplified because the outcomes in our context are different from those of professional translator training, for which his grid was devised. Nevertheless, some common elements remain, such as a focus on function (the suitability of the translation for its purpose), quality (including language choices), and effect on readers as well as justification of translation decisions and use of relevant research in the field.

## **4 Teacher Reflection on Assessment Practice**

Hill's overarching question—"How does the context for teaching shape your assessment practices?"—is broken down into several sub-questions (2017, p. 7). In what follows, we reflect on those most relevant to TET.

### **4.1 Influences on Decisions About Content and Methods in Assessment**

The coordinator has had the most influence over the design of the unit, which was largely shaped by her background in language teaching (including the use of literature in the language classroom) and in the theory and practice of literary translation.

The context of the teaching style was tightly bound to the assessment with a flow-on effect on the unit. Staff *model* how to reflect upon translation options and

decisions; students *practise* doing reflective translation in class and at home. For example, one class involves the lecturer reflecting on her own strategies and translation choices as a practising literary translator. In the language-specific workshops, students are asked to discuss and reflect aloud upon their approach and strategies. This works especially well in collaborative translation activities as students compare different approaches and justify their preferences (Maher 2014).

The teaching style also models interdisciplinary collaboration and collegiality, as the flexible approach to workshop content across the groups acknowledges the different contexts of the three languages (e.g., emphasizing dialect or migrant writing in the Italian stream, the vast geographical spread of the Spanish language(s), or the particularities of *Francophonie*). The Mini-Conference emerged to further promote interdisciplinary collegiality. This is a public event that colleagues, other interested students and even senior management can attend, giving our cohort the opportunity to present their work to people they might not have met before: this is likely to be an important skill for them in their future working lives. It also promotes our work beyond our immediate area of the University.

Translation is usually taught in L1, but because TET forms part of a language major, aspects of it have, from the beginning, been taught in L2. We seek to bridge the gap between L1 and L2, relying on L2 in the language-specific workshops, while using L1 in the lecture and in the Major Assignment. The Mini-Conference needed to take place in English because it aimed to promote collegiality, so it made sense for students' commentaries to be written in English too. One of the great benefits of offering the same unit to students majoring in different languages has been the chance it offers them to interact across majors. This fosters an empowering sense of ownership over the language and the task, even as students acknowledge that they are all still novices in their LOTE. In the earlier years of TET, students wrote their commentary in the LOTE, but many struggled with this requirement, since the translation theory to which they were exposed was in English, as were the weekly readings. The shift in language between different domains of work within the unit demonstrates to students—indeed *puts into practice*—the notion of using different languages in specific contexts and for identifiable purposes.

Despite the specified use of L1, all assessment in the unit is language-specific and thus assessed by the relevant LOTE lecturer, who might not necessarily have a background in translation studies. This, along with staff turnover and the role played by sessional teachers in some years, has meant it was important to devise detailed marking rubrics for the assessment tasks, and provide guidance and templates for weekly in-class activities that, though not assessed, would ultimately equip students to complete the assessment. The unit has been offered six times now, so student feedback, both formal and informal, has also played an important part in refining assessment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>In the early years of TET, student feedback often called for a reduction in the number of assessment tasks and this was ultimately deemed to be justified. The two casualties of this were a short translation task *into* LOTE, as well as a critical analysis (written in the LOTE) of a published translation. In their stead, two formal oral assessment tasks were introduced: leading class discussion of the weekly topic and reading(s) (generally in pairs), and the short presentation at the Mini-Conference. These contribute to refining students' ability to undertake reflective practice and apply translation theory. Response from students over the years has resulted in a small reduction in the



While institutional stipulations about assessment are in place and have been adhered to, these did not have any major impact on assessment design in this unit.

## ***4.2 Factors Considered when Planning and Conducting Assessment***

The wide range of abilities among the cohort was an important consideration in designing the Major Assignment. Requiring students to choose their own text for translation enables them all to shine at their own level. Although the instructions stipulate that the text for translation must be literary, we emphasize learner autonomy and encourage students to follow their own interests, as this leads to greater motivation. Thus, they are by no means restricted to “high” literature: past projects include fantasy and science fiction, crime fiction, graphic novels and children’s literature.

The corollary of learner autonomy is risk taking, also a key element of the Major Assignment. Sometimes students worry they will choose the “wrong” text, one that is “too easy” or “too hard”, but the requirement to reflect on the translation process results in a more complex task than simple linguistic transfer from one language to another, and the assessment criteria reflect this. Students who manage to reflect critically on a text and the challenges it poses can be rewarded for their commentary on the translation process, even if they might not always have successfully tackled those challenges. Conversely, those who view the translation process rather simplistically tend to fall short in their commentary, regardless of the difficulty of the source text selected or the accuracy of their translation. In short, experience has shown that although asking students to choose their own text is more challenging (for both students and staff), the benefits for learner agency and autonomy, and promoting and rewarding risk taking, outweigh any logistical difficulties.

Other assessment tasks in the subject, notably the short translation with commentary assigned early on, train students to translate reflectively; as noted above, this is also modelled on a weekly basis in class. Feedback on the first two parts of the Major Assignment also helps students to improve their skills. The unit is designed to work in a holistic way to socialize students into how one translates, so that they move from a possibly simplistic understanding of translation at the start of semester, to an awareness that there is rarely, if ever, a single right answer to any translation problem. One important benefit that stems from developing the ability to

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number of theoretical readings, freeing up more time to do practical translation exercises, but also the addition of more explicit requirements to engage with theory in the Major Assignment and the test, as well as when leading class discussion. This latter measure was an effort to show students more explicitly the value and applicability of the theoretical readings, and to reward their application. In more recent years, students have noted in their feedback surveys their appreciation of teachers’ flexibility and openness regarding the use of both English and LOTE in the workshops. Students’ feedback on the Mini-Conference, though largely anecdotal since the event takes place after feedback surveys are completed, has generally been very positive, as has that of colleagues.

reflect on and enunciate one's translation practice is that it helps students to develop skills in critical thinking and self-analysis, which will also be important to them in the workplace or in academia, and transferable to many different fields of endeavour.

### ***4.3 Impact of Assessment Practices Both Locally and in the Broader Context***

The Major Assignment was partly inspired by assessment practices in translator training and other undergraduate units with which the coordinator had been involved, either as teacher or student. The emphasis on both process and product is nowadays a common feature of formative assessment in translation studies (Li 1998; Gile 2004; Alves 2005; Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011; Orlando 2014). The choice of an assignment (rather than a test or exam) as the major assessment task was in keeping with existing practice in most advanced language subjects at La Trobe University. Students would generally be expected to write essays in the LOTE, and in the early iterations of TET, though the translation was into English, students had to write their commentary in the LOTE. This was felt to be an important part of developing students' writing proficiency in the LOTE. However, as noted above, this has been revised and now students submit their commentary in English.

Marking time was also a consideration. The translation and commentary are time-consuming to mark, not least because for each student, the teacher must familiarize him/herself with a different source text. Over the years, assessment in the subject has been streamlined by reducing the number of assessed tasks (in part in response to student feedback, see note 4), increasing the weighting of the Major Assignment, introducing the Mini-Conference presentation, simplifying the marking scheme for the translation and commentary, while at the same time developing more detailed descriptors for different levels of achievement. The latest version of the marking rubric for the final stage of the Major Assignment, refined over a number of years, appears in the [Appendix](#). It seeks a balance between a student-facing and a teacher-facing rubric (for example, by spelling out in plain English the details of coherence and cohesion which many students find opaque when referred to in those terms), so that both groups of users can understand and apply the contents. The tweaks that were made to the descriptors in the most recent round of fine tuning were based on samples of prior student work, and included mentioning the quality of academic English used in the commentary (since well-developed L1 skills and a sensitivity to register are central to being a good translator), a more explicit indication of what is understood by good quality engagement with academic sources and appropriate referencing, and added mentions of reflection and (self-)reflective practice (notions discussed in class) to emphasize that these should be part of the translation process and be evidenced in the commentary. The mid-lower end of the marking scheme alludes to common problems and weaknesses, such as omitting key points from the commentary or overlooking central aspects of the source text, so that students can seek to avoid such pitfalls.

## 5 Implications and Concluding Remarks

Scarino (2017) has noted the difficulty of capturing the language learning *process*. What has come out of the self-analysis occasioned by Hill's questionnaire is confirmation that assessing our students' translation process is every bit as important as assessing their finished product, particularly because these are language learners for whom translation is not so much a future profession as an extra skill. In addition to focusing learners' attention on the translation decisions they make, the translation commentary provides lecturers with valuable insights into students' processes: the challenges focused on and the strategies drawn upon while translating (Gile 2004, p. 3). Requiring students to reflect upon such processes is a way of capturing what Scarino calls "the processual and reflective dimensions of assessing interlinguistic and intercultural and multilingual practices and capabilities" (2017, p. 26).

Moreover, the reflective process of writing this very article has been beneficial to the researchers/lecturers, and the results of this consciousness raising have already been integrated into the cyclical pattern of curriculum and assessment design in TET. Just as translators (novice or more experienced practitioners) can fall into the trap of translating unthinkingly or intuitively, so can lecturers be at risk during the process of developing curriculum and assessment, especially if carried out in haste due to the multitude of time pressures academics must often contend with. Through in-class activities and assessment tasks, we promote self-reflection in our students; by interrogating and making explicit our own processes as teachers and assessors we do something analogous. In the present case, this has led to realizations about our practices and assumptions, and the ways in which we can do better in future. The results of the reflection process can also have implications for other educators aiming to devise assessment tasks anchored in culture in a language-teaching context. This is one of the aims of Hill's (2017) framework.

The analysis of the development and implementation of a translation skills assessment task has made explicit the teacher perspective on assessment in our context. "Trans European Translation" serves to create intersections between teaching language, culture and translation by combining research into translation theory, pedagogy and assessment with developments in foreign language teaching and by introducing students to texts that can help expand their understanding of the culture of the focus country or countries. At the level of the translation task, the teaching style and the assessment design bridge the gap between micro and macro in the translation process, as students reflect not only on lexical and grammatical questions but also on register, style, genre and audience. The unit also bridges the gap between L1 and L2, providing space for each in classroom and assessment activities, asking students to use their language skills to mediate between audiences and contexts, and providing a sense of how they might continue to use and learn in each of those languages in their post-university lives.

## Appendix

EST3TET Marking Rubric. Major translation assignment: Translation with analysis and commentary (2018 version)

Criteria	A (80% or above)	B (70–79%)	C (60–69%)	D (50–59%)	N (49% or below)
Comprehension of the ST, lexical and grammatical choices, presentation (25%)	1. The translation demonstrates excellent understanding of ST 2. Excellent lexical and grammatical choices throughout the translation 3. Excellent attention to editing, presentation, proof-reading	1. The translation demonstrates very good understanding of ST, with minimal lapses 2. Very good lexical and grammatical choices in the translation, and very few inaccuracies 3. Very good attention to editing, presentation, proof-reading	1. The translation demonstrates a competent reading of ST but with some misunderstanding 2. Some lexical and grammatical choices in the TT are not suitable; some minor inaccuracies 3. Acceptable attention to editing, presentation, proof-reading	1. The translation demonstrates only partial understanding of ST, with some inaccuracies 2. Several lexical and grammatical choices in the TT are unsuitable or inaccurate 3. Minimal attention to editing, presentation, proof-reading	1. The translation demonstrates a very poor understanding of ST, with several minor or a few major inaccuracies and misunderstandings 2. Many lexical and grammatical choices in the TT are unsuitable or inaccurate 3. Barely any attention to editing, presentation, proof-reading
Register, style and idiomatic correctness (25%)	1. The register used in the translation is in keeping with target-language conventions for this type of text; the language is idiomatically correct (natural) wherever appropriate 2. The literary style of the translation shows a sensitivity to ST style and to target-language and audience requirements	1. The register used in the translation is generally in keeping with target-language conventions for this type of text; the language is almost always idiomatically correct (natural) when appropriate 2. Literary style of TT generally shows a sensitivity to ST style and to target-language and audience requirements	1. The register used in the translation is not always in keeping with target-language conventions for this type of text; there are unmotivated lapses in idiomatic correctness (naturalness) 2. Literary style of TT shows some sensitivity to ST style and to target-language and audience requirements, but with some lapses	1. The register used in TT rarely matches target-language conventions for this type of text, and this flouting of convention is not explained by any aspect of the target text 2. Literary style of TT shows little sensitivity to ST style or to target-language and audience requirements	1. The register used in TT shows little awareness of target-language conventions for this type of text 2. Literary style of TT shows very little awareness of ST style or of target-language and audience requirements

(continued)

Criteria	A (80% or above)	B (70–79%)	C (60–69%)	D (50–59%)	N (49% or below)
Commentary on the translation process (50%)	<p>1. Sophisticated reflection on translation challenges, with convincing examples to illustrate key points</p> <p>2. Clear and convincing justification of the translation solutions discussed, showing an excellent capacity for self-reflective translation practice</p> <p>3. Well written commentary with clear, coherent structure throughout, with arguments well linked</p> <p>4. Engages productively with 3 or more appropriate academic sources in the field of TS</p> <p>5. Correct and consistent referencing style is used throughout</p> <p>6. Word count adequate</p>	<p>1. Very good reflection on translation challenges accompanied by examples</p> <p>2. Clear justification of the translation solutions discussed, indicating an engagement with processes of self-reflective translation practice</p> <p>3. Good writing throughout the commentary, with mostly clear, coherent structure and appropriate links between arguments</p> <p>4. Makes very good use of 2 appropriate academic sources in the field of TS</p> <p>5. Consistent and almost faultless referencing style is used throughout</p> <p>6. Word count adequate</p>	<p>1. Some reflection on translation challenges but depth may be lacking; examples not always sufficient, appropriate or convincing</p> <p>2. Justification of translation solutions is partial or not entirely convincing, or some major aspects of the translation are left unexplored or unexplained, indicating only partial engagement in reflective practice</p> <p>3. Acceptable writing and structure in the commentary; some problems with links between arguments</p> <p>4. Makes use of at least 1 appropriate academic source in the field of TS (or refers to more, but in a sometimes cursory way)</p> <p>5. Referencing style is adequate but with some oversights or inconsistencies</p> <p>6. Word count adequate</p>	<p>1. Only cursory reflection on translation challenges; few or no examples provided</p> <p>2. Translation solutions not examined in sufficient depth or not sufficiently justified, indicating that sustained self-reflective practice has not been central to the translation process</p> <p>3. Writing is rather poor or difficult to follow in places; structure of the commentary is at times confused or confusing</p> <p>4. Makes little or no use of appropriate academic sources in the field of TS, or refers to research in a way that does not show genuine engagement with or understanding of it</p> <p>5. Many problems with referencing style</p> <p>6. Word count does not meet the requirement</p>	<p>1. Little reflection on translation challenges and few or no examples provided</p> <p>2. Little or no discussion of translation solutions and minimal evidence of engagement in self-reflective translation practice</p> <p>3. Writing style needs a considerable amount of work; fragmented and superficial structure in the commentary, lack of coherence</p> <p>4. Makes no use of appropriate academic sources in the field of TS, or refers to research in a way that does not show genuine engagement with or understanding of it</p> <p>5. Many problems with referencing style</p> <p>6. Word count does not meet the requirement</p>

NOTE: “ST” and “TT” stand for “source text” (the original text) and “target text” (your translation). “TS” stands for “translation studies”

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## Part X

# Indigenous Languages Education: International Variations in Planning and Practice

The chapters in this section offer a critical overview of language programs implemented within different international contexts: in Hawai'i, China and Australia respectively. Wilson discusses the Hawaiian language program in the tertiary sector, focusing on the *honua* or places and contexts where the use of Hawaiian language is privileged and expected. From the outset, the Hawaiian language program offered by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo was closely integrated with school and community programs. The Hawaiian university programs provide the training, both in language knowledge and proficiency, and in the teaching skills required for work beyond the tertiary sector, as well as most of the materials and resources used. These resources are shared via an intranet by the various school-based and community-based programs located on a number of distinct islands.

Yang focuses on Yúnnán Minzú University in China, a university dedicated to the education of ethnic minority students, in much the same way as the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory, but on a much larger scale. Various policies have been put in place by the Chinese government to make courses more accessible to ethnic minority students, thereby increasing their participation in tertiary education. The quota for China's Minority High Level Backbone Program is currently 4000 Masters and 1000 PhD students where the L1 of all applicants is an ethnic minority language. Enrolments on this scale have no parallel in Australia, where L1 speakers of Australian Indigenous languages are an extreme rarity amongst the ranks of Australian postgraduate students. Whilst the ranks of Indigenous postgraduate students in Australia has grown rapidly in recent years, almost all are L1 speakers of English.

Gale's chapter addresses essentially the same issues, but in a different institutional context, where the technical education or TAFE sector provides the skills needed for Anangu L1 speakers of Pitjantjatjara to deliver the university level Pitjantjatjara summer school (described in Part XI, this volume). The TAFE training is a generic package consisting of a Certificate III "Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language" and Certificate IV "Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language". It was designed primarily to impart the knowledge and skills for those associated with revival languages such as Ngarrindjeri, Kurna, Adnyamathanha,

Narungga, and others, to teach their languages and engage in language work, such as producing resource materials. It was subsequently adapted successfully for L1 speakers of a strong language, Pitjantjatjara. Gale's paper provides a detailed description of this innovative training package and its implementation, noting that it is something of an odd fit within the TAFE system.

The three chapters taken together are indicative of the extremely diverse nature of Indigenous languages education worldwide, where policies and programs are formulated in response, at least in part, to the local language ecologies. Most programs struggle to find a niche within particular bureaucratic structures, whilst in other contexts, the outcome is the result of top-down planning decisions, but the three models described have survived, despite the obstacles they have negotiated during their planning and development.

# The *Honua* of the Hawaiian Language College



William H. Wilson

**Abstract** University teaching of Hawaiian has played a foundational role in the continually expanding revitalization of Hawaiian. Yet, it was over half a century before any university program regularly produced speakers proficient enough to raise their children in Hawaiian. What is now the UH Hilo Hawaiian Language College has had a particularly high level of success in this regard. The College is at the core of what is now a full educational system from an infant-toddler program to the doctorate. The College has developed a perspective on language and language learning that focuses on language-based identity expressed in *honua*. *Honua* are a sequence of places where use of an endangered language is dominant and language-based identity is expressed. While Hawaiian language classrooms might seem like the most obvious *honua* for Hawaiian, Hawaiian language *honua* in Hilo include courses in English, Japanese and Latin, as well as purposeful integration of Hawai'i Creole English into educational experiences. Multilingualism and its active promotion, but in a particular Hawaiian language-based approach, as practised in Hilo, will be explored in terms of intersections and collaborations as a key to the future of languages and cultures in the tertiary sector and beyond.

**Keywords** Hawaiian · Language revitalization · Language-based identity · *Honua* · Endangered language · Multilingualism · Collaboration · Hawai'i · Native American · Language nest

*Ngadlu Tampinhi, Ngadlu Kaurua Yartangka Inparrinhi.  
Mahalo ka ho'okipa 'ana mai i ka makahiki 'elua kaukani 'umikumamāhiku.*

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## 1 The History of the Development of the College

### 1.1 *Geography and Early History*

The Hawaiian language, the traditional language of the Native Hawaiian people, is a highly endangered language spoken in the American state of Hawai‘i. Located in the Pacific Ocean thousands of kilometres from the nearest of the other 49 states, Hawai‘i is highly distinctive in terms of climate, natural history, demography, and history from the other states of the United States.

A Polynesian language spoken with very few dialectal differences among the seven inhabited islands (Elbert and Pukui 1979, pp. 23–27), Hawaiian was long isolated from the rest of the world when Captain James Cook came across the archipelago in 1778. Cook was killed in Hawai‘i (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 13–19). His ships were soon followed by traders and in 1820 by missionaries from the newly independent United States (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 39–48). By the time the missionaries arrived the islands had been united through warfare into a political unit that foreigners were referring to as a kingdom (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 23–29).

During the earliest period of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i the bulk of the population lived in a typical Pacific Island subsistence economy primarily based on cultivation of taro, with the main protein being fish (Kuykendall and Day 1961, p. 9). The king and his court were initially supported by surpluses from the people, supplemented with foreign goods obtained through selling locally harvested sandalwood to European traders. Later cash industries included supplying whalers with food and crewmen and then massive cultivation of sugar cane (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 39–40, 92–94, 117–125).

The missionaries were embraced by the ruling descendants of Kamehameha, the *ali‘i* or chief who had united the islands. The Kamehameha dynasty worked through the mission-derived Anglo-American community to obtain international recognition of Hawai‘i as a European-style nation state operating as a constitutional monarchy (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 63–75). Key to this political transformation was adoption of a written form of Hawaiian established by the missionaries (Schütz 1994, pp. 98–133), but spread primarily by Native Hawaiians themselves through traditional Native Hawaiian teaching practices (Kamakau 1992, pp. 248–249).

### 1.2 *The Indigenous Language in Nineteenth-Century Schooling*

Promulgating Hawai‘i’s first constitution in 1840 (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 49–55), Kamehameha III declared: “*He aupuni palapala ko‘u*”—Mine is a government of the written word (Pukui 1983, p. 64). He then established a Department of Education with compulsory public education through Hawaiian for all children

aged 4–16. The vast majority of teachers were Native Hawaiians who had learned to read and write in community-run adult schools (Kamakau 1992, pp. 248–249; Pukui et al. 1972, pp. 57–60).

Missionaries operated higher level Hawaiian-medium schools, including a small college (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 82–83). Newspapers written in Hawaiian spread rapidly, as did the use of Hawaiian as the language of the courts, the national assembly, and civil service (Wilson 1998, p. 127). A pidginized form of Hawaiian was widely used with non-Hawaiian immigrants. That Pidginized Hawaiian became a major contributor to a Creolized English still used by the heterogeneous non-white majority of Hawai'i today, including most Native Hawaiians (Wilson 1998, pp. 128–129; Pukui et al. 1972, pp. 62–64).

### ***1.3 Western Colonial Impacts Lead to US Annexation***

This distinctive history of written Hawaiian provided a foundation for the revitalization of the Hawaiian language after its near extinction as a spoken language during the twentieth century. That near extinction was the result of a number of factors. The position accorded the English speaking missionaries and their associates in the establishment and running of the new nation state brought with it certain ideologies. Those colonial ideologies gradually weakened Native Hawaiians' confidence in themselves and the cultural integrity of their leaders, leading to a movement away from Hawaiian toward English in schools and government (Schütz 1994, pp. 289–302).

Massive deaths due to imported diseases greatly weakened the Native Hawaiian population and led to the importation of sugar plantation labourers, primarily from China, Japan, and the Azores Islands, and later from the Philippines and Puerto Rico (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 126–137, 211–212). Native Hawaiians became a minority, albeit a significant one, in their own homeland. The ultimate blow was actual military intervention by the United States against the Kingdom of Hawai'i that resulted in the takeover of the government by missionary descendants and then the annexation of Hawai'i by the United States in 1898 (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 174–190).

After taking over the government, the tiny Anglo-American minority moved to change radically the linguistic and cultural identity of Hawai'i by closing all education through Hawaiian and replacing it with English-medium education (Wilson 1998, p. 128). Children were physically and psychologically punished in the schools for using Hawaiian and teachers were threatened with dismissal if they spoke Hawaiian in schools (Pukui et al. 1972, pp. 61–62; Wilson and Kamanā 2006, pp. 153–154). From this ban sprung the creolization of the local pidgin English as Hawai'i Creole English (Wilson and Kamanā 2006, p. 169).

### ***1.4 The Territorial and Early Statehood Periods***

When an American territorial government was established in 1900, Native Hawaiians, but not the larger population of foreign-born East Asians, were accorded the vote. As the majority of those with the power of the ballot, Native Hawaiians immediately took control of the territorial legislature (Fuchs 1961, pp. 79–85). Native Hawaiian political power was severely limited, however, by the control that the Anglo-American oligarchy of missionary descendants maintained through the United States president's appointment of a territorial governor who held the power of veto over the legislature, as well as controlling territorial departments (Kuykendall and Day 1961, pp. 193–202).

During the long territorial period Hawaiian remained outlawed as a medium of education in the schools and became replaced by Hawai'i Creole English among Native Hawaiian and other non-Caucasian children who attended school with them. The use of Hawai'i Creole English as a peer group language then expanded among those new generations. As Hawai'i Creole English moved from the schools into other areas of life, Hawaiian and immigrant languages became relegated to use by older generations born in Hawai'i before 1920 or born abroad. The Caucasian elite sent their children to a few private schools and their children maintained their heritage of speaking Standard English as their peer group language (Pukui et al. 1972, p. 63). Hawaiian began to die out.

After World War II, the locally born Hawai'i Creole English-speaking descendants of immigrants came of age with the right to vote and took over the legislature. The largest single group were Japanese Americans who had faced questions regarding their loyalty to the United States during World War II. The Hawai'i born Japanese, or Nisei, established an exemplary military record to prove that loyalty. In leading the takeover of the territorial legislature, they pushed for the end of territorial status for Hawai'i and for full statehood within the United States against the wishes of older Native Hawaiians still loyal to the Monarchy (Fuchs 1961, pp. 308–322).

### ***1.5 The Hawaiian Renaissance Leads to Language Revitalization***

Statehood came in 1959. Then, as the American civil rights movement grew in strength among African-Americans and spread to Latino minorities and then to American Indians, young Native Hawaiians and others of their generation who were part of the majority population of non-white Hawai'i Creole English speakers began to question their own minority status, negative socio-economic outcomes in their communities and the loss of land, culture and political sovereignty over the past century. This included a reevaluation of what their parents' generation had given up

in order to convince Washington that Hawai‘i was worthy of becoming an American state.

The status of the Hawaiian language also received attention as those young people turned to their elders for answers to their questions as to what had happened to Hawai‘i and the Native Hawaiian people (Wilson 1998, pp. 130–131). Those elders, generally born before 1920, were the last in their families to actually speak Hawaiian as a language of communication. Young people knew songs, place names, terms for flora and fauna, and Hawaiian words used in Hawai‘i Creole English, but they went to the elders to learn more about Hawaiian culture, history, and spirituality.

The Hawaiian language revitalization movement developed from this larger cultural movement of the 1970s and 1980s that came to be known as the “Hawaiian Renaissance” (Schütz 1994, pp. 361–362). It was a statewide movement but with distinctive realizations in different islands and among specific interest groups. For example, there was an especially strong interest in the Hawaiian language and traditional Hawaiian dance in Hilo, the second largest population centre in Hawai‘i located on the rural “Big Island”, itself also called Hawai‘i.

## ***1.6 The Beginnings of the College and Language Nests***

Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language (Ka Haka ‘Ula, the College) at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo grew out of efforts by Native Hawaiian elders and youth to have the Hawaiian language taught along with foreign languages at the local two-year college. As that two-year college became a four-year entity, students demonstrated in the 1970s for a full four-year Hawaiian language program and a BA in Hawaiian Studies. I came to the program in 1978 to write up such a BA, based on my participation in core Hawaiian language revitalization efforts. I did so with the approval of the sole permanent teacher, elder Edith Kanaka‘ole, and her support for major innovations to the program. The BA we developed was approved in 1982 with the innovation of being taught through Hawaiian rather than English and operating as its own small department of three staff (Wilson 2018, pp. 87–88). Shortly after the BA was approved, we initiated language nests similar to the Māori Kōhanga Reo. These were named Pūnana Leo “nest of voices” with the non-profit organization operating them called the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo (Wilson and Kamanā 2001). In Hilo staff and students operated the schools. We were also parents of enrolled children (Wilson and Kamanā 2013, pp. 101–117).

A close connection between the Pūnana Leo schools and the new BA resulted in rapid enrolment growth. In 1997, the Hawai‘i State Legislature mandated that the Department become its own small college with a Hawaiian language centre, a Hawaiian-medium teacher certification program, an MA in Hawaiian language and literature, and eventually an MA in Indigenous language and culture education, along with a PhD in Hawaiian and Indigenous language and culture revitalization (Wilson and Kawai‘ae‘a 2007). The realization of all these initiatives was

accomplished through community, student and staff activism, as had been the case from the beginning of the teaching of Hawaiian in Hilo. Although there was some resistance within the University of Hawai‘i system to building higher level programs and structures in Hilo, the Legislature moved on the matter. It saw strength in the Hilo population, with its high percentage of Native Hawaiians, and in the orientation of the Hilo campus, which was focused on community applications rather than on the research and theory expected of the larger University of Hawai‘i campus at Mānoa in Honolulu. The new college status and the Legislature’s mandate that we serve the community strengthened Ka Haka ‘Ula’s focus on serving Pūnana Leo language nests statewide, along with the growing number of associated primary and secondary Hawaiian immersion schools that were growing out of the language nests.

## 2 The Operations of the College

### 2.1 *The Kumu Honua Maui Ola Educational Philosophy*

In 1998, together with teachers from the non-profit ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, the staff of the new college wrote up an educational philosophy from the teachings and practices of Hawaiian speaking elders. Those elders included staff members’ own family members and elders teaching in the Pūnana Leo language nests, public school immersion programs and college courses (‘Aha Pūnana Leo and Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani 2009). This written philosophy was then used to clarify programming to accreditors as well as to those served by what was developing into a completely Hawaiian language medium educational system.

Called the Kumu Honua Maui Ola, the philosophy envisions language revitalization as focused on the expression of Hawaiian *mauli* or life force. The *mauli* is expressed in a person and group spiritually, linguistically, physically and through a body of knowledge. It includes three *piko*, or points of connection to others with the same *mauli* who came before, exist now, or will exist in the future. Those connections are spiritual, genealogical, and agentive/creative. The *mauli* and its development are seen as progressing through a series of *honua* “locations” beginning with the womb, then into an intermediate protected environment and finally into the entire world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Philosophy is available online with explanations in Japanese, French, Spanish and English at <http://www.ahapunaleo.org/images/files/KHMO.pdf>.



## 2.2 *The Physical Environment of the College*

Ka Haka ‘Ula is itself a *honua* where the Hawaiian *mauli* is dominant. All operations and daily protocols are conducted through the language. All staff are second language speakers or the first language speaker products of Hawaiian language dominant homes established by second language speakers (Wilson 2018, pp. 88–89).

For many years, the activities of Ka Haka ‘Ula were scattered across the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo campus. Then, in 2014, the College was blessed with its own building named Hale‘ōlelo. It also has a “portable” or roughly constructed temporary building across a stream from the main building where it houses its Hale Kuamo‘o Hawaiian Language Centre. Fifteen minutes away from campus is its demonstration Hawaiian language medium demonstration school laboratory, Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u (Nāwahī). The Nāwahī site includes an infant toddler program for Hawaiian speaking children under the age of three, a Pūnana Leo language nest that integrates non-Hawaiian speaking children with Hawaiian speakers aged three and four (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 151–154). From there students progress into a kindergarten-to-high school Hawaiian-medium program serving students from ages 5–17 at that same site (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 158–163; OiwīTV 2012).

The above three main *honua* of the College are focused on producing highly fluent and literate users of Hawaiian as the primary language of life. That is, the core mission of the College is to produce individuals who establish, maintain and grow *honua* where Hawaiian is the dominant language, e.g., peer groups, homes, educational entities, support entities, government services, and private businesses.

## 2.3 *The Qualifications Offered by the College*

Ka Haka ‘Ula offers two bachelor degrees: Hawaiian Studies and Linguistics. Linguistics is the smaller degree and is taught through the medium of English, although Hawaiian-medium courses on Hawaiian linguistics may be used to fulfil some of its requirements. It is offered as a means to strengthen multilingualism for Hawaiian speakers and as a means for those outside the Hawaiian language revitalization movement to be a part of the program. It includes a certificate in contemporary Indigenous multilingualism focused on Indigenous students from non-Hawaiian backgrounds pursuing the revitalization of their own languages. Linguistics staff also play an important role in a stream in the PhD degree of the College that provides for the enrolment of selected students highly proficient in an Indigenous language other than Hawaiian (Wilson 2018, p. 90).

The Hawaiian Studies BA has two tracks. One allows inclusion of some courses taught through English in other departments. The other is taught entirely in the College and through Hawaiian except for some of the lowest level courses. Courses taught primarily through English are HAW 101–102 and three culture courses

focused on the family, ethnobotany and ethnozoology. Students from throughout the University may take these courses to meet general education requirements. Those who continue in the Hawaiian Studies major are typically Native Hawaiian from Hawai'i Creole English and Standard English speaking homes. A certain percentage have taken foreign language style courses in Hawaiian language at the high school level, but typically are not very proficient in the use of Hawaiian. Those who have developed some proficiency may be granted an exemption from first year courses upon a satisfactory test result and proceed into second year level courses taught through Hawaiian.

With the growth of student enrolments at the high school laboratory of the College and overall enrolments in public schooling through the medium of Hawaiian, the College has added HAW 133–233 to its offerings. Taught through Hawaiian, this two semester sequence provides proficient Hawaiian speakers with the metalinguistic knowledge of Hawaiian grammar and semantics taught to non-speakers in the four semesters of first and second year. That background allows them to proceed into third year and then fourth year where such metalinguistic knowledge is used to build higher levels of adult level proficiency. The Hawaiian Studies BA also requires additional credits taught through Hawaiian which can come from such Hawaiian topics as oratory, literature, linguistic analysis, traditional arts, music and dance (Wilson 2018, p. 87).

## ***2.4 Assuring High Proficiency in the Language***

The College is currently working to develop a general education strand taught through Hawaiian, that is, such courses as World History and Introduction to Biology, courses that within the American system of education are required to be taken by students in order to provide a breadth of general knowledge in addition to the depth of knowledge in a specific area provided by a student's major. Expanding to include an array of general education courses through Hawaiian is a means for Ka Haka 'Ula to increase student proficiency in Hawaiian and their ability to apply Hawaiian cultural perspectives in a range of new domains. This development will therefore further strengthen the training of Hawaiian-medium school teachers (Wilson 2018, p. 91).

In order to graduate with the Hawaiian Studies BA, students must pass a rigorous proficiency assessment addressing all four language skills (Wilson 2018, p. 89). Relative to the skill of speaking, a student must pass an ACTFL proficiency interview at no lower than the Intermediate High level (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) 2012). The listening skill is assessed through the transcription of a tape of an elder speaking in normal conversational speed about a cultural topic. Demonstration of the skill of reading is combined with attention to orthography differences, with students required to take a nineteenth-century Hawaiian document and rewrite it using contemporary Hawaiian spelling. Writing skills are assessed through an essay in Hawaiian on an assigned topic. In

addition students must demonstrate skill in translation by converting a contemporary English language newspaper article into Hawaiian.

The level of proficiency required to pass the assessment is seen as appropriate for use of Hawaiian in professional life, and is aligned with the recommendations of the US Foreign Service Institute for the S-3 General Professional Proficiency level. The US Foreign Service Institute sees such a level being reached after 1100 hours of study and use, which is the requirement for a language such as Hawaiian with significant linguistic and cultural differences from English (United States Department of State [n.d.](#)). Hawaiian Studies students exceed those hours through class hours, College cultural activities, student work, volunteer hours, and through social activities conducted through Hawaiian.

## 2.5 *Graduate Level Education in the College*

Passing the Hawaiian proficiency assessment is among the requirements for enrolling in Kahuawaiola, the post-BA teaching certificate program of the College. Also required are four years college-level study of Hawaiian, at least two Hawaiian culture courses and no less than 50 hours previous paid or volunteer hours in an educational setting taught through Hawaiian. For licensure to teach certain secondary-school content areas, students meet the same content area requirements as English-medium post-baccalaureate teacher-education programs in Hawai'i. Seeking such additional licensure, a considerable number of students enrolled in the Hawaiian Studies BA major in the College take a double major in other fields at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (Wilson and Kamanā [2001](#), pp. 169–171; Wilson and Kawai'ae'a [2007](#)).

Kahuawaiola consists of 37 credits taught entirely through Hawaiian (Wilson and Kawai'ae'a [2007](#)). The program is taught over three semesters. The first semester is taught in the summer and includes the core Kumu Honua Maui Ola teaching philosophy and its application, as well as specialized courses for various content areas such as language arts, mathematics, science, arts and physical education. This is followed by two full semesters of student teaching with experience at both the primary and secondary level. Most student teaching is done at the Nāwahī school laboratory site but it is possible for students to teach at Hawaiian immersion schools elsewhere. During each of the student teaching semesters, all students also enrol in a late afternoon seminar course through distance learning.

All graduates receive a Hawaiian language-medium licence applicable to multiple grade levels, a primary school teacher's license applicable to schools taught through English or Hawaiian, and a licence to teach Hawaiian language at the secondary level. Other licences are based on any non-Hawaiian Studies major content degrees that the student may have earned and student teaching hours in such a content area.

Following Kahuawaiola, students who meet certain other requirements may apply to enter the MA in Indigenous Language and Culture Education that builds from the 37 credits of Kahuawaiola, with an additional 12 graduate credits also

taught through Hawaiian. Kahuawaiola includes within one of its courses regular distance-education contact with Indigenous graduate students in education programs in other universities in Canada, the United States and New Zealand. Students in this MA program complete an action research project as part of their final requirements.

Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani offers another MA that includes a required Masters thesis and thesis defence. The MA in Hawaiian Language and Literature includes features of a traditional “foreign language” Masters program and an applied linguistics and anthropology program. Students complete 36 credits taught entirely through Hawaiian with a focus on the wealth of materials written in Hawaiian in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as well as later recordings of Hawaiian language and music. The program includes a diversity requirement of travel beyond Hawai‘i to another Indigenous community involved in language and culture revitalization (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 171–172).

The third graduate program of the College is the PhD in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture Revitalization. This program follows the American tradition of a set program of coursework followed by a dissertation. The program accepts Hawaiian speakers with a Masters degree, high proficiency in Hawaiian, demonstrated skills in academic writing, experience in an Indigenous language and culture beyond Hawaiian, and a commitment to Hawaiian language and culture revitalization. Also eligible for enrolment are selected students with high proficiency and academic knowledge of an Indigenous language other than Hawaiian and with similar backgrounds to those of Hawaiian speakers accepted into the program. The PhD includes a required Hawaiian language and culture focus for Hawaiian speaking students. This is addressed through courses taught through Hawaiian. Non-Hawaiian students study a broader area of Indigenous languages and culture in society through English. A second area of focus for which Hawaiian speakers and other Indigenous language speaking students join together is typically Indigenous language and culture in education or language planning (Wilson 2018, p. 90).

## ***2.6 Preschool to Secondary School Programming***

The 1997 law that mandated the transition of the Hawaiian Studies Department into its own college also required that Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u School be its school laboratory. In 1997, Nāwahī was an abandoned private school site that had just been purchased for the non-profit ‘Aha Pūnana Leo by the State Office of Hawaiian Affairs to house education provided through Hawaiian. Families who had been pioneering public education for their children through Hawaiian at grades 7–9 (ages 12–14) had moved there the previous year, while it was being administered as an off-campus site for Hilo Intermediate School and Hilo High School. The new law did not eliminate that administrative layer, but added to it with the school laboratory status, including an administrator from the College (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 158–159).

Subsequent to being established as a school laboratory, Nāwahī gradually added an elementary school component, operated as a charter school, and two programs of the private non-profit 'Aha Pūnana Leo, one a Hawaiian language medium pre-school/language nest for three and four year olds and the other an infant-toddler program for those with Hawaiian speaking parents. The first students graduated from Nāwahī in 1999. Nāwahī is the most developed site within a larger effort in Hawai'i and the United States to revitalize endangered Indigenous languages through schooling (Wilson and Kamanā 2011). Its outcomes challenge assumptions that education provided totally through an Indigenous language cannot match mainstream schools academically (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 159–161; Wilson and Kamanā 2011, pp. 46–47).

Data from the 2012–2013 school year show enrolments at Nāwahī to have been 95% Native Hawaiian, with over 65% meeting government criteria for free and reduced lunch ('Aipia-Peters 2014, pp. 57–58). While statewide Native Hawaiian students and students from lower socio-economic status graduate from high school at below average rates, the statistics on high school graduation and college attendance for Nāwahī students has exceeded state averages for all ethnic groups. The 2016–2017 school year data for public schools as a whole for high school graduation are 83% for all students (the largest group of which are Native Hawaiians) and specifically for Native Hawaiians, 79%. For college attendance immediately after high school, the statistics are 55% for all students and 42% for Native Hawaiians (Hawai'i Department of Education 2017, pp. 8–9). The Nāwahī high school rates for the 2016–2017 year were 100%, with Nāwahī maintaining that rate for many years since its first graduating class in 1999. Relative to college attendance directly after high school graduation, the Nāwahī rate has averaged over 80% since that first class ('Aipia-Peters 2014, p. 43).

The curriculum at Nāwahī is college preparatory and built from a perspective of Hawaiian culture. Teachers and students access campus gardens containing plants of cultural importance and also the nearby ocean for academic and cultural purposes. All coursework and school operations are conducted through Hawaiian (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 158–163). Beginning in grade 5, English is taught as an additional language through a single course per semester through to grade 12. English courses are taught through Hawaiian, but follow curricula similar to the traditional English language arts courses in English-medium public schools (Wilson and Kamanā 2011, pp. 43–44, 49–50). Intermediate and high school students also use English-medium internet resources to research work for Hawaiian-medium content classes.

Because of the prevalence of English in Hawai'i and in the media, by age ten all students regardless of home language have approximately the same proficiency in oral Standard English as their Native Hawaiian peers in English-medium public schools (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 156–161). They have also developed considerable literacy in English through transfer from Hawaiian literacy. By high school graduation their English literacy is sufficient for them to enrol in English-medium tertiary education. Besides teaching English as a world language, Nāwahī has a

heritage language program to honour sugar plantation immigrants who intermarried with Native Hawaiians (Wilson and Kamanā 2011, p. 50). That program provides Japanese or Chinese to all students from grade 1 to grade 6 and Latin to all from grades 1 to 4.

The tertiary programs of Ka Haka ‘Ula and the language nest to high school programs of Nāwahī intersect at several levels. The school laboratory provides a site for college students to experience an environment where children are being raised and educated through Hawaiian. University students may volunteer or work there and also visit through course field experiences. Students from Nāwahī attend ceremonies and events at the Hale‘ōlelo building. Beginning at grade 10 of high school (15 years of age), Nāwahī students enrol in Hawaiian-medium college courses at Ka Haka ‘Ula. Those courses can be applied to requirements of universities and colleges both in and outside Hawai‘i.

## 2.7 *The Hawaiian Language Centre*

In 1989, 2 years after the initial government adoption of the Pūnana Leo model for primary school education, the Hawai‘i State Legislature passed legislation to establish a Hawaiian language centre at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo to provide support for schools taught through Hawaiian. Named the Hale Kuamo‘o, the centre built on the work already occurring in the Hawaiian Studies Department in partnership with the private non-profit ‘Aha Pūnana Leo to produce curriculum and provide in-service support to teachers. The establishment of the Hale Kuamo‘o allowed the Department to bring new staff in to join the three staff members operating the BA in Hawaiian Studies (Wilson and Kamanā 2001, pp. 167–169).

When the Legislature mandated the establishment of the College, the Hale Kuamo‘o was incorporated into the College. However, the establishment of the College without funding to expand meant that new programs in teacher certification, Masters degrees and the PhD consumed the funds earlier appropriated to support the Hale Kuamo‘o. Nevertheless, the College was able to maintain and expand the Hale Kuamo‘o through partnerships and by winning competitive grants from the federal government. The Hale Kuamo‘o has been the key to Hawaiian immersion growth statewide as it has produced the core curriculum of elementary schools taught through Hawaiian including mathematics, social science, and science texts.

Among other projects of the Hale Kuamo‘o is the *Māmaka Kaiāo* dictionary of contemporary Hawaiian terms produced by a statewide lexicon committee. There are over 3000 terms in the dictionary, with the focus being on those needed in the schools. That dictionary and all older Hawaiian language dictionaries are available online through the Ulukau Electronic Hawaiian Library of the Centre.<sup>2</sup> Hawaiian language readers for different levels can be downloaded for free from Ulukau,

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<sup>2</sup>These resources can be accessed at <http://ulukau.org/>

which also provides public access to historical Hawaiian documents. Among those historical documents, Hawaiian language newspapers are especially important. These newspapers include the writings of Native Hawaiian scholars on Hawaiian history, culture, and political commentary. The Hawaiian language newspapers are used at the tertiary and secondary levels in teaching a variety of subjects. Most recently Ulukau has added Kani'āina, a collection of Hawaiian language radio talk show programs broadcast from 1972 to 1988. Those recordings include a wide range of native speakers from different islands talking about cultural and historical topics.

## **2.8 Advantages of *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani* for Language Revitalization**

The major advantages possessed by the Hawaiian language revitalization movement emanate from the large Indigenous population and distinctive history of Hawai'i. There are some 300,000 Native Hawaiians in the State of Hawai'i today, approximately 21% of the entire state population (Hixson et al. 2012, p. 19). The existence of a single Indigenous language and the impact of the earlier Kingdom of Hawai'i on the shared identity of the general population provides unique advantages to Hawaiian. Furthermore, Hawai'i Creole English spoken by the majority of Hawai'i's multi-ethnic population, includes much vocabulary and influence from Hawaiian. Its shared sense of identity grounded in Hawai'i's Indigenous culture and history played a role in Hawai'i's multi-ethnic population voting in 1978 to establish a distinctive official status for the Hawaiian language.

Hawaiian has also benefited from an existing framework of formal Hawaiian language teaching in the University of Hawai'i and some high schools (Schütz 1994, pp. 311–320, 356–362). The founding staff of *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani* were part of a small group who met each other in Hawaiian language classes in the beginnings of the Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s. Besides the College, our core group developed the non-profit 'Aha Pūnana Leo with the two entities serving to assure assistance to communities in opening and resourcing first language nests and then K-12 Hawaiian language immersion streams (Wilson and Kamanā 2001). As of late 2019 there were twelve Pūnana Leo language nests and 27 follow-up sites in K-12 streams statewide with a total enrolment of 3675.

The key strength of *Ka Haka 'Ula* is its establishment of language revitalization-ist controlled *honua* structures where the Hawaiian language is dominant. The amount of actual funding for those structures has never been equal to that allocated to higher profile foreign languages in American universities. However, by placing the establishment of structures as a priority over funding, the core group has been able to fill in those *honua* with students and grant funds to the point that the pre-school to graduate program under the auspices of *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani* has become the leading integrated language revitalization effort, not only in Hawai'i,

but in the United States. It is also the only entity offering the PhD in any Indigenous language in the country.

## 2.9 *Growth in Enrolments and Revitalization*

In the early 1960s there were no university level Hawaiian language courses in Hilo and the entire Hawaiian enrolment at the main University of Hawai‘i Mānoa campus was 27 (Schütz 1994, p. 362). The situation has changed dramatically, with Hawaiian taught in over ten universities and colleges in the state. The United States national statistics for the fall of 2013 show that within a listing of over 300 “less commonly taught languages” offered in tertiary institutions, Hawaiian ranked seventeenth with an enrolment of 2419. (Goldberg et al. 2015, pp. 9–10, 43–60).

The initiation of the formal Bachelors program in Hawaiian Studies in Hilo in 1983, with three full-time positions and the ability to hire advanced students to assist with teaching, allowed the program to begin with 12 declared students enrolled in the Hawaiian Studies BA major. The staff has since grown to 13, three of whom are assigned primarily to administrative duties—one as the director of the College, one as the director of Nāwahī, and one as a statewide developer with the Pūnana Leo language nests, of which there are 12 statewide feeding into primary through to secondary Hawaiian immersion program streams consisting of 22 separate sites.

In the fall of 2017 the College had 92 declared students majoring in the Hawaiian Studies BA, 39 majoring in the Linguistics BA; 9 Kahuawaiola teacher education certificate students, 7 in the Masters of Indigenous Language and Culture Education, 13 in the Masters in Hawaiian Language and Literature and 11 students in the doctorate in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture. The total enrolment of students was considerably higher, with a total of 741 individual course registrants (University of Hawai‘i System 2018). Furthermore, closely affiliated with the College were 402 K-12 students enrolled at the Nāwahī demonstration laboratory site, with an additional 57 Hawaiian speaking infant-toddlers and preschoolers on that campus (Kauanoē Kamanā, personal communication, October 2017).

The contribution of the Hale Kuamo‘o language centre has also been considerable. It is the largest publisher of Hawaiian language books anywhere and has published 664 Hawaiian language titles, ranging from early readers through to college level materials. Its Ulukau Hawaiian electronic library averages twenty million hits per year (Keiki Kawai‘ae‘a, personal communication, October 2017).

While much work remains to be done in terms of Hawaiian language revitalization, there is growing acceptance of the importance of Hawaiian in the state’s Native Hawaiian and broader multiethnic population, especially on the rural island of Hawai‘i where Ka Haka ‘Ula is located. Hawaiian was no longer spoken by children on the island when the BA was being developed in the late 1970s. However, in the 2018–2019 school year, over 50% of students enrolled at Nāwahī are enrolling already speaking Hawaiian (Kēhaulani ‘Aipia-Peters, personal communication, January 2019). Furthermore, the latest government figures indicate that Hawaiian is



the largest declared non-English language spoken by children aged 5–17 on the island, with a total of 1600 (State of Hawai‘i 2016). While surely not all those children are primary speakers of Hawaiian, the fact that parents are listing their children as Hawaiian speakers bodes well for the future of the revitalization movement.

### 3 Some Key Points of Possible Value to Others

Our small core group that developed Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani, the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u set a goal of establishing a Hawaiian speaking community served by a full semi-autonomous system of preschool through to university education provided through Hawaiian. While that truly huge goal was internally held, our group worked with the broader society on incrementally addressing small steps to the larger goal as they emerged. We initiated those steps with the limited resources that we ourselves had and used our own families to populate the system as it grew. We were stubborn in our insistence on the human right to such a system while realizing that no one else would actually build it for us. We had to develop and expand it ourselves.

### 4 Appreciation

Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani is a heartfelt supporter of all language revitalization efforts throughout the world and it was an honour to be welcomed to Kaurua Country by the speakers of that language and to present on the College at the Fourth Biennial Colloquium of LCNAU.<sup>3</sup>

*Ngaityu yakanantalya, ngaityu yungantalya.  
Mahalo nui.*

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<sup>3</sup>This chapter is based on a keynote address given at the Fourth Biennial Colloquium of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU), at the University of Adelaide, on November 27 2017.

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# Access and Personnel Policy in Minority Language Education: A Case Study at Yúnnán Mínzú University of China



Jie Yang

**Abstract** China, a country with 56 official ethnic groups, retains approximately 120 minority languages, only a few of which are taught at the tertiary level. Using Kaplan and Baldauf's (Language and language-in-education planning in the Pacific Basin. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht) model of language-in-education policy as a theoretical framework, this study focuses on the access (who studies which language) and personnel (selection of teaching staff) policies and planning of minority language education at universities in Yúnnán Province, China. The data in this study are comprised of documents and interviews with eight teaching staff and nine students currently working with minority languages at Yúnnán Mínzú University. The data are analysed qualitatively to scrutinize the access and personnel policy within the institution, especially with regards to teacher and student recruitment. The study provides insights into the success of, as well as challenges posed by, the access and personnel policies and planning of minority language education in Yúnnán Province, China.

**Keywords** Access policy · Personnel policy · Language-in-education policy · Preferential policy · Minority language · Southern-Chinese minorities · University admission · Staff background · Endangered language

## 1 Introduction

There are currently over 10,000 Chinese minority bilingual schools within the People's Republic of China (PRC), with total enrolments of approximately 6,000,000 students. More than 60 minority languages are used in schools and over 3000 textbooks in 29 languages have been compiled and printed, with a print run of

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100,000,000 in total per year (Zhang 2011, p. 207). According to the report on Chinese University assessment published in 2015, there were 15 Mǐnzú universities (recruiting students from ethnically diverse backgrounds) in China. Yúnnán province is the most complex province in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity, and Yúnnán Mǐnzú University offers ethnic minority language programs for the 13 most representative ethnic minority languages of southern China: Xishuangbanna Dài (*Xīshuāngbǎnnà Dǎi*), Dehong Dài (*Déhóng Dǎi*), Tibetan (*Zàng*), Nakhi (*Nàxī*), Jingpo (*Jīngpō*), Lahu (*Lāhù*), Yi (*Yì*), Zhuang (*Zhuàng*), Miao (*Miáo*), Hani (*Hānī*), Wa (*Wǎ*), Lisu (*Lisù*), and Bai (*Bái*).

## 2 A Brief Introduction to Ethnic Minority Languages in China

Based on the data from the China Population Census of 2010, the majority group, Han (*Hàn*), accounts for 91.5% of the total population. The size of the minority population is approximately 113.7 million, representing 8.4% of the national total population, and the remaining 0.64 million people are considered “unrecognized ethnic groups”. 60% of these minorities use their own languages. There are 129 known languages still spoken in China (Sun et al. 2007). These languages (see Table 1) can be classified into five distinct language families: Sino-Tibetan, Altaic, Indo-European, Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian (Sun et al. 2007, p. 30; Stites 1999; Tsung 2009, p. 12).

The use of minority languages in China (see Table 2) can be broadly categorized into three groups (Daobu 1998):

1. Minorities such as Chinese Mongols, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Chinese Kazakhs and Chinese Koreans, with populations of over one million. These groups use their languages not only within their families, neighbourhoods and amongst relatives, but also within their own sociocultural sphere, politics, education, economy and other sectors. Such widespread languages may also be in use between nearby communities. Their languages are expressed orthographically by either traditional or newly devised scripts. In China’s autonomous regions, minority languages and Chinese are spoken bilingually in the performance of official business. They are utilized within various forms of media such as books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, literature and art industries, as well as in minority language teaching systems throughout primary school (ages 6–12), junior middle school (ages 12–15), senior middle school (ages 15–18) and university.
2. Some minorities, such as the Zhuang, Yi, Dai, Lisu, Lahu and Jingpo, remain in ethnic enclaves. Their languages are in use within families, neighbourhoods and amongst relatives. However, their written scripts, whether they be traditional or newly devised scripts, are not widely used at all. Moreover, their spoken lan-

**Table 1** Linguistic classification of minority languages in China

Language families	Language branch	Ethnic groups	Locations of speakers
Sino-Tibetan	Tibetan-Burmese	Achang ( <i>Āchāng</i> ), Bai ( <i>Bái</i> ), Derung ( <i>Dúlóng</i> ), Jingpo ( <i>Jīngpō</i> ), Jino ( <i>Jīnuò</i> ), Hani ( <i>Hāni</i> ), Lahu ( <i>Lāhù</i> ), Lhoba ( <i>Luòbā</i> ), Lisu ( <i>Lisù</i> ), Monba ( <i>Ménbā</i> ), Nakhi ( <i>Nàxī</i> ), Nu ( <i>Nù</i> ), Pumi ( <i>Pūmǐ</i> ), Qiang ( <i>Qiāng</i> ), She ( <i>Shē</i> ), Tibetan ( <i>Zāng</i> ), Tujia ( <i>Tújiā</i> ), Yi ( <i>Yī</i> )	South and Southwest
	Kam-Thai	Bouyei ( <i>Bùyī</i> ), Dai ( <i>Dǎi</i> ), Dong ( <i>Dòng</i> ), Gelao ( <i>Gēlǎo</i> ), Li ( <i>Lǐ</i> ), Maonan ( <i>Máonán</i> ), Mulao ( <i>Mùlǎo</i> ), Sui ( <i>Shuǐ</i> ), Zhuang ( <i>Zhuàng</i> )	
	Miao-Yao	Miao ( <i>Miáo</i> ), Yao ( <i>Yáo</i> )	
Altaic	Turkic	Kazakh ( <i>Hāsàkè</i> ), Kyrgyz ( <i>Kē'ěrkèzī</i> ), Salar ( <i>Sālā</i> ), Tatars ( <i>Tǎ tá'ěr</i> ), Uyghur ( <i>Wéiwú'ěr</i> ), Uzbek ( <i>Wūzībīékè</i> ), Western Yugur ( <i>Xī Yùgù</i> )	North, Northeast and Northwest
	Mongolian	Bonan ( <i>Bāoān</i> ), Daur ( <i>Dáwò'ěr</i> ), Dongxiang ( <i>Dōngxiāng</i> ), Mongol ( <i>Měnggǔ</i> ), Tu ( <i>Tǔ</i> ), Eastern Yugur ( <i>Dōng Yùgù</i> )	
	Tungusic	Evenki ( <i>Èwēnkè</i> ), Hezhen ( <i>Hèzhé</i> ), Korean ( <i>Cháoxiān</i> ), Manchu ( <i>Mǎn</i> ), Oroqen ( <i>Èlúncūn</i> ), Xibe ( <i>Xībó</i> );	
Indo-European		Tajik ( <i>Tǎjǐkè</i> ), Russian ( <i>Éluósī</i> )	Northwest
Austro-Asiatic		Blang ( <i>Bùlǎng</i> ), De'ang ( <i>Déáng</i> ), Gin ( <i>Jīng</i> ), Wa ( <i>Wǎ</i> )	South
Austronesian		Gaoshan ( <i>Gāoshān</i> , is an umbrella name created by PRC government); Utsul (i.e., Huíhuī, unrecognized by PRC government)	Táiwān; Hǎinán

**Table 2** Use of minority languages in China

Minority groups	Domains	Language use in school	Language use channel
Chinese Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur, Chinese Kazakh, Chinese Korean	Families, neighbourhoods, relatives, within own sociocultural sphere, politics, education, economy and other sectors	Comprehensive language learning from primary school to university	Oral; Various forms of media: books, newspapers, radio, television, literature and art industries
Zhuang, Yi, Dai, Lisu, Lahu and Jingpo	Families, neighbourhoods, relatives; the use of languages is limited to oral communication; few important document translations conducted for political purposes	Foundation language learning from primary school to university	Oral; Traditional or newly devised scripts, but not widespread.
Over half of China's minority groups	Diglossia: use H languages in formal situations and L languages in informal situations.	For the purpose of academic research (Zhu 2003)	Oral; No scripts or lost scripts

languages exhibit diverse lectal variation. The use of their languages is limited to oral communication, and few important document translations are conducted for political purposes. Thus, they are not used as widely in society as those of Group One. Subsequently, people from these groups are only taught ethnic minority language foundation courses between the years of preschool and tertiary education.

3. Other minorities use their mother tongue in informal situations. They do, however, use other languages (mainly Han or other minority languages) in the realms of politics, education and the market place. This situation is called “diglossia” in linguistics; the “Low” (L) languages they use in informal situations have low prestige, while the “High” (H) languages used in formal situations have high prestige (Ferguson 1959). This situation accounts for three quarters of total language use in China, including over half of China’s minority groups. For example, Bonans and Oroqens use the Han language in formal situations, and most Chinese Uzbeks and Tatars use Uyghur or Chinese Kazakh in politics, education and the market place.

### 3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Kaplan and Baldauf’s (2003) model of language-in-education policy was adopted as a theoretical framework. Kaplan and Baldauf (2003, p. 202) point out that the implementation of language education policies and planning in any country should involve seven aspects: access, personnel, curriculum, community, methods and materials, resourcing, and evaluation policy.

In an educational context, access policy involves the consideration of the individuals who need to study and in which languages they should do so. Personnel policy refers to the recruitment, in-service and pre-service training of teachers. Curriculum policy relates to specific teaching goals, whereas methods and materials policy involves the teaching methods and teaching materials adopted in a particular period. Community policy involves parental attitudes and community support, and resourcing policy concerns funding sources. Lastly, evaluation policy involves the evaluation of the curriculum, student success, teacher success, interest, cost effectiveness, societal change and basic policies exhibited by an educational institute (Kaplan and Baldauf 2003, pp. 217–220).

This study focuses on the access and personnel policies and planning of minority language education at universities in Yúnnán, China. The criteria for recruiting students and teachers is related to education quality and teaching objectives. The data in this study are comprised of documents and interviews with eight teaching staff and nine students who are currently working with minority languages at Yúnnán Míngzú University.

A set of questions was designed when I applied for ethics approval from the University of Adelaide (Ethics approval H-2016-195). Questions were reviewed and modified by experts. The interviews were conducted on 22 and 23 June 2016 in Yúnnán Mínzú University (Yǔhuā campus), Kūnmíng, Yúnnán province. The participants were a language lecturer of Yi language, an Associate Professor of Zhuang language, an Associate Professor and a teaching staff member of Wa language, an Associate Professor and a Masters student of Lisu language, a Hani language lecturer, a Professor and three Masters students of Jingpo language, a Nakhi language Masters student, three Dai language Masters students, and two Han students majoring in ethnic minority language and literature. All interviewees belonged to an ethnic minority except for the two Han students.

The interviews were open-ended, semi-structured, and face-to-face. Both one-to-one and focus group interviews were conducted. All interviews were recorded and stored on the University of Adelaide student U drive. A consent form was given to each interviewee to obtain his/her consent before the interview. Every interviewee was requested to share his/her personal information and contact email address. Interview questions for each interviewee were designed individually based on these general questions:

#### **Access**

1. Are all students in this program native speakers of (ethnic minority)? + (Probes)
2. Are there any preferential policies for the (ethnic minority) students who apply for this program? + (Probes)
3. Is the minimal score of the university entrance exam for this program lower than many other programs in this university? + (Probes)
4. Could students listen, speak, read, or write before enrolling in this program? + (Probes)
5. What are the teaching purposes of this program? + (Probes)

#### **Personnel**

1. Is there any in-service or pre-service training for the teaching staff in this program? + (Probes)
2. Are (ethnic minority) language courses taught by native minority language speakers of (minority) ethnicity? + (Probes)
3. How frequently did you attend these training sessions after you were recruited? + (Probes)
4. Do you have any suggestions on in-service/pre-service training? + (Probes)

During the interview, I adhered to the planned questions, but was flexible in following the conversations of the interviewees. Probes (sub-questions) under each question were asked in order to elicit sufficient information.



#### 4 Access and Personnel Policies in Ethnic Minority Language Education at Yúnnán Mínzú University

The Faculty of Ethnic Culture at Yúnnán Mínzú University offers Bachelors and Masters programs. Ethnic minority language courses are taught by native speakers (except the Nakhi literacy course, which is taught by a professor of Han ethnicity). All undergraduate students in the Faculty are native speakers of a minority language, however, a majority of them cannot read or write their ethnic scripts prior to enrolment. With few exceptions, some students of the Jingpo language major received bilingual education in kindergarten and primary school. They therefore possess basic reading competency before studying at university. There are two Han students enrolled in the Masters programs at the Faculty of Ethnic Culture. These students all study in the same classes, with Modern Standard Chinese being used as the medium of instruction in class.

Ethnic language courses are taught by means of bilingual instruction. Students from the same ethnic groups speak different dialects, with some dialects varying significantly. Additionally, some teaching staff speak different dialects. An example from the Zhuang language is as follows: the Guǎngxī Wǔmíng dialect is the basis of the standardized pronunciation of the Zhuang language (Sun and Huang 2009, p. 7). Speakers of the Yúnnán Wénshān Zhuang dialect can understand the Guǎngxī Wǔmíng Zhuang dialect. However, Guǎngxī Wǔmíng Zhuang dialect speakers may not fully understand the Yúnnán Wénshān Zhuang dialect due to its phonetic complexity (M. Wei, personal communication, 2016). Zhuang language major students begin practising its orthography upon enrolment. There are few primary and secondary schools offering the Zhuang language in Yànshān County (located in Wénshān Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yúnnán province). Consequently, no students were familiar with writing the Zhuang script before enrolling in the discipline at Yúnnán Mínzú University.

For the purpose of training Bai language teachers and maintaining their ethnic minority language, Dàlǐ Bai Autonomous Prefecture People's Government signed an agreement with Yúnnán Mínzú University on establishing the Bái language and culture discipline from 2018. The Bái language oral tests for University Entrance Examinations were held on 28 and 29 March 2018 in Dàlǐ City, the county-level seat of Dàlǐ Bai Autonomous Prefecture in Yúnnán Province. 1287 candidates registered for the Bái language oral test and 1031 attended. Over 20 Bai language experts were involved in assessment (Dàlǐ Bai Autonomous Prefecture Education Bureau website 2018; J. Zhang, personal communication, 2018).

#### 4.1 Access Policy in Ethnic Minority Language Programs at Yúnnán Míngzú University

According to the documents entitled “Opinion on Yúnnán Provincial People’s Government Establishing Demonstration Areas of Ethnic Unity and Progress, the Frontier’s Prosperity and Stability” (Yúnnán Provincial Party Committee 2012) and “Implementation Opinion on Accelerating the Construction of the South-and-Southeast-Asia-Targeted Radiation Centre” (Yúnnán Provincial Party Committee 2015), the Faculty of Ethnic Minority Culture of Yúnnán Míngzú University has been continuing to train ethnic minority workers by adopting new curriculum models: “specialty + language” and “language + specialty” (Yúnnán Míngzú University 2018b). These new models aim to train well-rounded students who are proficient in both languages and professions. The Faculty of Ethnic Minority Culture was established in 1956, and offers the most comprehensive programs in different southern Chinese ethnic minority languages. The Faculty started to recruit Masters students from 1979 (Yúnnán Míngzú University 2018a).

So far, there are two Bachelors programs encompassing 13 different ethnic minority languages. The Faculty of Ethnic Minority Culture offers the following two programs: China Ethnic Minority Language and Literature (Xishuangbanna Dai, Dehong Dai, Tibetan, Naxi, Jingpo, Lahu, Yi, Zhuang, Miao, Hani, Wa, Lisu, Bai) and Editing and Publishing (Ethnic Minority-Han Bilingual). Ethnic minority students who are eligible to apply for these two programs need to meet the following criteria: eligibility to register for the National University Entrance Examination in the coming year; ability to speak their ethnic languages; and have a household register (*hùkǒu*) which appears on the Admission Scheme List of Ethnic Minority Language Test of Yúnnán Míngzú University (see Table 3). The ethnic minority groups and recruitment criteria of these programs need to comply with the agreements of ethnic minority autonomous prefectures and counties in Yúnnán Province. All eligible candidates need to attend the Ethnic Minority Language Oral Test for the University Entrance Examination, organized by Yúnnán Míngzú University and ethnic minority autonomous prefectures and counties (with the exception of Tibetan language speakers). Applicants who apply for Chinese Ethnic Minority Language and Literature (Tibetan language) are required to attend five provinces and autonomous regions for the Tibetan language joint examination (Yúnnán Míngzú University 2018b). The five provinces and autonomous region are as follows: the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Qīnghǎi Province, Sìchuān Province, Gānsù Province and Yúnnán Province. There is no oral test for Tibetan Language major applicants.

The oral test is comprised of the following exercises: vocabulary translation (30%), sentence translation (30%) and short answer questions (40%). Applicants’ results will be converted into the five-grade marking system where: 90–100% is five, 80–89% is four, 70–79% is three, 60–69% is two, and 59% and below is one. According to the Yúnnán Míngzú University (2018b), applicants whose results are not less than two are eligible to apply for those two programs. In practice, applicants whose results are not less than three are considered qualified candidates. The oral

**Table 3** Admission scheme list of ethnic minority language tests, Yúnnán Mǐnzú University

Ethnic minority language	Candidate's household register (Hùkǒu) place	Candidate's ethnicity
Dehong Dai	Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Líncāng City, Xīnpíng County of Yùxī City	Dai
Hani	Xīnpíng County/Yuánjiāng County/Éshān County of Yùxī City, Hóngghē Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Líncāng County of Pǔěr City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture	Hani
Jingpo	Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Líncāng City	Jingpo
Lisu	Lùquàn County of Kūnmíng City, Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Nùjiāng Lisu Autonomous Prefecture, Dìqīng Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	Lisu
Miao	Lùquàn County of Kūnmíng City, Yíliáng County/Wēixìn County/Zhènxióng County of Zhāotōng City, Wénshān Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture	Miao
Nakhi	Lìjiāng City	Nakhi, Mosuo (Mósuō, unrecognized ethnic group in China)
Lahu	Xīnpíng County/Yuánjiāng County of Yùxī City, Mènglián County/Líncāng County/Xīméng County of Pǔěr City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Líncāng City	Lahu
Wa	Mènglián County/Líncāng County/Xīméng County of Pǔěr City, Líncāng City	Wa
Xishuangbanna Dai	Yuánjiāng County of Yùxī City, Mènglián County/Líncāng County of Pǔěr City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture	Dai
Yi	Shílín County/Lùquàn County of Kūnmíng City, Yíliáng County/Wēixìn County/Zhènxióng County of Zhāotōng City, Xīnpíng County/Yuánjiāng County/Éshān County of Yùxī City, Hóngghē Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Líncāng County of Pǔěr City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Líncāng City	Yi
Zhuang	Wénshān Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture	Zhuang
Bai	Dàlǐ Bai Autonomous Prefecture	Bai

test results only help applicants to be qualified in applying for ethnic minority language programs. The university admission, however, mainly depends on the applicants' University Entrance Examination scores (Bai, personal communication, 2016).

According to the Yúnnán enrolment scores in 2017, the average scores for both Arts and Sciences of the Chinese Ethnic Minority language and literature majors are conspicuously lower than other majors (with the exception of fine arts, music, dance, performance and sports majors). There is no significant difference between the

highest scores of Ethnic Minority language literature majors and other majors, but the lowest scores are much lower than those of other majors. This is because each ethnic minority applicant has 10 bonus points out of 750 added to the University Entrance Examination result, and Chinese Ethnic Minority language and literature majors have 40/750 lower minimal admission scores than other regular Arts majors (with the exception of fine arts, music, dance and performance majors) in Yúnnán Mǐnzú University (J. Li, personal communication, 2016). Therefore, school teachers may encourage students to apply for this discipline because of the preferential policies. This gives academically weaker students a chance to enter university provided they apply for this discipline (C. Dao and Xilibufa, personal communication, 2016).

The Faculty of Ethnic Culture offers three Masters programs: Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, China Classical Philology, and China Ethnic Language and Literature (Yúnnán Mǐnzú University 2018c). There is no ethnic minority language requirement for applicants. Han candidates are also eligible to apply for these programs. The Yúnnán Mǐnzú University offers generous scholarships and subsidies to each postgraduate student, in particular, to the ethnic minority students. Moreover, ethnic minority applicants can benefit from the “Minority high-level backbone talents” program and the “Double Minority” (*shuāngshǎo*) policy.

#### 4.1.1 Minority High-Level Backbone Talents Program

The “Minority High-level Backbone Talents Program” (*shǎoshù mǐnzú gǔgàn réncái péiyǎng jìhuà*) has been offered since 2006. This postgraduate education program is designed for recruiting:

1. minority students whose registered permanent residential accounts (*hùkǒu*) are in the western provinces (Sichuān, Yúnnán, Guìzhōu, Shānxī, Gānsu, Qīnghǎi), autonomous regions (Tibet, Xīnjiāng, Xīnjiāng Production and Construction Corps, Níngxìà, Inner Mongolia, and Guǎngxī), and direct-controlled municipalities (Chóngqìng) and Hǎinán province; the frontier cities and counties, minority autonomous prefectures, counties, towns, and villages in Héběi, Liáoníng, Jílín, Hēilóngjiāng, Fújiàn, Húběi and Húnán provinces;
2. Han and minority people who are working as teaching and administrative staff for Tibet/Xīnjiāng classes in inland China, Mǐnzú universities or preparatory education for ethnic minorities (*yùkē bān*) in the university sector (General Office of Ministry of Education of the PRC 2017a).

The quota for this program is 4000 Masters students and 1000 PhD students per year. In 2017, 141 universities and vocational colleges were assigned to enrol students in the “Minority High-level Backbone Talents Program” (General Office of Ministry of Education of the PRC 2017b).

#### 4.1.2 “Double Minority” (*shuāngshǎo*) Policy for Postgraduate Education

National postgraduate entrance examinations include a preliminary exam and a re-examination. The preliminary exam normally takes place in December of every year. After the results are released, “minimum re-examination acceptance scores” will be set according to disciplines and the locations of the university. The locations of the universities in the PRC are divided into two zones in the national postgraduate entrance examination system, Zone A and Zone B. Zone A contains Běijīng, Tiānjīn, Héběi, Shānxī, Liáoníng, Jílín, Hēilóngjiāng, Shànghǎi, Jiāngsū, Zhèjiāng, Ānhuī, Fújiàn, Jiāngxī, Shāndōng, Hénán, Húběi, Húnán, Guǎngdōng, Chóngqìng, Sìchuān and Shānxī. Zone B includes Inner Mongolia, Guǎngxī, Hǎinán, Guìzhōu, Yúnnán, Tíbet, Gānsù, Qīnghǎi, Níngxià, and Xīnjiāng. The minimal re-examination acceptance score in Zone A is 10 points higher than that in Zone B in each discipline.

The “Double Minority” policy allows preferential postgraduate admission for the minority candidates who apply for the universities located in Zone B, and will work in the minority autonomous regions upon graduation. This includes five regions, 30 prefectures and 120 counties (State Council Information Office of the PRC 2005); or, minority candidates who work in the minority autonomous places and will go back to their original workplaces after graduation (Ministry of Education of the PRC 2018). Taking the national postgraduate re-examination requirement of 2017 (see Table 4) as an example, the minimal national re-examination acceptance scores for different disciplines range from 345 to 245, while the minimum national re-examination acceptance score for the “students who are eligible for the ethnic minority preferential policy” category is 245. In practice, the re-examination acceptance scores and admission requirements for the “Double Minority” students vary according to the particular university and discipline. Some universities only recruit working candidates, e.g., Mínzú University of China, South Central University for Nationalities, South China Normal University, etc. The “Double Minority” policy cannot help candidates a great deal if they apply for popular universities or disciplines, due to high competition, e.g., Chóngqìng University or Húnán University.

Unlike the “Minority High-level Backbone Talents Program”, there is no special admission quota for “Double Minority” candidates. This means that candidates who pass the national postgraduate preliminary examination have to compete with regular candidates in the re-examination. The final admission list is determined by the sum of preliminary exam results and subsequent re-examination results. Therefore, “Double Minority” candidates have relatively few opportunities to be enrolled, especially for those who apply for popular majors and universities.

As the majority of candidates for the Chinese minority language and literature relevant majors are from ethnic minorities, a series of preferential admission policies including “Double Minority” may apply to them.

**Table 4** Minimum acceptance scores for National Postgraduate re-examination 2017

Name of discipline (major)	Zone A			Zone B		
	Total score (full mark = 500)	Individual score (full mark = 100)	Individual score (full mark = 100)	Total score (full mark = 500)	Individual score (full mark = 100)	Individual score (full mark = 100)
Philosophy	285	38	57	275	35	53
Economics	335	46	69	325	43	65
Law	310	44	66	300	41	62
Pedagogy (excludes physical education)	310	44	132	300	41	123
Literature	345	53	80	335	50	75
History	315	45	135	305	42	126
Natural Science	290	39	59	280	36	54
Engineering (excludes mitigation major)	265	35	53	255	32	48
Agronomy	255	34	51	245	31	47
Medical Science (excludes mitigation major)	295	40	120	285	37	111
Military Science	280	39	59	270	36	54
Management	340	46	69	330	43	65
Art	335	35	53	325	32	48
Physical Education	260	34	102	250	31	93
Engineering (mitigation major)	260	34	51	250	31	47
Traditional Chinese Medicine (mitigation major)	295	39	117	285	36	108
Mitigation Policy for Minority Students	245	30	45	245	30	45

Note: Minimum Re-examination Acceptance Score is 245 for the “Minority High-level Backbone Talents Program”

#### **4.2 *Personnel Policy/Planning for Teaching Staff of Ethnic Minority Programs in Yúnnán Mǐnzú University***

Southern Chinese ethnic minority language educational policies differ from some of those catering for northern and western ethnic minority languages, which have a long development history ranging from kindergarten to PhD education. Well-designed programs at tertiary level cover a variety of majors including arts, science, technology, and medicine. The development of southern Chinese ethnic minority languages alongside tertiary educational policies has a short history. Very few universities offer southern Chinese minority language education programs, and not many qualified teaching staff members can be recruited in these disciplines at tertiary level.

The latest data (Yúnnán Mǐnzú University 2018d) show 42 teaching staff on the official payroll in the Faculty of Ethnic Minority Culture, Yúnnán Mǐnzú University. There are 14 professors, 14 associate professors, 10 lecturers and 4 tutors in the Faculty. 19 of them have doctorates, 1 member is still completing a PhD, 12 staff hold Masters degrees, 9 have Bachelors degrees, and only 1 holds a diploma as his highest certificate. Among them, 31 staff are from minority ethnicities, and 11 are Han. All ethnic minority language courses are taught by native language speakers from the relevant ethnic groups, with the exception of Nakhi language literacy, which is taught by a Han-background Professor, Guowen Li. The other Han teaching staff primarily teach non-minority languages courses, such as Editing, Theory of Literature and Art, Han languages and the History of Ethnic Minority Literature.

Both new and experienced teaching staff are required to attend pedagogical training. However, in practice, only new or young lecturers take short-term training in the first year of their teaching in order to obtain their Teacher Qualification Certificate for Higher Education (Wei, personal communication, 2016).

The lack of teaching staff is a major issue for ethnic minority language programs in Southern China at the tertiary level, and Yúnnán Mǐnzú University is no exception. There are no Miao and Nakhi language teachers employed at the university, so the Yúnnán Mǐnzú University has to hire external language experts from the Ethnic Minority Language Committee of Yúnnán Province and other research institutes (X. Zhao, personal communication, 2016). Nakhi language reading and writing is taught by Professor Guowen Li, who was re-employed following retirement. Professor Guowen Li is an expert in the Nakhi Pīnyīn (Chinese phonetic alphabet) writing system. Only a few people have proficiency in the Nakhi Pīnyīn writing system within China, and they hardly meet the criteria for teaching at the university. Therefore, nobody is equipped to replace him. A Masters student of the Lisu language major at Yúnnán Mǐnzú University said, “If the government or the university does not take any action, the Nakhi Pīnyīn writing system will disappear soon” (F. Li, personal communication, 2016). Hani language education is facing the same problem. The Hani script was created by linguists after the establishment of the PRC, and the Hani language has only been taught at the tertiary level in China for

less than 10 years. Consequently, very few people have proficiency in Hani language literacy.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

The undergraduate ethnic minority language programs of Yúnnán Mínzú University are restricted to enrolling local ethnic minority students to study their native languages (see Table 5). As an additional requirement, their household register (*hùkǒu*) must be on the Admission Scheme List. Candidates need to attend the Ethnic Minority Language Oral Test for the University Entrance Examination (with the exception of Tibetan language speakers). There are some preferential policies when admitting ethnic minority students, including 10–40 bonus points out of 750, to the “Minority High-Level Backbone Talents” program and the “Double Minority” (*shuāngshǎo*) policy. Central and local governments cooperate with Yúnnán Mínzú University to offer generous scholarships and subsidies.

However, there is no employment agreement signed by local governments or the university, which leads to graduates of ethnic minority language majors having difficulties finding jobs related to their majors. Some up-to-date practical programs should be proposed in order to help graduates find employment. Inspired by the well-run Tibetan and Yi languages programs in the Southwest Mínzú University

**Table 5** Access and personnel policy in minority language education in the Yúnnán Mínzú University

<b>Access</b>	Undergraduate	<i>Household register</i>	Refer to admission scheme list (see Table 3)
		<i>Oral test</i>	12 languages (except Tibetan); Native speakers only
		<i>Preferential policies</i>	10–40/750 bonus points; Lower minimal entrance score Scholarships and subsidies
	Masters program	<i>“Minority high-level backbone talents” program; “double minority”</i>	Lower minimal re-examination score Scholarships and subsidies
		<i>Both ethnic minority students and Han students</i>	No minority language requirement for entry to this program
<b>Personnel</b>	Background of minority language teachers	<i>Minority language native speakers (except Nakhi language teacher)</i>	
		<i>Minority ethnicities (except Nakhi language teacher)</i>	
	In-service training	<i>Pedagogical training</i>	New teaching staff



(Southwest Mǐnzú University 2018), I suggest that Yúnnán Mǐnzú University should put in place some practical programs including: Tourism Management (Ethnic Minority-Hàn Bilingual), Management of Cultural Industries (Ethnic Minority-Hàn Bilingual), and Language Information Processing (Ethnic minority language), etc.

Approximately three quarters of the teaching staff in the Faculty of Ethnic Minority Culture, Yúnnán Mǐnzú University, are from ethnic minorities. And all ethnic minority language courses are taught by native language speakers from the relevant ethnic groups (with the exception of the Nakhi language teacher). However, a shortage of minority language course teachers has been a problem at Yúnnán Mǐnzú University for some time, and the Faculty has had to hire external language experts to teach some language courses. In fact, the lack of teaching staff is a common issue for all southern Chinese ethnic minority languages. Governments and universities need to take some measures to tackle this issue. I propose that having two teachers in class is an effective method, one being a native minority language speaker who may lack formal academic credentials, the other being a qualified university lecturer.

A majority of the ethnic minority language programs are taught and learned by native speakers at universities in China. I suggest that the southern Chinese ethnic minority language programs become open to applicants of all backgrounds. (Note that some northern and western Chinese ethnic minority languages majors have enrolled non-native speakers already, e.g., Chinese Kazakh language, Tibetan language, and Uyghur language).

Governments cannot abdicate responsibility for supporting language programs at universities by simply issuing language educational policies. While educational policies play an important role in alerting students and teachers to the necessity of transmitting and maintaining minority languages and cultures, we have seen that stronger action is required, particularly when it comes to the maintenance of endangered southern minority languages. Regular and sustained financial support is needed from both central and local governments to ensure the smooth running of minority language programs in universities, in general, and the survival of southern minority languages, in particular, but also to raise public awareness of the endangered status of these languages.

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# Square Peg in a Round Hole: Reflections on Teaching Aboriginal Languages Through the TAFE Sector in South Australia



Mary-Anne Gale

**Abstract** This chapter reflects on the successes, and challenges, of teaching Aboriginal languages through the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector in South Australia (SA) over the last seven years. In 2011 a newly developed, and nationally “accredited course” was first offered through the TAFE sector in SA: the Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language. Since then we have celebrated the graduation of 37 Aboriginal adults with their Certificate III drawn from five Aboriginal languages currently being revived, as well as the only stronger language still spoken fluently in SA—Pitjantjatjara. Fourteen of these Certificate III graduates have gone on to complete their Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language. The Certificate IV aims to give graduates the skills to teach their own languages to others in schools, at TAFE and in the university sector. This training has been ongoing, now through Tauondi Aboriginal Community College, with the newly accredited Certificate III. In August 2019, a further 25 students graduated with their Certificate III, representing two languages being revived.

As the developer, writer and co-teacher of both the Certificate III and IV, I outline the past and current course content and expectations, the make-up of the student clientele and their aspirations, plus the methodology used in teaching the course. I also reflect on the many successes worthy of celebration, and discuss the challenges we still face. It seems at times that the Aboriginal language courses being offered through the TAFE sector are truly like a “square peg in a round hole”.

**Keywords** Aboriginal languages · Pitjantjatjara · Accreditation · TAFE sector · Course content · Language methodology

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## 1 Introduction

This chapter will review and reflect on the teaching of Aboriginal languages through the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector in South Australia (SA) over the last decade. It will outline the content of the “Accredited Courses” offered, the aims of the courses, the students and languages involved, the methodology used, and the expectations of the graduates. It will also summarize the history of the development of the courses being offered, the community demand for such courses and the nature of the host institutions that offer the qualifications. Firstly, however, it should be explained that offering other courses through the TAFE sector in SA is more typically done in partnership with industry, and offered through “training packages” (rather than accredited courses).<sup>1</sup> Hence students are often already working as apprentices in their respective industries and their TAFE training component is ideally suited to a competency or performance-based model of assessment. So our accredited courses in languages have to adapt to this assumed model, and the expectation of “work” outside the classroom, despite there being no formally recognized jobs in SA, nor career paths in Aboriginal languages for our graduate students, hence the feeling of this course being a “square peg in a round hole”.

## 2 Background History

South Australia has historically been a pioneer state in offering Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal languages to students in the school sector, both at the primary school level (see SA Department for Education and Children’s Services (DECS) and Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) annual reports on Aboriginal Languages) and at the senior secondary level (Mercurio and Amery 1996). But one ongoing impediment to offering these languages in schools has been finding the teachers with the adequate knowledge, skills and confidence to teach Aboriginal languages. When state funding was more accessible to schools wanting to offer Aboriginal language programs in SA (in the early 2000s), there were ten Aboriginal languages taught, ranging from the only strong language in SA (Pitjantjatjara) to languages being completely revived from archival sources with no first language speakers (such as Kurna). These ten languages, and the types of language program they offered in schools, are summarized in Fig. 1 (DECD Report 2013).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Accredited courses are typically created outside of industry, while training packages are created by industry, and other invested groups, and are approved under government frameworks. Accredited courses often comprise “modules” (in addition to “units”) which have “learning outcomes” and understandings. By contrast, training packages typically comprise “units” and are assessed according to “performance criteria”.

<sup>2</sup> The code used for this table is: LR (Revitalization) offering a language still spoken by some; LR (Renewal) offering a language with some words still known; LR (Reclamation) offering a lan-

Antikirinya <i>LR (Revitalisation); L1</i>	Dieri <i>LR (Revitalisation)</i>	Nauo <i>LR (Reclamation)</i>	Wirangu <i>LA (Awareness)</i>
Adnyamathanha <i>LR (Revitalisation)</i>	Kaurna <i>LR (Reclamation)</i>	Ngarrindjeri <i>LR (Renewal)</i>	
Barngarla <i>LR (Reclamation)</i>	Narungga <i>LR (Reclamation)</i>	Pitjantjatjara <i>L1; L2</i>	

**Fig. 1** Aboriginal language programs offered in SA schools in 2013

In the heyday of adequate state departmental support,<sup>3</sup> there were over 4000 school students learning one of the ten Aboriginal languages offered:

In 2013, [...] **42** schools offered [...] **48** Aboriginal language programs to a reported total of **4,200** learners. This involved **117** teaching team members (51 Aboriginal, 66 non-Aboriginal). **6%** of South Australian state schools offer Aboriginal languages programs. (DECD Report 2013; my emphasis)

Unfortunately government support, and the availability of teachers to teach these school programs, has dwindled over the years, despite the increase in the number and quality of Aboriginal language resources now available for teaching in schools (made possible through Commonwealth funding programs).<sup>4</sup> Yet the demand from schools wishing to introduce Aboriginal language programs appears to be strong, with many schools actively seeking teachers of Aboriginal languages. The 2017 SA annual departmental report fails to list any student figures, while the number of Aboriginal languages being taught in schools has been reduced to seven (see SA Department for Education Aboriginal languages summary, Department for Education 2017). This gradual decline in practical and financial support from the SA government<sup>5</sup> is one of the key factors that stimulated the development and introduction of the TAFE Aboriginal language training programs for adults, which is the very subject of this paper.

Informal and haphazard training for Aboriginal language teachers has been ongoing since the introduction of Aboriginal languages into SA schools in the mid

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guage being reclaimed largely from archival written sources; L1 offering a language maintenance program in a language still spoken as a first language; L2 offering a stronger language still spoken by communities as a second language to students, and LA (Awareness) offering a program about a language rather than teaching the language itself.

<sup>3</sup>This period of state departmental support and funding for Aboriginal Studies and then Aboriginal languages in schools began in the mid 1980s, but has been in decline since the turn of the century.

<sup>4</sup>The name and department running these Commonwealth Aboriginal language support programs have had many forms over the years, including DCITA (Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts) and now the Indigenous Languages and the Arts (ILA) program, through the Department of Communications and the Arts.

<sup>5</sup>The reasons for this decline in state support for languages are economic and political, but can also derive from changes of personnel in management positions, and the shift to a national curriculum from a state-based curriculum.

1980s. However, since the interest and enthusiasm has swelled amongst Aboriginal people and their communities for learning their own Aboriginal languages, particularly over the last couple of decades, the demand for more formal language training has increased. Aboriginal people have also realized that there is a potential employment opportunity for them in schools and other institutions, if they develop an ability to speak and teach their own languages to others. Unfortunately, one of the ongoing and frustrating aspects of the TAFE training we currently offer in SA is that there is no formal or recognized career path in the Department for Education schools for our language graduates, despite community lobbying for the last two decades. This critical issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 3 Development of Language Training Courses

The TAFE sector has offered foundational Certificate I level literacy and numeracy courses to adults for many years in SA. The old IVEC I (Introduction to Vocational Education Certificate I), offered until about a decade ago, had the option of offering elective units in addition to the core literacy and numeracy units. Mike Gray, of Tauondi Aboriginal Community College,<sup>6</sup> wrote an elective unit on developing basic communication skills in an Aboriginal Language (in the 1990s), which has now long expired.<sup>7</sup> This elective unit was a popular unit for Aboriginal students studying at Tauondi College well over a decade ago, particularly for those studying the three Nunga languages<sup>8</sup> that Aboriginal people most identify with in the Adelaide region: Kaurna, Ngarrindjeri and Narungga. It was this elective unit (as part of IVEC I training) that was offered to a group of 17 Ngarrindjeri students who demanded more formal training in their language in 2007. This training was offered through a language teaching research project based at the University of Adelaide (Gale 2008), and gave the Ngarrindjeri adult student trainees a taste of what was possible. They soon demanded more formal training, which inspired the author to apply for Commonwealth funding to develop more advanced certificate courses in Aboriginal language training.

After much community consultation, and with the advice of a professional steering committee, two new Aboriginal language courses gained national accreditation in January 2011, and were released on the official Australian Government training

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<sup>6</sup>Tauondi Aboriginal Community College is an adult training college in SA for Aboriginal people only, and is located in Port Adelaide, but offers courses off-site in regional areas as well as in the city.

<sup>7</sup>Note that accredited TAFE courses (or any training package) only have a five-year lifetime, and must go through a re-accreditation process to continue for another five years. If this process is not initiated by a host institution, the course expires for good, and is no longer available to any Registered Training Organization (RTO).

<sup>8</sup>“Nunga” is the term of identity used by Aboriginal people from southern SA, including Ngarrindjeri, Narungga, Kaurna and other southern regional groups.

website ([www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)). They included: the Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language”, which aims to give students an understanding of their own Aboriginal language (that is, their “target Aboriginal language”) and some degree of communicative competence; plus the Certificate IV in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language”, which aims to train students to be teachers of their own Aboriginal language. The Certificate III is a prerequisite for the Certificate IV, and the same course outline is used for any chosen “target Aboriginal language”, whether it is a strong language or a language being revived. The courses were written by the author, with funding and ownership being auspiced by the SA Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (see DFEEST 2011). The courses gained formal accreditation and national recognition until December 2015. However, before they could be offered to any students, the Registered Training Organization (RTO), TAFE SA, had to go through the formal and lengthy process of getting the courses “on their scope”. This involved preparing all the necessary course materials and proving to the independent auditors with TAFE SA that as an RTO they had the professional and administrative ability to offer the courses successfully to potential trainees.<sup>9</sup>

Of course no language courses could be developed and taught without adequate language resources being made available to trainers in the respective target Aboriginal languages being offered. Fortunately, the Commonwealth was already funding various revival and revitalization programs in SA, so gradually Aboriginal language resources were becoming available (such as alphabet books, learners guides and dictionaries). But other generic training course documents also had to be produced to get these language courses successfully “on scope” with TAFE SA. An example of such document types that the author had to produce before either course could be offered were the RPL (Recognized Prior Learning) tools required for every single unit of each course.

It is important to explain at this point one of the major differences between the philosophy and training methods espoused by the TAFE sector and those of the university sector. As mentioned in the Introduction, TAFE is typically a job-training institution that prepares its graduate students for particular trades or workplaces on graduation. As such, TAFE is very much a “competency-based” training institution and units of courses *must* be written in a style that allows them to be assessed (often in the workplace) through “demonstration” or “performance”. An example from the Certificate III language unit is called “Demonstrate basic communicative competence in the target Aboriginal language”. An example from an “Element” of this same unit in the re-accredited version of the Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language” is “Performance Criteria 2.3” which requires

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<sup>9</sup>This scoping process demanded the development and writing of many generic course materials including student workbooks, assessment tools, RPL tools, trainer guides, plus the language resources for the target Aboriginal language to be taught, which was initially Ngarrindjeri.

students to: “Speak sentences in target language that can be used in the community and in the workplace.”<sup>10</sup>

Because of the emphasis on “performance”, and demonstrating “competency” in the TAFE sector, all courses offered must provide potential students the opportunity to demonstrate to the trainer that they may already have competency for the particular skills or “Performance Criteria” being offered. So through a Recognized Prior Learning (RPL) process, they can be given instant credit for a unit. But students must prove or demonstrate their competencies to their assessor by going through a RPL process, and the catch cry is “Don’t *tell* me what you can do, *show* me with evidence”. This process requires detailed RPL tools that list *all* the required competencies or “Performance Criteria” in the respective units. This RPL process is one of the many things that makes studying in the TAFE sector different from the university sector. A student cannot pass a course in French, for example, at the University of Adelaide by turning up on the first day of lectures and demonstrating to the lecturer that they are completely fluent in French. Theoretically, this is possible at TAFE, through the RPL process, and can be a very real advantage for students who are already fluent speakers of their language.

This RPL process was, in fact, implemented for one of our largest student cohorts wanting to undertake the Certificate IV in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language”. This cohort was that of the Pitjantjatjara students, who were already fluent and competent speakers of their own first language. These students were training to become language teachers for the annual Pitjantjatjara Summer School offered by the University of South Australia. The majority underwent the RPL process for the (pre-requisite) Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language”, before they undertook their training in the Certificate IV, which aims to train speakers to teach their own language to others.

### 3.1 *Trialling the New Language Courses*

Once the Certificate III and Certificate IV language courses gained accreditation in January 2011, the author applied for and won a Commonwealth grant to trial the courses with a range of SA languages. The money was granted, and then auspiced through TAFE SA. The tedious process of getting the Certificate III course “on

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<sup>10</sup>The original version of this unit on “Communicative Competence”, written by the author, had seven Performance Elements, but these were reduced to two by the compliance officers in the re-writing of the re-accredited version in 2015. It was explained that this much reduced and simplified version of “Elements” and “Performance Criteria” made assessing the unit less difficult. Examples of the original Performance Criteria are: “6.3 Practise together the types of dialogues and sentences in the target language that can be used in the wider community such as greetings, seeking information, sharing news, etc.” and “6.4 Practise together with others the types of dialogues in the target language that can be used in the work situation, such as coffee-break talk, enquiring about the weekend, etc.” Arguably, the detail provided by the author in the earlier version was a helpful guide for TAFE lecturers, and students, so it was frustrating for the author to see this detail lost.



scope”, with TAFE SA as the RTO, was finalized, and the Certificate III was eventually offered through the TAFE Aboriginal Education unit later in 2011. It was offered free to two trial groups: a group of five Wirangu students in Ceduna, taught by Paul Monaghan (of the Mobile Language Team from the University of Adelaide), alongside the Elder Gladys Miller; and a group of eight Ngarrindjeri students, taught by the author at Murray Bridge alongside two Ngarrindjeri Elders, Eileen McHughes and Julia Yandell. It is important to note that to train and assess students in the TAFE sector, all lecturers *must* have successfully completed the nationally accredited Certificate IV in “Training and Assessment” (TAE). The author had already completed this qualification, but Monaghan had to work alongside a certified TAFE lecturer to do his formal student assessments. Furthermore, the Aboriginal communities concerned made their own demands on the teaching teams. They insisted that an Aboriginal Elder always be involved in the teaching team, and that the Elders were to be paid at the same rate as the non-Aboriginal linguists or trainers employed to teach the certificate courses. This was seen as an important part of community protocols, and TAFE did adhere to this demand, but this was only possible because of the Commonwealth funding received by the author to trial the new courses. Without this Commonwealth funding TAFE would not have complied. TAFE also conceded in allowing Elders to teach without their Certificate IV TAE, but they had to work in a team with a qualified trainer, and were not allowed to conduct any formal assessments.

The trialling of the course with the two groups was a much valued opportunity to see whether the course content met the needs and expectations of the students, as well as the aims and requirements of the course. Feedback from the lecturer teaching Wirangu, and from some Aboriginal Education Unit staff at TAFE, with no expertise in Aboriginal languages, complained that the course was “too academic”. Some students also asked for more practice within the course content for speaking the language, an issue which was rectified in the re-accredited version of the Certificate III course, available since January 2016. Another change involved the unit, “Develop basic communicative competence in the target Aboriginal language”, which was made a core unit, rather than an elective unit. Furthermore, the most recent intake of Ngarrindjeri students attended a Language Camp for the teaching of aspects of this unit, with the sole aim of getting rid of pens and paper for the duration, and practising speaking Ngarrindjeri in a spontaneous and more natural conversational manner. The camp, held at Tauondi College for two days and an evening in July 2018, was a great success; so much so, that the 30 students who attended demanded another similar language camp before the end of their course studies.

The initial trial also provided the opportunity to test different modes and timing arrangements in presenting the training course, but still offering the required nominal hours of training. The Wirangu group in Ceduna was taught the course in several whole-week blocks over the period of a year, with the lecturer having to travel a long distance from Adelaide for each block (at considerable expense, which was covered by the Commonwealth grant). The Ngarrindjeri classes were taught two days a week initially, and then one day a week (on a Friday) for a full year and a quarter. This was logistically possible because the classes were held at Murray

Bridge, which is just a one-hour drive from Adelaide, where the lecturer (the author) was based. Most of the students lived in Murray Bridge, as well as the Elders, but several of the students had to also travel over an hour from Meningie. Again travel costs were covered by the Commonwealth grant. After the successful completion of the Certificate III by these two trial groups, the Aboriginal Education Unit at TAFE SA approved funding to offer the same course to other language groups, particularly to a group of adult Kurna students.

### 3.2 *Kurna Language Training*

The Kurna language of the Adelaide Plains has achieved national and international recognition for doing the almost impossible of “awakening” an Aboriginal language entirely from written archival sources (Amery 2016). There is now much demand for teachers to teach the Kurna language across schools in the Adelaide metropolitan region. But one of the issues for the Kurna language movement is a severe lack of numbers of Kurna people, or any Aboriginal people, who have sufficient communicative skills in speaking the Kurna language. So offering the Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language” to a group of Kurna adults was the obvious next step by TAFE SA.

The Certificate III was offered from 2012 to 2013 to a group of 11 Kurna people, with the group including several respected Kurna Elders. This course was offered over five one-week blocks in Adelaide, being the land of the Kurna people, over a period of just over a full year. It was offered only in the school holidays, as a number of participants were already engaged in teaching in schools. This time TAFE SA provided the funding, but this was not sufficient to cover costs, so the course was run in partnership with Kurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP), which had its own Commonwealth and state funding for Kurna language activities.<sup>11</sup> One of the extra costs was to find a venue and to pay for local Elders or community instructors to teach the course, as TAFE SA will strictly only pay people to teach who have the required TAE Certificate IV. Another cost was the provision of a free shared lunch for all students, which TAFE will definitely not fund. The reason argued (by the course trainers) for providing this free lunch is that it gives the class an opportunity to spend time together using the target language in a communicative way over lunch in a relaxed environment with fellow language learners.

This Kurna training course was particularly successful, for several reasons, particularly because it was taught and run by a team of people (including the author, alongside a young Kurna man Jack Buckskin, plus the linguist Rob Amery who has been involved in the revival of Kurna for many years). There were also several sources of KWP funding, which took the pressure off the author to organize

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<sup>11</sup> Kurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP) is a Kurna language support group, based at the University of Adelaide, which accesses funding for promoting and developing resources in the Kurna language.

everything on a limited budget. It was also a gift to have so many respected Elders participating in the class, particularly for the units which usually spark much enthusiastic conversation, such as “Define the target Aboriginal language”.

We learnt from the previous two trials, and from the Kaurna classes, that if the course is to be offered in one-week blocks, these need to be run in the school holidays, otherwise trainees employed in schools are unable to attend—unless of course they have extremely amenable and sympathetic school principals. Alternatively, if the courses are offered on a regular basis one day a week, sympathetic employers seem willing to allow the students a full year of attendance, but no longer. They also expect that their employees have an outcome of a formal certificate by the end of that year, plus language skills that enhance their job performance.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.3 *Certificate III Course Content*

Figure 2 taken from the official 2011 TAFE curriculum document, outlines the course content, the name of each unit and the expected nominal hours of study for the Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language”. It shows how the course content, and hourly requirements were, before the course was re-accredited in January 2016. However, the main aim of the course remains the same, that is, for students to learn their own language, particularly how to read, write and speak their language. There were eight “Core units”, which are the compulsory units, that must be undertaken by all students. As mentioned, the unit on “communicative competence” is now a core unit rather than an “Elective unit”, so now there are nine core units in the re-accredited course.

The core units initially required 215 nominal hours of study, but this increased to 265 hours of core units with the new re-accredited course.<sup>13</sup> In addition, students must study “Elective units”, five of which were written by the author specifically for the language course. Students could theoretically opt to study alternative elective units, as long as they are related to language learning, and are taken from other relevant accredited courses or training packages. The total number of nominal hours that students had to study in the original Certificate III course was 345 nominal hours (including a minimum of three elective units). These expectations and hours were achievable for *all* the groups that undertook this course in their chosen time-frame of study. This included an extra group of Ngarrindjeri students who were taught, from April 2013, by the author and an Elder, Phyllis Williams, who had graduated from the first intake of Certificate III Ngarrindjeri students. It was taught

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<sup>12</sup>These are only casual teaching jobs, paid with hourly paid instruction (HPI) funding, and they offer neither career paths nor job security for Aboriginal employees.

<sup>13</sup>“Nominal” hours of study means the possible number of hours that could be spent on that unit of study, but not necessarily the number of face-to-face hours with the lecturer. That is, they refer to the maximum contact hours of study for each unit.

### TAFE SA Units of Competency

40635SA Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language CORE UNITS		
UNIT CODE	UNIT TITLE	NOMINAL HOURS
HPNT	Define the target Aboriginal language	5
HPNW	Understand strength and viability of the target Aboriginal language	10
HPNX	Identify language resources in the target Aboriginal language	20
HPNY	Demonstrate an understanding of sound and spelling system of the target Aboriginal language	40
HPNZ	Demonstrate use of grammatical features of the target Aboriginal language	60
HPPA	Compose new texts in the target Aboriginal language	30
HPPB	Translate texts from English into the target Aboriginal language	30
HPPC	Use electronic resources available in the target Aboriginal language	20
TOTAL CORE HOURS		215
TOTAL ELECTIVE HOURS		130
TOTAL HOURS		345

Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language ELECTIVE UNITS – choose a minimum of three		
UNIT CODE	UNIT TITLE	NOMINAL HOURS
HPPD	Explore natural environment in the target Aboriginal language	20
HPPE	Write and translate songs into the target Aboriginal language	20
HPPF	Compose and deliver a speech in the target Aboriginal language	20
HPPG	Develop skills to contribute to an electronic dictionary in the target Aboriginal language	30
HPPH	Demonstrate communicative competence in the target Aboriginal language	40
ICAU1128B	Operate a personal computer	15
ICPMM263C	Access and use the internet	20

Fig. 2 Outline of the 2011 version of the TAFE SA course Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language”

alternately at Victor Harbor and Goolwa for one day every week, on a Friday, for over a year. It had four Ngarrindjeri graduates.

The Certificate III course outline in Fig. 2 displays the units studied by the two successive Ngarrindjeri cohorts and the Kaurna cohort plus the Wirangu cohort of adult students up until the end of 2015. It also outlines the nominal hours studied for each unit.

The re-accredited version of the same course, available for study since January 2016, requires many more hours, making the course less achievable in the desired 18-month timeframe. See in Fig. 3 the outline of the current Certificate III “Supervised” and “Unsupervised” required hours (TAFE SA 2016a). This huge increase in hours, imposed by TAFE SA without community consultation, is largely because of a crackdown conducted by the quality control group, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), in order to exclude low quality courses that are not meeting industry requirements and expectations.<sup>14</sup> Meeting the newly introduced “Unsupervised (structured)” and the “Unsupervised (community/family)” hours is now problematic for course providers. It is hard to log and assess. It is also discouraging schools from taking the Certificate III language course on board as a possible subject for the senior secondary students, as they simply cannot meet the hourly requirements.

The re-accredited course was undertaken, and continues to be undertaken, by new cohorts of Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna students respectively. They are both studying the course through Tauondi Aboriginal Community College, located at Port Adelaide, which now has the Certificate III on scope. The current cohorts are being taught in several groups and venues, including Murray Bridge, Victor Harbor and Goolwa, Old Reynella, and Tauondi College itself, in Port Adelaide. They are taught where the majority of the student clientele live, as is Tauondi’s policy. TAFE SA has not offered the Certificate III or the Certificate IV since the author, who was also the course lecturer, moved to work with Tauondi College in 2017.

Nominal duration for the Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language:	
Supervised	305-445 hours
Unsupervised (structured)	100 hours
Unsupervised (community)	400 hours
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>805 – 945 hours</b>

**Fig. 3** Required “Supervised” and “Unsupervised” hours in Certificate III TAFE courses

<sup>14</sup>“The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia’s vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.” See <https://www.asqa.gov.au/about>

### 3.4 *Certificate IV Teacher Training Course*

The Certificate IV in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language” aims to train speakers of an Aboriginal language to teach their language to others. The Certificate III is a compulsory pre-requisite to the Certificate IV. This Certificate IV was offered to several groups between 2012 and 2015, all by the author, and again with funding from the Commonwealth government.<sup>15</sup> The funding was granted to the University of Adelaide, as a trial, but the course was offered through TAFE SA, which had the course “on scope”. The course has since been re-worked for re-accreditation by TAFE SA and is now valid from January 2016 (TAFE SA 2016b). Unfortunately this course is not yet “on scope” with any RTO, but Tauondi College hopes to have the Certificate IV on their scope.

Figure 4 outlines the original Certificate IV unit names and the nominal (or nominal) hours requirements:

### 3.5 *Pitjantjatjara Teacher Training*

Most importantly, the Certificate IV has been offered to the Pitjantjatjara language tutors who travel from their remote communities in the North West of SA to teach at the Pitjantjatjara Summer School run annually by the University of South Australia (see Gale et al., this volume). The Summer School is offered to anyone wanting to learn to speak Pitjantjatjara, which is the only strong Aboriginal language in the state. The Summer School was the work placement component of the Pitjantjatjara tutors’ Certificate IV studies, specifically the Unit “HPPR Undertake work placement”. The Summer School also enabled other units of the Certificate IV to be taught on the job. Such units were: “HPPS Plan and prepare lessons in the target Aboriginal language”; “HPPT Present a series of lessons in the target Aboriginal language”; “HPPW Assess and evaluate lessons in the target Aboriginal language”.

Because the Certificate III is a pre-requisite for the Certificate IV, the Pitjantjatjara students still had to complete the Certificate III, even though they were already fluent speakers of their own language. They undertook the Certificate III largely through an RPL process. This was done in a week-long workshop in Adelaide, but some of the Certificate III units were formally taught, giving the students a chance to “catch up” on some of their language skills. One such unit was Unit 4 “Demonstrate an understanding of the Sound and Spelling system of the target Aboriginal language”. Offering this unit gave the Pitjantjatjara students the opportunity to consolidate their literacy skills in Pitjantjatjara. Similarly, doing the Unit 5 “Demonstrate use of the Grammatical features of the target Aboriginal language” gave the

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<sup>15</sup>All courses discussed are offered free to Aboriginal students, whether they be offered through Tauondi College or TAFE SA. This is a major incentive for students to undertake their studies.

40838SA Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language CORE UNITS		
UNIT CODE	UNIT TITLE	NOMINAL HOURS
HPPK	Demonstrate an understanding of different approaches to teaching Aboriginal languages	20
HPPL	Develop techniques for teaching an endangered language program	20
HPPM	Teach the target Aboriginal language through contemporary functions	20
HPPN	Understand the terminology and metalanguage to talk about the target Aboriginal language	20
HPPP	Protocols and ethics of teaching endangered Aboriginal languages	20
HPPS	Plan and prepare lessons in the target Aboriginal language	30
HPPT	Present a series of lessons in the target Aboriginal language	30
HPPW	Assess and Evaluate lessons in the target Aboriginal language	20
HPPR	Undertake a work placement	100
HLTOHS300A	Contribute to OHS processes	30
TOTAL CORE HOURS		320
TOTAL ELECTIVE HOURS		90
TOTAL HOURS		410

Certificate IV in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language ELECTIVE UNITS – choose a minimum of three		
UNIT CODE	UNIT TITLE	NOMINAL HOURS
TAEDS401A	Design and develop learning programs	50
TADEL401A	Plan, organise and deliver group based learning	30
TAEASS401A	Plan assessment activities and processes	20
BSBITU302A	Create electronic presentations	20
BSBCMM401A	Make a presentation	30
TAEASS403A	Participate in assessment validation	20
TAEASS402A	Assess competence	15
HLTFA301B	Apply first aid	18
CHCCN301A	Ensure children's health and safety	60
CHCCHILD401A	Identify and respond to children and young people at risk	30
CHCEDS323A	Support development of student research skills	35

Fig. 4 Outline of the 2011 version of the TAFE SA course Certificate IV in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language”

students an explicit understanding of some aspects of the grammar of their first language, despite them knowing the grammar intuitively (Gale 2012). This unit gave them the confidence to explain some of the features of the grammar to the non-Aboriginal students they tutored in the Summer School.

By formally undertaking some units of the Certificate III the Pitjantjatjara students gained a better understanding “about” their language and how it works, particularly its sound system and grammar, relative to English, which is their second language. It is interesting to note that in past Summer Schools the Pitjantjatjara tutors had complained that their students asked too many “annoying grammar questions” which they found almost impossible to answer. These students who undertake the Summer School each year are generally professional people working with Pitjantjatjara people in their workplace. They notoriously ask lots of questions of their tutors about Pitjantjatjara, which can be difficult to answer without some training. So the Certificate III, along with the Certificate IV, gave the Pitjantjatjara tutors much more confidence as language teachers to answer such questions.

The Certificate IV has now been offered to a number of Pitjantjatjara students over the last decade, alongside the Pitjantjatjara Summer School. Eleven Pitjantjatjara students completed the Certificate III in 2013 and 2014, while six Pitjantjatjara students successfully completed the Certificate IV in 2014 and 2015. The author was responsible for offering this training, alongside the Summer School coordinator and teacher Paul Eckert (who himself is a fluent speaker of Pitjantjatjara). The author and Eckert both observed that the Pitjantjatjara tutors have proved themselves to be much more professional, competent and confident as language teachers as a direct result of studying the Certificate III and the Certificate IV.

### ***3.6 Teacher Training in the Language Revival Field***

In addition to offering training to the Pitjantjatjara cohort of students, the author has also offered the Certificate IV as a trial to a cohort of teacher trainees whose languages are being revived in SA. Again this was undertaken with funding from the Commonwealth government, even though the course was offered through TAFE SA, and they would normally fund their own courses. But the Commonwealth was willing to fund this initial “trial” of a new nationally recognized course, as there were demands for such a language training course. Students had to be invited to participate in this initial trial, with the major prerequisite being that the prospective student had a work placement organized for their 40-hour teaching practicum. Four languages were represented in the chosen group of nine adults: five Kaurna, two Ngarrindjeri, one Adnyamathanha and one Narungga. The latter two had to go through an RPL process to obtain their pre-requisite Certificate III. The other seven already had their Certificate III through formal training. This Certificate IV training course was the first time the author had run any of the courses with a mixed group of students representing different language groups. It proved to be a challenging but uplifting experience for the students. They really enjoyed getting to know each



other, and especially appreciated being able to share the common frustrations they faced in their teaching experiences, as well as their successes. They also used the opportunity to share their knowledge and understandings of their own languages.

This course was taught in five one-week blocks, by bringing all of the students together (usually in Adelaide) over a period of 18 months. Their work placements were done either in schools, or with adults doing their Certificate III. The Ngarrindjeri Elder Phyllis Williams, for example, had already completed her Certificate III in Murray Bridge in 2012, so, for her Certificate IV teaching placement, she taught, alongside the author, our second cohort of Victor Harbor students doing their Certificate III, every Friday, during the period 2013–2014.

Phyllis went on to teach our third cohort of students at Victor Harbor. These students were doing the newly accredited version of the Certificate III: 10190NAT Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language”.<sup>16</sup> This time it was offered through Tauondi Aboriginal College, but funding was again supplemented by the Commonwealth. In addition, Phyllis and the author initiated classes for further Certificate III students, with a class at Murray Bridge, another class at Tauondi College itself in Adelaide, and for a short time also at Old Reynella. These classes were all taught fortnightly, and there were 34 adult students enrolled. These were the same students who happily attended a language camp held at Tauondi College in July 2018. The confidence in these students grew day by day as they enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to re-learn their language, which they feel is their birthright. So too did the confidence and skills of their teacher Phyllis. The goal was for these same Ngarrindjeri students to complete their Certificate III by mid 2019. Twenty students did succeed, and many of these graduates wish to go on to study the Certificate IV, to train as language teachers, and complete their course through Tauondi College (once it is on scope) before it expires.

## 4 Conclusion

A square peg in a round hole? This paper has outlined the history and passage of developing courses for the teaching of Aboriginal languages in the TAFE sector. It has discussed some of the shortcomings of the “competency-based” methodology demanded for training people in the TAFE sector, and the excessive number of nominal hours of training expected. With the newly accredited Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language”, for example, the required nominal hours of supervised instruction are 305–445 hours (compared to the original requirements of 345 hours). There are also now 500 additional hours required for outside-the-classroom language activity, with 100 hours of these under supervision. We are still not quite sure how some of our students will meet these requirements before graduating.

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<sup>16</sup>Note that the newly accredited Certificate IV is: 10191NAT Certificate IV in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language”.

I have also discussed the successes, particularly in the number of graduates we have seen from a range of language groups. The concern is that these successes were only possible with considerable extra funding from the Commonwealth to supplement the state funding through the Department for Education and TAFE SA. The course currently being offered through Tauondi Aboriginal College also requires supplementary funding, especially for the payment of Elders in the class, petrol money for the considerable travel required by teachers, and for meals during workshops. The Aboriginal communities demand that Elders be employed to co-teach classes, but their lack of formal qualifications, which are required to assess students, means that they are unemployable by RTOs. But despite these difficulties, we have proven by the enthusiastic presence of students at the 2018 Ngarrindjeri language camp, and the ongoing presence of students at our regular classes, that the Certificate III course is in demand and here to stay—at least for the time being.

That said, the newly re-accredited Certificate IV in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language” is yet to be put “on scope” at any RTO. Tauondi Aboriginal College was fortunate in late 2018 to have received a Commonwealth Aboriginal language grant to help fund the process of putting the Certificate IV onto their scope. This is a long and tedious process, but once all the course materials and other required documents have been written and prepared, the course can be offered at Tauondi. Of course, our next big challenge is to obtain formal recognition for our Certificate IV graduates from the SA Department for Education. The hope is for them to enter the workforce with a recognized qualification, and to enter a structured career path with steps for every year of experience that they teach their own languages, along with the holiday pay that any other permanent (or even casual) employee deserves. Sometimes our students really do feel like “square pegs” that just do not fit. It seems it is not only the TAFE sector that is the “round hole”, but also the SA Department for Education and the Teachers Registration Board. We trust this situation will be remedied as our growing number of graduates lobby louder and continue to demand equity.

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## Part XI

# Australian Indigenous Languages in Academe: Constructing Pathways

Few Indigenous languages are taught within Australian universities. In most cases where they are taught, offerings are very limited, often consisting of a one semester course or a single intensive summer school. This section provides detailed descriptions of two programs offered in “strong” languages: Gale, Bleby, Nami and Osborne on Pitjantjatjara from the northwest of South Australia taught at the University of South Australia in Adelaide and Hayashi on the teaching of Yolŋu Matha from northeast Arnhem Land at Charles Darwin University. Pitjantjatjara is the longest running Indigenous language program in the tertiary sector, now taught as an intensive summer school with a small minority of the students taking the course for credit. The chapter by Gale et al. describes recent efforts to empower Anangu teachers of the Pitjantjatjara program through TAFE training immediately preceding the course and drawing on an Anangu-inspired pedagogy (see Part X, this volume). Similarly, Hayashi describes the approaches and pedagogy used by Yolŋu in the teaching of their language, also inspired by Yolŋu cultural practices. The Yolŋu Matha program is now the most comprehensive Indigenous language program on offer in an Australian university. Unlike current Pitjantjatjara offerings, the Yolŋu program consists of a progression of courses. An especially innovative approach in this program has been its delivery from “on country” using the latest in digital technology.

The other two chapters in this section, by Amery and Giacon, address broader issues that underpin all Indigenous languages within the tertiary sector, but with a strong focus on revival languages: Kurna in Amery’s case and Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay in the study by Giacon. Giacon stresses the need for high level learning and outlines the role that universities can play in conducting the research that underpins rigorous language revival programs and in providing the training that will enable programs to progress beyond the teaching of body parts, simple songs and limited emblematic language. Amery looks at the rationale for teaching Indigenous Australian languages. Whilst some of the reasons for teaching an Indigenous language are shared by every other language offered in the tertiary sector, there are in

addition a number of significant reasons which are unique and there are some further differences in the rationale for teaching a “strong” language compared with teaching a revival language.

The four chapters taken together provide a wide-ranging discussion of the current position of Australian languages in the tertiary sector, the reasons why they are taught, the approaches and methods used and the strategies adopted to facilitate access, increase enrolments, and provide a coordinated approach to opening up further student pathways.

# Teaching Aboriginal Languages at University: To What End?



Rob Amery 

**Abstract** In 2017 the theme chosen by the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC), “Our Languages Matter”, drew attention to Australia’s national linguistic heritage, the 250 or more Indigenous languages from across the nation. A mere handful of these languages are taught in universities. Three of these, soon to be four, are “strong” languages spoken by all generations in their homelands and transmitted transgenerationally. The other three are “reclaimed” languages. Most are taught as a single unit within an Aboriginal Studies or Linguistics program and offer little opportunity to gain advanced language proficiency or an in-depth knowledge of the language. The reasons for learning “strong” languages are somewhat different from the reasons for teaching and learning “reclaimed” languages. Furthermore, many of the reasons why Indigenous languages are taught are fundamentally different from the reasons why world languages, such as French or Japanese are taught. This chapter investigates the reasons why Indigenous languages are taught and learnt in Australian universities, with a view to increasing the number of these offerings and expanding the field.

**Keywords** Indigenous languages · Aboriginal studies · Reclaimed languages · Tertiary sector · Yolŋu Matha · Pitjantjatjara · Kurna · Wiradjuri · Gamilaraay

## 1 Introduction

Some research (see, for instance, the Group of Eight 2007) has looked at the motivations for studying a language at tertiary level, focusing largely on issues of declining enrolments and student retention, which are serious problems in the language teaching sector in Australian universities. The same can be said of languages in universities in the UK (Worton 2009) and the US (MLA 2007). In an era of economic

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rationalism, the teaching of languages per se is under pressure, with periodic closure of programs (Kinoshita 2018). But little has been written about the teaching of Australian Indigenous languages in universities (Edwards 1995; Amery 2007; Gale 2011; Giacon and Simpson 2012; Simpson 2014), and even less about what motivates students to learn Australian Indigenous languages, where there are few opportunities to use these languages for everyday communication and where there is little to read, view or listen to in these languages. Furthermore, there is little opportunity to pursue an in-depth or extended study of these languages, at least not within the tertiary sector itself, as most courses are offered as a single semester-length course or intensive summer school with no possibility of progression, the Yolŋu program at Charles Darwin University (CDU) being the exception.

Indigenous languages have a much lower profile in Australian universities than they do in New Zealand or North America where “nearly 30 Native American languages are taught in U.S. colleges and universities, and [there is] a higher growth rate in enrolments in those languages than in European languages” (Goldberg et al. 2015, cited in Wilson 2018, p. 84). Furthermore, a progression of study to meet a two- or four-year degree (i.e., two to four one-semester courses) is the norm rather than the exception for Indigenous language programs in North America (Wilson 2018, p. 85). Wilson (2018) reports considerable success with incremental advances over a 40-year period in “producing college graduates with sufficiently high proficiency to be the parents, teachers, and curriculum developers to effectuate Indigenous language-medium education and to coordinate it with the tertiary-level program” (Wilson 2018, p. 87). Our fledgling programs in revival languages here in Australia still have a long way to go in comparison. The few courses offered in Australian universities are of insufficient duration to produce knowledgeable or fluent speakers.

## 2 Why Study Languages at Tertiary Level?

There are some very good reasons why everyone should study a language for its own sake. Acquisition of a second, third or further language is good for the brain. It enhances problem-solving ability, lateral thinking and the ability to grasp abstract concepts. Some evidence suggests that multilingualism staves off the onset of Alzheimer’s disease by providing a form of cognitive reserve (Craik et al. 2010; Diamond 2010). It stands to reason that the more typologically diverse that these languages are, the more benefit they might serve in exercising the brain to a greater degree. Indigenous Australian languages used alongside languages from other parts of the world would seem particularly well-placed. I know from personal experience that staving off Alzheimer disease is a reason sometimes put forward by students of Indigenous languages (including both Pitjantjatjara and Kurna).

There are also profound social benefits in acquiring a second language (Gallagher-Brett 2005, pp. 11, 15–16, 21). Knowledge of a second language allows the speaker to engage with the speech community in ways not possible otherwise. In the case of Indigenous languages, the very fact that a learner takes the time and effort to learn

the language signals empathy and a genuine commitment to the speaker community. Even just a few words can make a world of difference in establishing rapport and respectful relationships. Language courses provide a path into understanding the associated cultures at a deeper level than we might ever gain through English. This is especially the case in Pitjantjatjara and Yolŋu Matha courses where the main aim is to provide insights into cultures and societies which are very different from Anglo-Australian culture. Michael Christie, who introduced the Yolŋu Matha program at Charles Darwin University (CDU) is quoted as saying “It’s part of the rich history of our country. If you study the language you start to learn about kinship and about land ownership and about ceremonial history, which actually teaches you something more general about Aboriginal societies” (cited by Statham 2011). By contrast, the gulf between the language ecologies of modern languages (French, Japanese, English, etc.) is not so great. Whilst these reasons outlined above for studying an Indigenous language are shared with other language programs, many are not.

World languages, such as French or Japanese, are the typical languages offered in Australian universities, though ancient languages such as Latin, Akkadian or Ancient Egyptian also figure, as well as a few modern languages, such as Javanese, which are neither national or official languages. Whilst recognizing the diversity of language offerings in Australian universities, I wish to draw some contrasts between Australian Indigenous languages and widely spoken world languages which serve as official and national languages of one or more nation states. These languages, specifically Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish, are the most widely offered languages in Australian universities (ULPA n.d.).

Language study is promoted for purposes of conducting business or trade, for diplomacy and national security (Group of Eight 2007, p. 6). This is a result of neo-liberal framing of what is valued and valuable within Australian society.<sup>1</sup> The possibilities for conducting business or trade in an Australian Indigenous language are extremely limited. These languages might be used at the community store to purchase some groceries or perhaps to purchase some artworks or handcrafts at the local art and craft shop, but that is probably the full extent of the business transactions made utilizing an Indigenous language in Australia. Even in the homelands of the strongest Australian languages, sadly negotiations with mining companies and government departments are invariably conducted in English. There could possibly be limited openings for the use of Indigenous languages within the North-West Mobile Force (NORFORCE), established in 1981 as a reconnaissance unit within the Australian Army.<sup>2</sup> 60% of NORFORCE personnel are Indigenous, and are drawn mainly from the areas they patrol.<sup>3</sup> But beyond that, there is no scope whatsoever for a role for Indigenous Australian languages in national security. The role

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed history of the agendas behind Australia’s successive decisions in promoting language study, see Baldwin (2019).

<sup>2</sup>I contacted the Australian Army, but no information was forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.army.gov.au/our-people/units/forces-command/2nd-division/north-west-mobile-force>



of Navajo, an Indigenous language from New Mexico and adjoining states, in both World War II and the Korean War should be acknowledged.<sup>4</sup> As for diplomacy there are no known openings whatsoever for Australian Indigenous languages.

International languages are often promoted for their instrumental value. Material promoting language study within Australian universities typically foregrounds their ability to enhance career opportunities. See, for instance, RMIT University's Language studies page.<sup>5</sup> However, the UK study undertaken by the University of Southampton (Gallagher-Brett 2005) shows that for language learners themselves, personal benefits including enjoyment, satisfaction, ability to establish meaningful relationships with others and interest in language and culture are far more important. Students "acknowledge the possibility of employability gains; but this is not the main reason for studying languages" and they are "uncertain about the strategic benefits of language learning for the UK and EU" (Gallagher-Brett 2005, p. 26). This seems to resonate well with the views expressed by Australian students, as evident in testimonials posted on university websites (see ANU Languages webpage).<sup>6</sup>

Additional reasons often cited are to enable students to access the academic literature of another tradition or to facilitate study abroad. None of these reasons come into play when it comes to Australia's Indigenous languages. Options to study a body of knowledge using Aboriginal languages are extremely limited and verging on non-existent in Australian universities, let alone studying abroad in these languages. Academic literature written in Aboriginal languages scarcely exists.

Overseas travel is also often cited as a reason for the study of languages other than English. Travel in the narrow sense is also quite irrelevant for Indigenous languages. It is simply not possible to check into a hotel in Australia speaking an Aboriginal language or to order a taxi, enquire about a bus or tram route or train destination or book a flight. In the broader context, however, a knowledge of Indigenous languages may well be useful for a visitor to Central Australia, the Kimberley or the Top End in order to connect with the local population. But it would be quite pointless to teach many of the usual kinds of expressions that an international traveller would learn in order to expedite their travel arrangements.

### 3 So Why Then Study an Indigenous Language?

Australia's Indigenous languages are our unique national heritage. A knowledge of Indigenous languages teaches us about the place in which we live, including the landforms, the fauna and flora, the weather and seasons, the places. Through a study

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/the-real-windtalkers-wwii-the-story-of-navajo-code-talker.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/schools-colleges/global-urban-and-social-studies/our-teaching-areas/language-studies>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.anu.edu.au/study/study-options/languages>

of Indigenous languages we also learn much about the people who speak these languages and their culture, which has developed in relative isolation from the rest of the world over a very long period of time. The grammars of Aboriginal languages are typically regular and systematic and typically have a much richer morphology than English and many other European and Asian languages. Through these languages we begin to appreciate a different way of looking at the world and experiencing the world. We gain insights into Australian history, often from the perspective of first language (L1) speakers of Indigenous languages.

By studying an Indigenous language at university, students can know that they are part of a movement that values Indigenous languages and is working for their continued survival, in the case of “strong” languages, or their re-introduction, in the case of revival languages. What better way to bring about reconciliation than to allow students to experience firsthand the genius of Aboriginal languages with their intricate and complex grammars, complex pronoun systems, complex kinship systems, radically different semantic organization and their ability to adapt and change?

The teaching of Indigenous languages provides meaningful and culturally-affirming employment for a handful of native speakers (in the case of Pitjantjatjara and Yolŋu Matha) or other language activists who are striving to regain their linguistic heritage—in the case of Karna at Tauondi College or Wiradjuri at Charles Sturt University (CSU). Furthermore, the study of Indigenous languages at tertiary level potentially plays an important role in the preparation of teachers of Indigenous languages, for which there is significant demand following the 2015 release of the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages as part of the national curriculum initiative (FLA 2018, pp. 26–28).

### ***3.1 Studying a “Strong” Indigenous Language at Tertiary Level?***

Pitjantjatjara was first offered for study at the University of Adelaide in 1966. At its peak it was offered as a progression with three units of study (Pitjantjatjara 1, 2 and 3) at the University of South Australia (UniSA) by Bill Edwards and Mona Tur. It is now offered as a two-week intensive summer school taught by Dan Bleby and Sam Osborne in conjunction with six Anangu tutors (see Gale et al., this volume) as well as in three short winter schools in Alice Springs and Adelaide. In 2019 there were 45 enrolments in the summer school, 40 in the two-day Wiltja intensive, 27 in the three-day Alice Springs winter school and 23 in the Adelaide two-day winter school, bringing the total to 135 enrolments in Pitjantjatjara language in 2019 (Bow 2019, p. 2). Yolŋu Matha has been offered by Charles Darwin University (CDU) since 1992 (Gale 2011, p. 284) by a team (currently Brenda Muthamuluwuy and Yasunori Hayashi), with a total of 139 enrolments in 2019 (Bow 2019, p. 2). For many years Yolŋu Matha was the only Australian Indigenous language offered as a major (Simpson 2014, p. 57). It is also offered at postgraduate level (Graduate Certificate

in Yolŋu Studies).<sup>7</sup> In fact enrolments in Yolŋu Matha in 2019 were predominantly postgraduate (Bow 2019, p. 2). For more detail on CDU's Yolŋu Matha course see Christie (2010a, b, Hayashi, this volume). A new on-line Binij Kunwok course was made available in Semester 1 2019, and was offered through both CDU, with 15 enrolments, and ANU, with 10 enrolments, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Arrernte was offered in 2019 by the Batchelor Institute for Higher Education in Alice Springs, but did not run for want of enrolments. There are plans for a semester-length course and a short course in 2020 (Bow 2019, p. 2).

The single stated aim of the Pitjantjatjara Language and Culture course offered at the University of South Australia is simple: "To introduce students to the practical aspects of Pitjantjatjara language and culture as a basis for communicating effectively with Pitjantjatjara people."<sup>8</sup> This course is offered as an intensive summer school taught over two weeks. Most of the students are workers in various fields (for instance, art centre coordinators, rangers, doctors, main roads workers, and so on) who are already working in the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara (PY) lands or intend working in the PY lands soon after taking the course.

Similarly, the Yolŋu Matha course at CDU is marketed for its instrumental value: "This course is designed for professionals (particularly in health and education sectors), government workers, researchers and workers on Yolŋu communities."<sup>9</sup> The Yolŋu course offered by CDU probably draws a wider audience because it is offered online. In addition to students working in, or intending to work in Yolŋu communities in northeast Arnhemland, the Yolŋu Matha program has drawn students from Japan, California and various places around Australia.

## 4 Studying a Revival Language at Tertiary Level?

Kaurna was the first revival language offered for study within the tertiary sector. It was introduced in 1997 at the University of Adelaide (Amery 2007, 2012). There were 16 students enrolled in the 2019 Kaurna summer school (Bow 2019, p. 2). Gamilaraay was offered at the University of Sydney for the first time in 2006 (Giacon and Simpson 2012, p. 66). An advanced course in Gamilaraay is occasionally offered if the demand warrants (Giacon, personal communication, 2018). In 2019 there were six Level 1 Gamilaraay enrolments at the University of Sydney and 11 at ANU whilst there were two Level 2 students and three Level 3 students (two of whom were Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay people) enrolled in the upper level winter intensive (Bow 2019, p. 2). Wiradjuri was recently introduced by Charles Sturt University (CSU), but had some prior presence within the University of Sydney's Koori Centre Aboriginal languages summer school in 2009 (McNaboe and Poetsch

<sup>7</sup><http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies/unitInformation.html>

<sup>8</sup><https://study.unisa.edu.au/courses/106079/2018>

<sup>9</sup>[http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:31:::::31:P31\\_SEARCH\\_COURSE:GCYS](http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:31:::::31:P31_SEARCH_COURSE:GCYS)

2010, p. 218). A two-year Wiradjuri Graduate Certificate course was introduced in 2014, resulting in almost 100 graduates by December 2019 (Bow 2019, p. 2).

The primary reason for studying a “strong” Indigenous language is not so relevant for revival languages such as Kurna, Gamilaraay or Wiradjuri where members of these language communities have only just themselves been re-connecting with their linguistic heritage in the last few decades. Few members of these communities have the linguistic competence to conduct a natural conversation in their own language.

For members of these language communities, study of their languages is about re-connecting with their ancestral language and culture, understanding themselves as a distinct people and as custodians of their lands, which were never ceded. However, at least for the Kurna course offered at the University of Adelaide, only a very small minority of the students are actually Kurna people. At the most they might comprise just one or two members of the student cohort in a given year, though several Kurna people do have input into the course via a panel discussion, guest presentations and film or video. The Gamilaraay and Wiradjuri nations are much larger than the Kurna nation. Whilst still a minority, there are more Gamilaraay people accessing the Gamilaraay program (Giacon, personal communication, 2018), even though it is taught off country in Sydney and Canberra. Several also participate through community access or attend part of the course. The Wiradjuri program, being taught on Wiradjuri country, is primarily for Wiradjuri people. In fact, “a basic understanding and competency in Wiradjuri language gained via the successful completion of the Certificates I to III in TAFE or in other community settings” is assumed knowledge and required for enrolment in the IKC301 Wiradjuri Language course (CSU Handbook 2018).

The teaching of revival languages at tertiary level is more closely tied to the demand for teachers and language resources to support programs within these languages in schools. Indeed a learning outcome of the Wiradjuri course is to “be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to create Wiradjuri Language resources (with a particular focus on digital resources) for use in the wider community and in other educational contexts” (CSU Handbook 2018). The Gamilaraay course at the University of Sydney is taught as part of the Masters program for teachers of Indigenous languages. When the Kurna course was introduced at the University of Adelaide in 1997, this was done with financial support from the South Australian Education Department. Over the next few years a number of the students were teachers from Kurna Plains School, including the Principal. The course was an integral part of research and fledgling efforts to re-introduce the language.

Studying a revival language, like Kurna, is the key to understanding much about the land in which we live and work, in this case Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains. It is the key to understanding the environment, climate and weather. Consider, for instance, *pukarra* “hot northwest wind frequently preceding a storm”. As residents of Adelaide, we know the weather phenomenon well, yet we do not have a word for it in English. *Manya* in Kurna means both “cold” and “rain”, particularly fitting in a climate where winter rainfall predominates (though this is now changing under the influence of anthropogenic climate change). Placenames often provide a window

into the environment, or at least into what used to be there, now often a reminder of a previous era. The lower reaches of the River Torrens were known as Witunga “reed location” (and in English, the Reedbeds). The River Torrens itself is called Karrawirra Pari “redgum forest river”, North Adelaide Kainka Wirra, another term for “redgum forest”. Some Kurna placenames have strong cultural overtones. The Onkaparinga River is Ngangkiparingga “woman/female river place” and the lower reaches of the Onkaparinga were indeed a women’s site, as opposed to Ochre Cove nearby, which is a known men’s site. Yarnkalyilla means “fallen location”, referring to the fragments of Kulultuwi’s body as it decomposed when carried by his uncle Tjilbruki down the coast (i.e., place of the fallen [bits]). Uraidla refers to the two ears (*yuridla*) of a giant being—the two highest peaks of Mt. Lofty and Mt. Bonython.

A study of Kurna language and associated records provides glimpses of early contact history. The sentence examples recorded by Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) and Teichelmann (1857) provide authentic examples of life in the 1830s and 1840s. Consider, for example:

**ngaityerli pudlondo, burro ngaii wortarra padneta, perkabbinama ngaii yailtyattoai tulyarlo**

RS<sup>10</sup> **ngaityarli pudluntu, puru, ngai wartarra padnitha, pirrkapinama ngai yailtyatuwayi tulyarlo**

“tell my father that I shall come after you, later, lest he think the police have shot me”  
(Teichelmann 1857, *pudlondi*).

**Yakko nindo pindi meyu kundata, tittappettoai. Waieninga; ngannaitya na waiwiltana?**

RS **yaku nintu pinti miyu kurntatha, titapituwayi. Wayirninga; nganaitya naa waiwiltana?**

“You must not kill a white man, lest you be hanged. Be afraid; why are you bold?”  
(Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840, p. 71)

Furthermore, some sentence examples provide potent insights into cultural practices. Consider the following:

**Pammaringga ngai budni, mokarta kundangko, kurru karrendaii.**

RS **pamarringga ngai pudni, mukarta kurtangku kurdu karrinth’ai.**

“For the sake of spearing I came (but as it has not taken place or is not to take place) beat my head (that the blood runs down) for I feel ashamed.”  
(Teichelmann 1857, *pammaringga*)

In this case, the speaker has come to take his punishment, but because for whatever reason the spearing is not going to take place, he asks that his head be beaten severely as he feels so ashamed. Such punishment by spearing or beating the head with a *katha* “waddy” was the accepted form of punishment in a society which did not have gaols.

<sup>10</sup>The original spelling as used by Teichelmann (1857) appears in line 1 of these sentence examples. The sentence is re-spelt in Revised Spelling (RS), the spelling in use today.

Study of Kaurna language also affords insights into Nunga English. For instance, in Kaurna *paitya* is defined by Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840, p. 35) as “s.<sup>11</sup> vermin; reptile; monster; any dangerous or disliked animal; int. expressing wonder or admiration”. Similarly, the Nunga English word *deadly* has the same dual meaning, pointing to Kaurna, or other languages like it, as the origin for the Aboriginal English semantics.

For some other students, however, an identification with the Kaurna cause may be a strong motivating factor. Or it may simply be an interest to learn something about the language of the land where they live and/or study. These students are drawn from a wide array of disciplines including education, psychology, anthropology, music, medicine, law, architecture, history, etc.

For others, especially those undertaking a Linguistics Major, enrolment in LING 2039/3015 “Reclaiming Languages: a Kaurna case study” may be just another Linguistics course towards their degree. In a small department, such as Linguistics at the University of Adelaide, there are limited options in Linguistics, with summer schools in Indigenous languages (“Australian Indigenous Languages” alternating with “Reclaiming Languages” in alternate years) being the only summer schools held in Linguistics. Aboriginal languages, and Kaurna is no exception, are a wonderful vehicle through which to teach the principles and analytical skills of linguistics. Furthermore, Kaurna is the best documented example in Australia of a reclaimed language that has been re-learned and re-introduced on the basis of written historical documentation. Some students may seriously wish to learn about approaches and methods for language revival with a view to working in this area, either with the Kaurna language or with another language in need of revival in some part of the world.

Now that the Kaurna course is offered as a summer school, it attracts a few students who are desperate to finish their degree and need to pick up a course over the summer in order to achieve that, perhaps after having failed a course during the year. These students may have no particular interest in the course content and are aiming for a bare pass. This does have the effect of lowering the tone of the course and level of interaction and engagement with the subject matter.

In the 1990s when the Kaurna course was first introduced it was open to community access, drawing members from the public at large with a passionate interest in the Kaurna language and culture. Community participation in this course, especially from the Kaurna community, but also from teachers and others with an interesting range of expertise and life experience, contributes much to the course, and students benefit as a result. Some years ago, community access was abolished by the university, for reasons unrelated to the Kaurna course itself. As a result, there is little point in promoting the course beyond the University, in contradiction with recent moves by the University to value impact and community engagement. In order to enable continued access by members of the Kaurna community and the general

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<sup>11</sup>Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) used the abbreviation *s.* for Substantive to identify nouns within their wordlist.

public, they are being signed up as volunteers, entailing added administrative processes for no financial return. In January 2017 two members of the public signed up as volunteers and assisted with the running of the course, four others, including two Kurna people, signed up as volunteers for 2019, whilst another four Kurna people came along to the first session to share their connection with the language and to talk about how they use Kurna (Bow 2019, p. 2).

## 4.1 Course Content

The ecology of Australian Indigenous languages means that the course content for Aboriginal languages in the tertiary sector is quite different from that of other languages. Some topics typically introduced in an introductory course in an international language will have little relevance in Aboriginal language courses and vice versa. Others will be given different emphasis. Whilst some topics will be relevant, they are often approached in a different way. For instance, the topic of family and kinship is likely to be addressed in any language course, but in many languages it will probably be limited to the nuclear family. In Australian Indigenous languages courses, kinship structures, including the moiety system, sections and subsections or birth-order names, and associated behaviours, are likely to play a central role within the course. However, course content is configured somewhat differently from one Indigenous language course to another in response to the state of the target language as discussed above, the perceived needs of the learners, and most importantly, in response to who is teaching the course.

Developing understandings of Aboriginal society and culture is of prime concern, especially when Aboriginal people are centrally involved in course design and delivery. Learning outcomes for the CDU Yolŋu Matha courses focus on understanding key concepts of Yolŋu life and kinship first, followed by understanding sounds, spelling, pronunciation and grammar. The Pitjantjatjara course at UniSA focuses on the concept of *Ngapartji* and reciprocal exchange. The Wiradjuri course at CSU focuses on the impact of invasion history and policies and practices that threatened the loss of the language. The Kurna course (taught by a non-Indigenous linguist) has a strong emphasis on historical source material and its interpretation. The Gamilaraay course (also taught by a non-Indigenous linguist) has less emphasis on culture (though of course it does come up) and focuses much more on grammatical understanding and communicative competence.

The Unit Description for the 2018 Introductory Yolŋu Matha course (CAS110)<sup>12</sup> reads:

The unit is designed to give an introduction to the life and language of Yolngu people in Northeast Arnhemland. The course concentrates on Yolngu Matha (Yolngu language) forms

<sup>12</sup>[http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:21:0::NO::P21\\_SEARCH\\_UNIT,P21\\_SEARCH\\_VERSION,P21\\_SEARCH\\_YEAR:CAS110,92,018](http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:21:0::NO::P21_SEARCH_UNIT,P21_SEARCH_VERSION,P21_SEARCH_YEAR:CAS110,92,018).

of Dhuwala and focuses on the everyday community version of the language. A basic grounding in the sounds of the languages, the grammar, and a basic vocabulary will give grounding for the learning of other Yolngu languages. Moiety systems, various aspects of kinship, Yolngu life, creation stories, songs, art and ceremonies, and how these relate together, will be presented.

Compare this with the Wiradjuri IKC301 course abstract:<sup>13</sup>

This subject focuses on developing the Wiradjuri language skills of students within the context of cultural heritage. Students will work together to increase their proficiency in Wiradjuri conversation and will work together to generate resources that can be made available for use by others teaching Wiradjuri Language. Students will also expand their working knowledge of the Wiradjuri language through an expansion of their vocabulary and a developing knowledge of Wiradjuri grammar.

This subject will also provide students with the knowledge and understanding of the Wiradjuri language, including likely contrasts between pre-invasion and post-invasion Wiradjuri language, and a clear understanding of the influences and impact of invasion history on the Wiradjuri Nation, language and culture; including policies and practices that have threatened the loss of the Wiradjuri language.

Of course, whatever the language, an introduction to the sounds and spelling (orthography) and the teaching of points of grammar is essential. Greetings and introductions will also figure in any introductory conversational course. However, welcomes to, and acknowledgements of country are probably more specific to Aboriginal language courses and especially important within revival language courses.

Family and kinship is a topic likely to be introduced early on in most language courses. This is particularly important within the Aboriginal context where kinship systems are highly elaborated and knowledge of kinship is essential in knowing how to behave appropriately within Aboriginal society. Kinship and the moiety system are clearly priority areas for study within the Yolngu program at CDU. “Explain an operational understanding of the Yolngu *mälk* and *gurrutu* (kinship) systems” is listed as one of just five Learning Outcomes for “Yolngu Languages and Culture 1” (IAS541),<sup>14</sup> while “Apply an understanding of the Yolngu *Mälk* and *Gurrutu* (kinship) systems in interactions with Yolngu people and other language speakers” is listed as one of just four Learning Outcomes for “Yolngu Languages and Culture 2” (IAS542).<sup>15</sup>

Course content may well focus on daily life, mealtimes, around the house, going places, etc., but at least for Pitjantjatjara and Yolngu Matha, this is more likely to revolve around life in a small community in a remote area, rather than life in a large city. Food as a theme in an Aboriginal language course most certainly will not feature how to place an order in a restaurant or how to bargain in the market, as is likely to be the case in a German, French or Indonesian language course.

<sup>13</sup><http://www.csu.edu.au/handbook/subjects/IKC301.html>

<sup>14</sup>[http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:21:::::P21\\_SEARCH\\_UNIT,P21\\_SEARCH\\_VERSION,P21\\_SEARCH\\_YEAR:IAS541,12,020](http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:21:::::P21_SEARCH_UNIT,P21_SEARCH_VERSION,P21_SEARCH_YEAR:IAS541,12,020).

<sup>15</sup>[http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:21:::::P21\\_SEARCH\\_UNIT,P21\\_SEARCH\\_VERSION,P21\\_SEARCH\\_YEAR:IAS542,12,020](http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:21:::::P21_SEARCH_UNIT,P21_SEARCH_VERSION,P21_SEARCH_YEAR:IAS542,12,020).



My introductory German textbook (Terrell et al. 1988) for first year German at the University of Adelaide includes chapters on *Geld und Arbeit* (money and work), *Essen und Einkaufen* (food and shopping), *Gesundheit und Krankheit* (health and sickness), etc. These topics are marginal at best for an Aboriginal language taught in the tertiary sector. No learner of an Aboriginal language will ever have cause to visit a doctor speaking the language of study. Nor will it be possible to go shopping (except perhaps in a community store or an art centre) and speak the target language with the shop keeper or shop assistant. Whilst the main purpose for learning languages such as Pitjantjatjara and Yolŋu Matha may be vocational, the vocabulary and expressions needed will bear little relationship to those taught in a German or Japanese class, where various occupations will be introduced and job application procedures taught, all of which will have absolutely no relevance in Indigenous Australian contexts. Many things (such as a daily newspaper), which are taken for granted in a modern world language, have no relevance in an Aboriginal language as they simply do not exist in Aboriginal communities and are not published in Aboriginal languages. For this reason, whilst there are many themes and topics which at a general level are common to human existence and everyday conversation, when it comes down to the specifics, they will be treated in very different ways. It would make no sense at all to model an Aboriginal language course too closely on a modern world language course. In other words, it makes no sense to simply translate such a course directly into an Aboriginal language.

## 4.2 Implementation

Another important point of difference arises in the teaching of Indigenous languages, which tend to be located at the far esoteric end of the esoteric-exoteric continuum. In the teaching of an exoteric language epitomized by English, everyone is welcomed, even expected to learn English. Teachers of English are drawn from many nationalities and language backgrounds. Indeed, it has been argued that the best teachers of English are not native speakers, but rather highly competent second language speakers (Alghofaili and Elyas 2017). English is not regarded as being “owned” by any particular individual, group of individuals or people and no-one needs to be consulted over the right to teach English. The same applies in large part to the other modern world languages offered by Australian universities. Australian Indigenous languages on the other hand, are located at the other end of the spectrum. Specific owners and custodians living at Galiwin’ku were consulted and permission was granted prior to the Djambarrpuyŋu course being offered at CDU. Mona Tur, herself an Antikirinya/Yankunytjatjara woman, consulted Elders in the Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara lands in the north west of South Australia prior to the teaching of Pitjantjatjara at the University of South Australia (UniSA). Kurna Elders were consulted prior to the introduction of the Kurna course at the University of Adelaide, and so on. Furthermore, it is vital that first language speakers, Elders or those most knowledgeable are involved in the delivery of these courses. Most

Australian Indigenous languages offered in the tertiary sector are taught by a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous lecturers and tutors. It is very important that the non-Indigenous lecturers are known to the community.

The need to include first language speakers, Elders and knowledgeable members of the community raises the need for training and professional development. It is often the case that the Indigenous members of the team have not had the opportunity to attend university themselves and their schooling itself may have been very limited. Training options for teachers of Indigenous languages are also extremely limited (FLA 2018). For many years Anangu lecturers or tutors were involved in the delivery of the Pitjantjatjara course at UniSA to deliver the conversational component of the course, whilst the teaching of grammar, assessment, and so on, was delivered by the non-Indigenous member of the team. In 2013 and 2014 the Anangu tutors undertook the TAFE Certificate III training “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language (Pitjantjatjara)” and in 2014–2015 the Certificate IV “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language (Pitjantjatjara)”. As they were already fluent first language speakers of Pitjantjatjara, the focus of the Certificate III course was on literacy, linguistic structure and metalinguistic terminology so that they were able to explain the grammar of their language and answer students’ questions (see Gale, this volume; Gale et al., this volume).

## 5 Conclusion

The reasons for teaching and learning Indigenous languages at tertiary level are much more localized than the reasons for learning a modern world language. Students will study an Indigenous language in order to be able to communicate, often for work purposes, with a specific localized group in Central Australia, the Top End of the Northern Territory, or elsewhere. These languages do not have wide currency and are useful for communicating with a few thousand people at most. By contrast, introductory German textbooks situate German amongst German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Belgium) and within the world context. There is little by way of literature to read that is written in Aboriginal languages and the amount of film, video or audio recordings in these languages is also limited by comparison with modern world languages. Further study options in and through Aboriginal languages and professions that depend totally on those language skills are non-existent, though knowledge of Aboriginal languages can be very useful for professionals in connecting with members of the target community.

But most importantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are Australia’s priceless, irreplaceable national heritage. Teaching these languages at universities does help to confer status and value upon these languages. Students enrol in the knowledge that they are an important part of efforts to maintain, revive and revitalize Australia’s national linguistic treasures.

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# The Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Summer School: *Kulila! Nyawa! Arkala!* Framing Aboriginal Language Learning Pedagogy within a University Language Intensive Model



Mary-Anne Gale, Dan Bleby, Nami Kulyuru, and Sam Osborne

**Abstract** The Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language and Culture Summer School (PYLCSS) is delivered over two weeks at the University of South Australia (UniSA) at the beginning of January each year. The university sector in South Australia has a long tradition of offering Pitjantjatjara to a wide variety of adult learners in intensive summer schools. Delivery of the course is centred on collaborative teaching, shared between experienced Anangu and non-Pitjantjatjara (*Pirampa*) educators. Students are encouraged to engage in Pitjantjatjara ways of learning using a *kulila* (listen) *nyawa* (watch) *arkala* (try) approach. Grammatical structures and vocabulary are taught first using the *kulila*, *nyawa*, *arkala* pedagogy through dialogue, song, story and visual texts, and are afterwards reinforced by explicit teaching. The aim of the school is to strengthen students' understandings of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara language and culture by immersing them in Anangu (Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) epistemologies and ontologies, and oral language interactions. This chapter provides an overview of the history of teaching Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara in South Australia in the tertiary sector since 1968, and then outlines the philosophical approach and the resulting methodologies that have been

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adopted and developed over the years. The course is for adults looking to improve their skills for professional or personal reasons as well as a 4.5 credit course offered at undergraduate and postgraduate degree level.

**Keywords** Pitjantjatjara · Yankunytjatjara · Collaborative teaching · Aboriginal educators · Language-learning pedagogy · Immersion · Oral-language interactions

## 1 Introduction

Pitjantjatjara is one of several languages that make up the Western Desert language group in central Australia. Historically it has been a dominant language in what is now known as the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in the remote north-west region of South Australia and in the south-west region of the Northern Territory. Pitjantjatjara was the first language in the region to be written down by Presbyterian missionaries who founded a mission at Ernabella in 1937 in the remote north west of South Australia (Edwards and Underwood 2006). Within the APY Lands, Yankunytjatjara later became identified as a separate language within the region, its speakers associated with communities situated in the east, particularly Mimili and Indulkana. *Anangu* (or *Yarnangu* in some Western Australian dialects), meaning “person”, is a self-referential term in Western Desert languages such as Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Pintupi and Luritja, and is used broadly to refer to people from these language groups. Pitjantjatjara language is the only remaining Aboriginal language in South Australia that is spoken fluently by whole communities and is still being transmitted to its children as their first language (Simpson 2019). For this reason, Pitjantjatjara has been sought after for many years by non-Aboriginal people with an interest in learning an Aboriginal language, or by people wanting to work or interact in a meaningful way with Anangu.

## 2 A Background History

The teaching of Pitjantjatjara language and culture in the university sector began in 1968 at the University of Adelaide with a three week summer school offered through their Department of Adult Education. The course was—and continues to be—offered to adults as second language learners. Often students are people working or preparing to work in Anangu communities. This was possibly the first time an Aboriginal language had been taught formally in the tertiary sector in Australia. The summer school was run in the University of Adelaide language laboratory using Pitjantjatjara language learning cassette tapes that were prepared by the missionary Jim Warburton and Pitjantjatjara man Gordon Inkatji. Initially the summer school

was attended by 20 students, with many of them from the University of Sydney.<sup>1</sup> The class was taught by Nancy Sheppard, who was a fluent speaker of Pitjantjatjara from her years spent as a school teacher (then Nancy Nicholson) at Ernabella mission, and sometimes with the Western Australian-based missionary, Wilf Douglas, and with Gordon Ingkatji. The primary methodology was for students to listen to the Pitjantjatjara lessons in the language laboratory. Many of the students went on to do an advanced Pitjantjatjara course in a winter school, also run at the University of Adelaide (Sheppard, personal communication, 2014). The language tapes were accompanied by grammatical lessons and notes that were prepared by the renowned American linguist Ken Hale, who had recently conducted a linguistic survey of Australia's Aboriginal languages for the newly formed Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, founded in 1964 (AIATSIS 2014). This Pitjantjatjara course continued at the University of Adelaide for a number of years.

Eventually the Pitjantjatjara language course was moved to Torrens College in 1975 (previously Western Teachers College), which then became Torrens College of Advanced Education (CAE). The course was initially taught by casual staff as a term unit (rather than an intensive summer school) called Pitjantjatjara Language 1. Between 1975 and 1982 there were 80 student enrolments in this language unit. Then in 1981 Bill Edwards (once superintendent at Ernabella mission in the 1960s and a Pitjantjatjara language speaker) was appointed as a full-time staff member at Torrens CAE. Edwards was able to offer further Pitjantjatjara units, and by 1983 Pitjantjatjara Language 2 was offered as a term unit, with 26 enrolments. By 1983 the number of students studying Pitjantjatjara 1 reached 95, largely due to the re-introduction of an intensive summer school. A Yankunytjatjara/Antakirinya woman Mona Tur was also employed to teach Pitjantjatjara in a team with Edwards (Edwards 1995, p. 10).

In 1983, a \$90,000 Commonwealth grant was used to employ Brian Kirke as a research assistant to produce study guides and cassette tapes of language lessons in Pitjantjatjara.<sup>2</sup> These materials enabled the offering of more advanced courses in Pitjantjatjara, beginning with Pitjantjatjara Language 1 through to Pitjantjatjara 5. Furthermore, these five term-length courses were offered externally for the first time

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<sup>1</sup>Candidates wanting to serve in the mission field were offered training at the University of Sydney, under Professor A. P. Elkin (also an Anglican clergyman), as early as the 1940s to 1950s. This anthropological and linguistic training was to prepare them for their mission work among diverse cultural groups in Australia and overseas. One such missionary was Beulah Lowe who did Anthropology 1 and Linguistics 1 at the University of Sydney as part of her one year missionary training at the George Brown Missionary College in the suburb of Haberfield in Sydney (Wearing 2007, p. 27). But to study a specific language students had to undertake the summer school at the University of Adelaide, when it became available in 1968. By this time Elkin had retired from the University of Sydney (Wise 1996).

<sup>2</sup>These lessons prepared by Kirke are remarkably creative and are still used today by students wanting to improve their conversational Pitjantjatjara. Kirke had previously prepared Pitjantjatjara language learning materials for the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs. He went on to produce language learning kits with tapes for other South Australian Aboriginal languages in the mid-1980s for languages being revived, particularly Ngarrindjeri and Narungga.

in 1984, with a total of 100 students enrolled in 1984, 57 students in 1985, and 49 students in 1986 (for more details, see Edwards 1995, p. 7).

In the meantime, the Torrens CAE was amalgamated with other CAEs to become the South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE). Then in 1987 the college calendar changed from a term system to a semester system, so the curriculum materials had to be adjusted from five term units to three semester units: Pitjantjatjara Language 1, Pitjantjatjara Language 2, and Pitjantjatjara Language 3. The number of students studying Pitjantjatjara fell over this period, but numbers picked up by 1990 with 60 students studying the three semester units. But in 1991 there was a further structural change, with the SACAE becoming part of the new University of South Australia (UniSA). This meant the units had to be adjusted once again from 6 point semester units to 4.5 semester units. They were taught within the Aboriginal Studies programs offered in the first Faculty of Aboriginal and Islander Studies in an Australian university (Edwards 1995, p. 7).<sup>3</sup> Cross-institutional enrolments helped maintain student numbers through to 1995, when there were 32 students enrolled in Pitjantjatjara Language 1, but the last year when all three semester units were offered was 1993. This was due largely to the “equivalent full-time student unit” (EFTSU) funding system imposed on universities in an era of economic rationalism. Staffing of courses with small student numbers was made very difficult, particularly for language courses with their smaller cohorts wanting to undertake the more advanced language studies.

By 1996, further restructuring at UniSA saw Aboriginal Studies and the Pitjantjatjara course being taught in the newly formed David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research (DUCIER). In order to boost student numbers, and to meet an increasing demand for Pitjantjatjara language training from outside the university sector, DUCIER decided once again to offer intensive summer schools. In 1992 a one week summer school was offered, once again taught by Bill Edwards alongside Mona Tur, and then in 1994 it became a two week intensive summer school. The use of language laboratories, and teaching the course externally using cassette tapes, became a thing of the past. Students were still given the option of studying the unit for credit towards a degree, either through UniSA or cross-institutionally. This mode of teaching continued until 2004 when Bill Edwards retired from teaching Pitjantjatjara.

In 2005 Paul Eckert took over running the summer school for DUCIER, also teaching in a team with Mona Tur. Eckert had worked throughout the APY Lands since the mid-1970s and was highly skilled in Pitjantjatjara after devoting much of his career to Bible translation work at Ernabella. Since the mid-2000s, a Commonwealth government policy logic of intervention and its “Closing the Gap” campaign (Osborne 2015, p. 134) resulted in increasing numbers of non-Aboriginal people working in service provision in the APY Lands. This resulted in an increased demand from employers, who encouraged their staff to study Pitjantjatjara in a

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<sup>3</sup> Ironically this Faculty, which was later restructured and re-named the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research (DUCIER) was dissolved by UniSA in 2015.



summer school but not for credit. From 2011, DUCIER employed someone to work alongside Eckert to offer a Pitjantjatjara course for credit towards a degree. This was called Pitjantjatjara Language and Culture and was offered within a degree in Aboriginal Studies or as an elective for credit in other degrees offered at UniSA or other universities. Eckert ran the two week intensive summer school for 11 years until he retired in January 2016. A feature of Eckert's approach was a language immersion method and an emphasis on involving Anangu as central to the model of language instruction. After the retirement of Mona Tur as his team teacher, Eckert insisted that DUCIER employ at least five or six Anangu tutors to share the teaching. This extra expense was offset by the steady increase in student numbers undertaking the course each summer. By the time Eckert retired, the course had an enviable reputation, and was so much in demand that there was a waiting list each year. It had become a flagship for publicity for UniSA in promoting the university's commitment to reconciliation. Student numbers were capped at 60 per summer school to make teaching more manageable and ensure that students had regular and direct access to Anangu tutors throughout the course.

From 2014–2016 Eckert also ran a training program for Anangu tutors in collaboration with Mary-Anne Gale, who had written a TAFE certificate course for training Aboriginal language teachers. This TAFE course was first accredited in 2011, and in 2014 Gale obtained Commonwealth funding to trial the Certificate IV course she wrote in “Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language”, working with six Aboriginal language groups. Gale was particularly keen to trial the course with a language such as Pitjantjatjara, which remains the only language still spoken fluently by a whole community in South Australia. The format was for the Anangu tutors to each be responsible for running their own small group sessions (comprising a group of ten students) throughout the summer school, as well as actively participating in the teaching of whole-group sessions. This participation constituted the “work placement” component of their teacher training. Other more theoretical units in the Certificate IV course were taught during intensive training and planning sessions run for a week before the summer schools began. By 2016 eight Anangu students had successfully graduated with their TAFE Certificate IV, along with their newly acquired skills and confidence as Pitjantjatjara language teachers.<sup>4</sup> During Gale's involvement she also coordinated the offering of Pitjantjatjara for university credit students, but in this period the number of these students was capped at six to keep the workload manageable.

In 2017 Dan Bleby and Sam Osborne took over the role of running the summer school. Bleby is a teacher in the South Australian Department for Education who has many years of experience teaching Anangu students in both the APY Lands and at Wiltja Anangu Secondary College, a residential secondary college in Adelaide for

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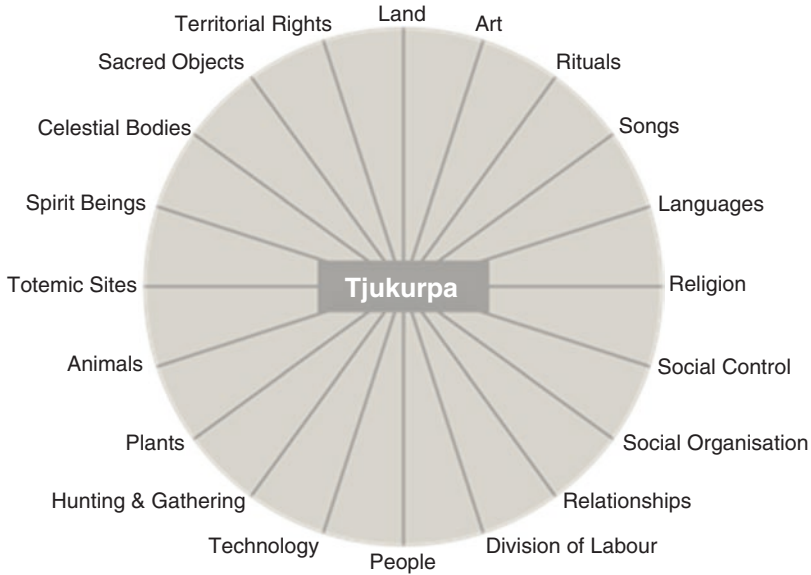
<sup>4</sup>The Anangu students had to complete a TAFE Certificate III in “Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language” before they could embark on the Certificate IV. But because the Anangu students were already fluent in their language, this was largely achieved through a process of Recognized Prior Learning (RPL). They did however do extra work on their Pitjantjatjara literacy skills for the Certificate III. Over 15 Anangu graduated with their Certificate III during this period.

students from remote Anangu communities. Sam Osborne is a former Principal of Ernabella Anangu School, currently working as Associate Director, Regional Engagement (APY Hub) at UniSA. Bleby and Osborne continue the philosophy and pedagogy of employing six Anangu tutors who take the lead in teaching small group sessions. Student numbers remain capped at 60, but the credit student numbers have been increased (in January 2019, the credit students were capped at ten). The partnership between Bleby as the primary teacher and Osborne as the coordinator of the credit program made this increase possible. For students studying for credit, standard university course fees apply for a single semester unit, while non-credit students paid \$1700 for the 2019 summer school, with an additional cost of approximately \$200 for books and language learning resources as required (University of South Australia 2018). From 2019 Karina Lester joined the teaching team to ensure inclusion of Yankunytjatjara language and culture in the course. Karina is a Yankunytjatjara woman and co-manager of the Mobile Language Team at the University of Adelaide.

In Section 3, Bleby, Osborne and Nami Kulyuru (an experienced Anangu teacher who has a long-standing involvement in the summer school), describe the current (developing) approach they have adopted, with a focus on the pedagogy and philosophy of the school. These aspects have been developed over time through the input of the Anangu teachers, whose number and involvement increased under Eckert. The structure of the school was shaped by their teaching styles and ways of knowledge-sharing, reflecting Anangu epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. The approach seeks to guide students not just to learn about Anangu languages and culture, but to also reflect on their own standpoints and “situatedness” in largely Western cultural and educational frameworks. The goal is that in developing such an awareness, students will be better placed to interact with Anangu in more dialogic, relational and power-sensitive ways.

### **3 Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language and Culture Summer School (PYLCSS) Pedagogy**

Oral narratives, both formal and informal, are central to knowledge sharing in Anangu society. Primarily, Pitjantjatjara law/lore is shaped by *Tjukurpa*, recounted through narratives retracing the “journeys and interactions of the ancestor beings as they lived, died and created the various land and celestial forms in the creation period” (Osborne 2015, p. 128). These beings engage in “hunting and gathering foods, making implements, punishing offenders, fulfilling kinship obligations, performing ceremonies, painting on rock walls, and marrying within specified section groups, so people in each generation are to follow these examples in their daily lives” (Edwards and Underwood 2006, p. 104). *Tjukurpa* provides a holistic framework for living and knowledge sharing, within which all things are interrelated (see Fig. 1).



Source: Edwards 1994, p. 18

**Fig. 1** Elements of *Tjukurpa*, a holistic framework

This is in stark contrast to Western education, in which knowledge is “disciplined” (Nakata 2007) into separate and distinct subjects. So how does a Western university language course reconcile these contrasting worldviews within a two week summer school devoted to the teaching of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara language and culture?

### 3.1 *Kulila! Nyawa! Arkala! An Anangu Pedagogy*

*Tjitji Pitjantjatjara tjuṯa mama, ngunytju, kami, tjamu munu walytja kutjupa tjuṯanguṯu kulira nyakula arkalpai.*

“From early childhood, Pitjantjatjara children are always listening to, watching, and mimicking their parents, grandparents and other family members.” (Kulyugu and Bleby 2017)

Pitjantjatjara was a predominantly oral language, without a traditionally written form, and the vast majority of communication continues to occur in non-written forms. Anangu children learn within this environment through watching, listening and imitating family and community members. The focus on non-written communication as the primary medium of education sees narrative, song, and physical movement (in the form of gesture, facial expression and dance) prioritized as key tools for teaching and learning. These ways of teaching and learning can be considered to be central to Anangu pedagogies.

The Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language and Culture Summer School (PYLCSS) draws on these pedagogies in the context of a second or foreign language (L2 FL) course, in which the learners are both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people wanting to learn an Aboriginal language which is still spoken by children (Giacon and Simpson 2012). The timetable is structured so that the first hour and a half of every day is set aside to observe, learn and practise a Pitjantjatjara dialogue. Pens, papers and written versions of the dialogue are prohibited to students in these sessions in the first three days. The two-person dialogue mimics a scenario in which one person arrives at another person's camp fire and is offered a cup of tea, followed by general enquiries about the purpose of the visitor's visit (see [Appendix](#)).

Anangu tutors work with small groups of students, generally sitting outside, to demonstrate the dialogue, providing very little clarification or translation into English. Students must rely on the use of props (e.g., a billycan, pannikin, fire, tea, milk and sugar), gestures and role play to develop understanding gradually. Further insights are gained through the more traditional Western sessions focused on grammar and vocabulary that are offered inside the classroom following the morning oral language sessions. As the course progresses, these oral sessions (still held outside) move from memorizing the dialogue to using simple sentences to describe elements of the physical environment (e.g., tree, leaf, bark, grass, creek) and wooden artefacts used for teaching purposes (boomerangs, spears, dishes, digging sticks). By the end of the third day, written versions of the dialogue are provided to students to consolidate their learning. For a number of students, this handover of a single sheet of paper (the dialogue in writing) is associated with instant relief from panic and grief.

Privileging oral forms of the language is challenging for many tertiary students who are used to being provided with readings and other preparatory texts prior to the course. As universities continue to move to online teaching, there is an increased expectation by students that all resources be provided online in readily accessible digital and written forms. In contrast, PYLCSS students are advised that there is no pre-reading or preparation required, and to "come with an open mind". Coming into an unfamiliar learning environment without familiar supports or methodologies can be confronting for many students and can lead to elements of low level resistance. The first assessment task is a performance of the dialogue at the end of the first week, which can further fuel students' anxiety, especially as the teachers insist on withholding the written version for the first half of that week. It is not uncommon to hear feedback along the lines of, "I understand what you're trying to do, but this isn't how I learn!" Or, "I am a visual learner, not an oral learner. I need to see the written text first". To which we respond, "But that is not the way Aboriginal people learn their languages, and indeed, not how all children (including you!) learned their first language."

Such comments are illustrative of the discomfort felt by predominantly Western-educated students as they come into contact with Anangu ways of teaching and learning. As the majority of students participating in the course are working with Anangu or in Anangu communities in some capacity, this discomfort is an important element of their learning in the summer school. The experience of having to engage in unfamiliar ways of learning and operating provides them with valuable insights

into the experiences of many Anangu who have to work with *Pirampa* (non-Aboriginal people) in their own communities. Making this discomfort explicit to students invites them to reflect on their own interactions and assumptions when working with Anangu. By the end of the second week, the students in the summer school start to understand and appreciate why they were encouraged to first *Kulila* (Listen!) and *Nyawa* (Watch!), and then to *Arkala* (Try!). They learn that this is a good way to learn the language from their Anangu tutors, and a good way to approach the way they work with Anangu when in Anangu communities.

### 3.2 *Atja-Atja*

As Anangu children begin their attempts at language, they develop a basic “baby talk” known as *atja-atja*. For example, the word *kangkuru* (senior sister or female cousin) is commonly spoken by small children as *kaku* or *tjatju*. As children progress in their oral language development they are gently corrected by adults, who model the correct sounds and structures (Kulyuru and Bleby 2017).

The oral communication focus of the PYLCSS allows Anangu teachers to use similar approaches in teaching Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara to adults. Modelling fluent language use through demonstration, repetition and gentle correction allows students to engage with the unfamiliar sound systems and language patterns of Pitjantjatjara. Once again, Western reliance on written representations of sounds is set aside to focus on listening, watching the mouth (and tongue where possible) and mimicking sounds. During the more theoretical and formal teaching time in the day, students are given a graphically illustrated phoneme sound chart, and the differences between English and the Pitjantjatjara sound and spelling systems are explained. Again, the emphasis is first on *Kulila!* (Listen!) and *Nyawa!* (Watch!), and then *Arkala!* (Try!).

### 3.3 *Tjukurpa Ayini-Ayini*

*Anangu tjuṯangu tjukurpa ayini-ayini wangkapai warangka itingka, mutukangka ankula, puṯingka, kuulangka unngu munu urilta, munu kiminitingka.*

“Anangu have humorous stories they share around campfires, on long road trips, on Country, inside and outside of schools and in their communities.” (Kulyuru and Bleby 2017)

Throughout the PYLCSS, different forms of oral narrative are used as key teaching strategies. In planning for the course, each Anangu tutor prepares two narratives to perform in naturally paced Pitjantjatjara for the students. The first is described as a “family narrative”, and describes each tutor’s family history. Photographs are collected from a range of sources, including the Anangu online community archive (*Ara Irititja*) and social media, and incorporated into their oral narratives. The second presentation prepared by the Anangu teachers is a *tjukurpa ayini-ayini*, or

humorous anecdote. These favourite stories, tried and tested over time, have been honed through regular retelling in the contexts mentioned above. The telling of these stories (two each by all six of the Anangu tutors) occurs in the more relaxed afternoon sessions, and are much anticipated, knowing that some of the *tjukurpa ayini-ayini* will be very funny and full of action and laughter.

These narratives act as engaging and powerful models of fluent speaking in real contexts. The stories are then retold at a slower pace with short breaks in between each line. Finally, they are retold slowly with interpretation provided. Repetition is another important pedagogical feature for allowing students to engage with oral language contexts. An additional benefit of these stories is that they contain valuable insights into Anangu ways of thinking, being, and knowing. Anangu teachers often present their stories for students through role play, incorporating gesture, rhythm and other important elements of oral communication. Some Anangu teachers go to great lengths with their props, and stand-in participants, as they try to re-enact a scene from one day out bush in the APY Lands. One example is a story told by Paul Andy, who recounts how a couple were travelling back to their community in a newly bought Volkswagen Beetle. The car broke down on the rough corrugated roads, some distance from the destination. The man went to check under the bonnet, only to find the engine was missing! He and his wife were forced to camp overnight on the side of the road, until another car approached the following day. The couple flagged down the car and asked the *Piranpa* driver if he had seen an engine anywhere along the road. It was at this point that the *Piranpa* man, familiar with the fact that Volkswagen Beetles' engines are located at the rear of the vehicle rather than under the bonnet, was able to show the man the engine, reconnect a loose wire, and send the couple happily on their way. This scenario was expertly narrated by Paul and jointly acted out by other members of the team so that it did not matter if students did not comprehend all of the language. Stories like this provide memorable examples of Anangu humour, often centred on small misfortunes. The sharing of these kinds of stories forms strong relational bonds, and themes often emerge as the Anangu tutors jointly prepare stories prior to the school. For example, one summer school was declared "Year of the Donkey" due to the proliferation of stories relating to the cheeky behaviours of wild donkeys around the Ernabella community. These themes often find their way into the students' oral performances at the conclusion of the school.

### 3.4 *Inma*

*Inmaku pakalpai; inma inkapai; tjitjiku inma; inma/ngura/walka tjungu ngaranyi.*

"Dancing, singing, children's songs, ceremony, land and art are all integrated." (Kulyuru and Bleby 2017)

*Inma* refers to a number of things, including song and ceremony, and provides another valuable resource for language learning. Singing and song, including traditional song cycles, community music and hymnal singing, are central to Anangu

life. Traditional songs are drawn from *Tjukurpa* (*Wapar in Yankunytjatjara*) and are a powerful tool for social/cultural maintenance and memory work. Songs continue to act as mnemonic devices for retaining and transferring knowledge in contemporary Anangu society and are also used as a mnemonic device for learning language in the summer school.

Each Anangu tutor at the PYLCSS selects one or more songs to teach to the class. These range from children's songs translated from English (for example, *kata, alipiri, muti, tjina*—"Heads, shoulders, knees and toes"), Pitjantjatjara children's songs which "borrow" the melodies of traditional songs from other languages (for example, *Kiilykiilykari*—the budgerigar song, sung to the tune of "Li'l Liza Jane"), or Pitjantjatjara songs with deeper meaning (such as *Kulilaya*—the Pitjantjatjara land rights song). It was endearing one year to watch a group of older men who attended the summer school together, singing the children's song in Pitjantjatjara (with actions and great gusto) "Heads, shoulders, knees and toes". These men were about to head off to the APY Lands, on a South Australian government contract, to build and improve the roads. To this day those men can probably still remember the Pitjantjatjara words for "Head, shoulders, knees and toes", plus "eyes, ears, mouth and nose"!

### 3.5 Assessment

For students enrolled for credit, there are three elements to their assessment. The focus is on oral performance and marks are weighted towards this, rather than written assessment. Assessment 1 is an oral performance and dramatization of the dialogue including the use of props, gestures and hand-talk, an ontological feature of Anangu communication (for examples, see *Iltyem-iltyem*, n.d.). Credit students are required to learn the dialogue off by heart and perform it without paper prompts. Students perform the dialogue for both Person A and Person B (see [Appendix](#) for the script), and are assessed by the coordinators and Anangu tutors. When the Anangu tutors were undertaking training towards the Certificate IV in "Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language", they assessed each credit student with a mark out of 40 as part of a unit on assessment. This was challenging but was helped by video-recording each credit student performing the dialogue and later comparing performances. Students are marked on word accuracy, pronunciation, stress and intonation, and gesture and use of props (see Fig. 2).

For Assessment 2, students compose and perform a text in Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara at the end of the second week of the school. As with Assessment 1, only students doing the summer school for credit are formally assessed. However, all students perform in front of the whole class on the last day as part of the celebrations of student achievements. They choose whether they work in pairs, in groups or as individuals. Many of the students choose to write and perform a song, while others compose and perform humorous skits, plays or simple conversational dialogues. From experience, we have learnt that some credit students can suffer from

Assessment 1: Dialogue	PART A .....	Word Accuracy	Pronunciation of words	Stress & Intonation	Gesture, use of Props etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word Accuracy</li> </ul>	PART B .....				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation</li> </ul>	A1. Wali Palyapa ma-pitjaku? B1. Uwa palya, ngalya-pitjal Nylnakatti Palyan?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress &amp; Intonation</li> </ul>	A2. Uwa, palyapa. Ka nyuntu? B2. Ngayulu palya.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gesture, use of props</li> </ul>	B3. Kapatikun mukuringanyi? A3. Uwa. B4. Tjuika yaaltitju? A4. Kutju B5. Milikakun mukuringanyi? A5. Wiya palya. B6. Nyilku. A6. Aj, wigumyal				

Fig. 2 Excerpt from dialogue assessment sheet, with assessment items

performance anxiety, so we encourage students not to be too linguistically adventurous in straying from grammatical features and structures that have been covered during class. Students are encouraged to draw on and build upon the dialogue, songs, stories and other things they have learnt throughout the two weeks, and to work in pairs or groups with other students who will give them extra support and encouragement. The final day of performances is a definite highlight of the summer school. In particular, the Anangu tutors enjoy sitting on a panel, assessing the performances collaboratively with the course coordinators, and watching the students demonstrate the fruits of their hard work.

The final Assessment 3 for credit students is a written portfolio of work that includes self-reflection and a review of the intensive learning experience (see Fig. 3).

## 4 Conclusion

When students are asked to write evaluations of their learning experiences at the end of each Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language and Culture Summer School, they inevitably respond with a comment about the positive relationships they developed with their group’s Anangu tutor. The collaborative teaching model featuring *Piranya* and Anangu educators sharing the teaching enables students’ thinking to shift from a Western-facing epistemological approach towards Anangu ways of knowing, being and doing. The aim of the intensive two weeks is to equip participants in their work alongside Anangu and in Anangu communities through an improved understanding of the language and cultural context.

For those who are interested in having an intensive intercultural encounter, in a safe and supportive environment, learning an Aboriginal language still spoken in South Australia, then this is the course for you! It is taught in collaboration with quality Anangu educators who will challenge the way you think about learning.



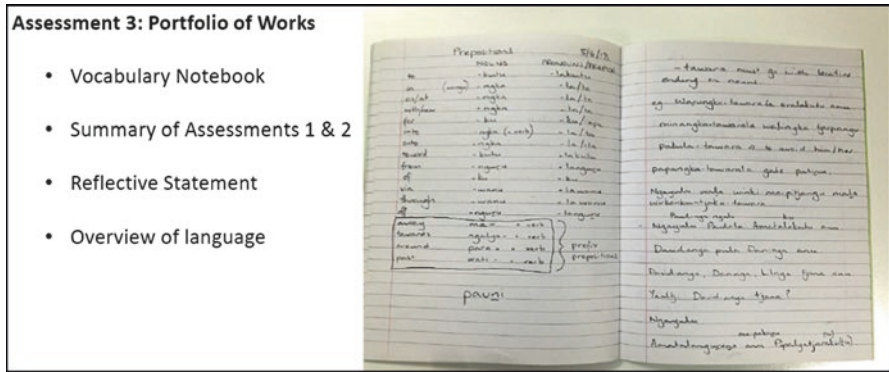


Fig. 3 Elements of Assessment 3—Portfolio of Works

Look out for the next Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Language and Culture summer school, run every January for two weeks by the University of South Australia. *Palya?* (OK?)

### Appendix: 2018 PLCSS Dialogue Script

- A1. **Wai! Palyana ma-pitjaku?**  
*Hey! Can I come over?*
- B1. **Uwa palya, ngalya-pitja!**  
*Yeah, sure, come over!*  
**Nyinakati!**  
*Sit down.*  
**Palyan?**  
*How are you?*
- A2. **Uwa, palyana. Ka nyuntu?**  
*Yeah, I'm fine. And you?*
- B2. **Ngayulu palya.**  
*I'm fine.*
- B3. **Kapatikun mukuringanyi?**  
*Would you like a cup of tea?*
- A3. **Uwa.**  
*Yes*
- B4. **Tjuka yaaltjitu?**  
*How many sugars?*
- A4. **Kutju**  
*One.*
- B5. **Milkakun mukuringanyi?**

- Do you want milk?*
- A5. Wiya palya.**  
*No, thanks.*
- B6. Nyiiku.**  
*Here you go.*
- A6. Ai, wirunya!**  
*Mmm, lovely.*
- B7. Yaaltjingurun pitjangu?**  
*Where did you come from?*
- A7. Mimililanguruna pitjangi.**  
*I came from Mimili.*
- B8. Yaalaran pitjangu?**  
*When did you come?*
- A8. Mungartjina tjarpangu.**  
*I came yesterday.*
- B9. Nyaangka?**  
*How did you come?*
- A9. 'Bush-Bee'ngkana pitjangi.**  
*On the Bush Bus.*
- B10. Munta-uwa, palya.**  
*Of course, I see.*
- B11. Nyaakun pitjangu?**  
*What did you come for?*
- A11. Inmakuna pitjangu.**  
*I came for a concert.*
- B12. Kan yaaltjingka ngarinyi?**  
*And where are you staying?*
- A12. Ngayuku malpaku ngurangka.**  
*My friend's house.*
- B13. Tjingurunanta mungawinki nyakuku.**  
*Maybe I'll see you tomorrow.*
- A13. Uwa, palya.**  
*Yeah, okay.*

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# Yolŋu Languages in the Academy: Reflecting on 20 Years of Tertiary Teaching



Yasunori Hayashi

**Abstract** This chapter describes and reflects on the history of the Yolŋu Languages and Culture Program at Charles Darwin University (CDU), focusing on the language teaching aspects, particularly on curriculum and pedagogy. Features of this program are: a commitment to teach Yolŋu culture through Yolŋu languages; to cover all Yolŋu languages; to have those languages taught by proper authorities; and to avoid sacred knowledge of language and culture. Taught through the intellectual collaboration of Yolŋu lecturers and non-Yolŋu coordinators, those pedagogical protocols have been practised by succeeding generations of teachers in the program. Student learning experiences shared in this chapter indicate that as well as gaining some competence in using these languages, students came profoundly to respect, and even love a particular group of Australian languages and cultures.

**Keywords** Yolŋu languages · Yolŋu culture · Curriculum · Pedagogy · Pedagogical protocols · Collaborative teaching

## 1 Introduction

Yolŋu languages are constituted as a family of different but related Indigenous languages cared for and spoken by people in East Arnhemland. The languages were first brought to what are now the Yolŋu lands by spirit Ancestors such as the Djan'kawu sisters. The Djan'kawu travelled across the sea in a canoe carrying their people and their languages in woven bags and folded mats. People and their languages, along with various institutions and their symbols, were deposited in various places as the sisters and other Ancestors of other groups travelled, bringing the world into existence (Mawalan(1) Marika in Berndt 1953; Mawalan(1) Marika in West 2008). The languages along with the people and their cultural life are thus

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invested in the land itself. Yolŋu speak, sing and dance these *Matha*, meaning both tongue and speech.

Like all Indigenous languages Yolŋu Matha (YM) is today a highly valuable Australian cultural resource. According to the second National Indigenous Languages Survey (Marmion et al. 2014), many Australian Indigenous languages are declining, some are gaining speakers and others remaining stable, but all of them are at risk of loss. Some Yolŋu languages along with Pitjantjatjara, Murrinh Patha, and Kunwinjku are among several Indigenous languages widely spoken in the Northern Territory (NT). The 2016 Australian Census figures for languages spoken at home in the NT notably show Djambarrpuyŋu (YM) as ranked third after English and Kriol, and ahead of languages such as Greek and Tagalog (Australian Government. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016).<sup>1</sup>

The census figures also show that 25.5% of the NT population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and this figure is expected to increase dramatically. Developing cross-linguistic and cultural competence in Indigenous situations is crucial for being able to work respectfully and carefully in the NT. The Yolŋu Languages and Culture Program at Charles Darwin University (CDU) is designed to enable students to learn the ways in which Yolŋu knowledge authorities nurture and care for their land and ancestral knowledge, and to develop Yolŋu specific language and cultural skills which are also relevant to other Indigenous people's worldviews and socioeconomic status. Commitment to teaching and learning with respect and care is the characteristic that should determine the forms and approaches of the curriculum and pedagogy in teaching YM.

## 2 History of Yolŋu Studies at Charles Darwin University

The Yolŋu Studies program was established in 1994 at CDU and won the Australian University Teachers of the Year award in 2005. In 2019 the program was delivered at both undergraduate (Diploma of Yolŋu Studies) and postgraduate (Graduate Certificate in Yolŋu Studies) levels, and also as a micro-credential course. These three courses are available on-campus in Darwin and via online study modes.<sup>2</sup> In the last 10 years CDU has recorded more than 1000 enrolments in total, alongside 20 or so micro-credential course enrolments every semester. A majority of postgraduate students are mature-age students who want to learn Yolŋu culture, particularly the kinship system, and YM for their professional work (e.g., school teachers, government officers, medical and law practitioners, national and international academic researchers). Most undergraduate students are beginners in learning Australian

<sup>1</sup> The figures show English (132,634 people—58% of the NT population), then Kriol (4390 people: 1.9%), Djambarrpuyŋu (4275: 1.9%), Greek (3245: 1.4%) and Tagalog (2994: 1.3%) (ABS 2016).

<sup>2</sup> For Yolŋu Studies internal and online learning, see Charles Darwin University. College of Indigenous Futures, Arts and Society (n.d.).

Indigenous languages and cultures, and select Yolŋu Studies units as electives within their Bachelor degree (e.g., in Education, Health or Arts).

At the very beginning of the process of its establishment, those working to institute the study of Yolŋu languages in the NT tertiary education sector explicitly articulated the principle that all aspects of curriculum, syllabus and pedagogy would involve senior and skilled Yolŋu speakers and knowledge authorities as decision makers and university lecturers. Those who own and love these languages worked with, and were supported by, non-Yolŋu academics who had learned to speak, love and respect the languages through committed study. Both these groups needed to work together to embed the teaching of Yolŋu languages in a modern university. Fostered by the calm persistence of the Yolŋu language authorities who were employed by CDU, and provided flexibility in the curriculum and syllabus, while accommodating Yolŋu pedagogical protocols, but also by the passion of students for learning an Australian Indigenous language with respect and in good faith, the program holds up extremely well 25 years after its birth. In this chapter I present short intellectual biographies of past and present teachers—three Yolŋu lecturers and three non-Yolŋu coordinators.

The Australian Government established the first five pilot bilingual education programs in 1973, and an additional six in 1974, in which Aboriginal languages and English were both used at Aboriginal primary schools in the NT.<sup>3</sup> In East Arnhemland, the Gupapuyŋu language was chosen at both Milingimbi and Galiwin'ku Schools, and the Gumatj language at Yirrkala School (Devlin et al. 2017). Up until 1998, when the NT Government passed legislation to shut down those programs, the use of Indigenous languages in NT schools was highly supported and encouraged. In 1994 CDU demonstrated support for Indigenous studies by founding a new Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. In recognition of his 20 years working in Yolŋu languages and culture in East Arnhemland, Michael Christie was invited to establish an Aboriginal languages program. To establish the foundation for the program, Christie had to find ways of representing Yolŋu knowledge practices in a university context. He was advised by the Yolŋu steering committee that all Yolŋu languages needed to be taught, as well as culture since each language had its own territory with its own people and species (Christie 2009). Language, territory, people and environment are inextricably linked and must be represented in class by the right person, namely by an owner or a manager of the knowledge. This is an important protocol in knowledge production and its practice on Yolŋu lands.

Christie organized a group of Yolŋu advisers from different communities, different languages and clan groups to provide supervision. CDU appointed a full-time Yolŋu lecturer, Waymamba Gaykamaŋu, who was at that time designing a homeland school curriculum in the NT Education Department. Christie and Gaykamaŋu co-designed the first Yolŋu languages and culture courses at the university.

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<sup>3</sup>Angurugu, Areyonga, Hermannsburg, Milingimbi and Warruwi were chosen in 1973, and Murrupurtiyanuwu, Galiwin'ku, Gunbalanya, Yayayi, Yirrkala and Yuendumu in 1974.

Dhuwala' mirri Gupapuyŋu was chosen as the first language to be taught. It had been chosen by early missionaries to be the language for the Milingimbi church, and was one of the first languages chosen for use in the bilingual education program in Milingimbi. As a result, it had extensive written resources, and was both the language known by Christie and the language of which Gaykamaŋu was an owner. In designing the learning of Dhuwala' mirri Gupapuyŋu and Yolŋu culture, the Yolŋu advisers and Gaykamaŋu clearly indicated that the experience of students in the classroom should reproduce the experience of Yolŋu children as they grew into Yolŋu life (Christie 2009). To meet the expectations of the students who were non-Yolŋu adults learning on-campus and online, Christie and Gaykamaŋu worked with the group of Yolŋu advisers to develop Dhuwala' mirri Gupapuyŋu Study Notes as learning aids providing linguistic analysis and description of the language.

One important concept from everyday Yolŋu life, *garma*, was situated at the centre of Yolŋu Studies pedagogy. Humans and other-than-humans (including Yolŋu languages) in East Arnhemland are either Dhuwa or Yirritja. As the Ancestral Beings journeyed through the country, shaped landscapes, communicated and sang at particular sites, everyone, everything and everywhere were declared as belonging to either the Dhuwa or Yirritja moiety. This does not mean that Yolŋu world-making-knowing is dichotomized, rather that individual Dhuwa and Yirritja beings play constructive roles in interrelating Dhuwa and Yirritja. *Garma* is a confluence of Dhuwa and Yirritja knowledge-making, the seeking of agreement by careful negotiation (Marika-Mununggiritj 1990), on open ground and in an understanding of Yolŋu Law (Gumbula 2009). *Garma* is a public place where all people are equally treated with respect and seriousness. Yolŋu advisers and lecturers, and university academics negotiated with care, working together to produce a public curriculum as a *garma* space—Yolŋu Studies at CDU—where non-Yolŋu adult students learn YM through Yolŋu pedagogy with the prepared language learning resources. To maintain the public Yolŋu Studies space under the Yolŋu knowledge protocols, support and understanding from the university were required so that this *garma* space and its practice could be legitimately run within a higher education institution, in the promise of mutual benefit. This has enabled Yolŋu Studies to continue since 1994 and retain its vigour and significance.

After working with undergraduate and postgraduate students, university authorities and researchers for over 12 years, Gaykamaŋu retired from the university. She was awarded an honorary PhD for her work, and is still actively involved in the program as a bilingual and bicultural consultant. After her retirement, Yiŋiya Guyula, a Ũiya-dhalinymirr elder was appointed as a full-time Yolŋu lecturer. Following the Yolŋu pedagogical protocol—only the owner or the manager of the knowledge is authorized to transmit it—the language taught in his class was shifted from Dhuwala' mirri Gupapuyŋu to Dhuwal' mirr Ũiya-dhalinymirr Djambarrpuyŋu. John Greatorex, a non-Yolŋu program coordinator who, like Christie, had worked collaboratively with Yolŋu since the 1970s, succeeded Christie and worked with Guyula in teaching Yolŋu languages and culture. After the resignation of Guyula from CDU, Brenda Muthamuluwuy, a senior Birrkili Gupapuyŋu woman, filled the

Yolŋu lecturer position. The language taught in class reverted to Dhuwala'mirri Gupapuyŋu, her own language bestowed from her patrilineal ascendants. She currently works with a coordinator, Yasunori Hayashi, who was a student of Gaykamaŋu's and had worked collaboratively with Yolŋu since the early 2000s. These three non-Yolŋu coordinators had developed sufficient language skills and cultural awareness to work alongside Yolŋu knowledge authorities, and had been adopted into different Yolŋu clan groups through the Yolŋu kinship system.

### 3 Protocols in Teaching Yolŋu Languages

While instituting the Yolŋu Studies program, the Yolŋu advisers placed four protocols at the centre of teaching Yolŋu languages at CDU:

- languages and culture should be taught together;
- all Yolŋu languages should be taught;
- languages should be taught by authorities;
- nothing secret or sacred of languages and culture should be taught.

Prior to the establishment of the Yolŋu Studies program in 1994, Raymattja Marika and Christie, who were both working at Yirrkala School used to visit Darwin to deliver short and intensive courses teaching Gumatj Dhuwala'mirri language. Marika was keen to talk about ways in which Yolŋu languages and cultural practices could be taught and learned at a tertiary institution. She focused on the fundamentals of Yolŋu culture (*rom*)—kinship (*gurrutu*), songlines (*manikay*), story (*dhäwu*), land (*wäŋa*) and art (*miny'tji*)—and used these fundamental words in Gumatj Dhuwala'mirri language as the basis of teaching and learning culture and languages. In a staff meeting at Yirrkala School about Yolŋu curriculum, a Yolŋu elder pointed out that all Yolŋu knowledge needs to be understood through those five dimensions (Christie 2001). Gaykamaŋu also emphasized that point during a presentation at the office of Prime Minister and Cabinet to celebrate the 2017 theme of the National Aborigines and Islanders Observance Day Committee (NAIDOC), “Our Languages Matter”. She stated that the land provides Yolŋu languages as well as those five fundamental dimensions placed by the Ancestral Beings who shaped the land ceremonially with singing and chanting in various languages. In teaching and learning Yolŋu languages, the CDU Yolŋu Studies program is a place of intersection for those five values—kinship, songlines, story, land and art.

Marika also sought to highlight the diversity of the languages of East Arnhemland. There are more than 30 Yolŋu languages which can be divided into several language groups. As Ancestral Beings associated with a species of animal or a human figure were travelling and shaping countries, they changed, twisted or made new sounds with their tongues (Djäwa 1977; Milappuma 2008) at certain locations, and placed the tongues as the languages for those territories. Yolŋu prefer to refer to those vernaculars with the English term “languages” rather than “dialects” since each



individual language has its unique Ancestral origin, and discrete linguistic characteristics that are different from those of other languages. For example, the forms of pronouns, demonstratives, auxiliary verbs, noun and verb suffixes, and so forth, differ markedly. In this regard the Yolŋu Studies program has to consider the way in which those discrete territorial languages should be introduced and taught.<sup>4</sup>

Considerable attention needs to be paid to the ownership of Yolŋu languages. When Yolŋu languages were first sung or chanted, as an innovation and invention by Ancestral Beings at certain locations, the languages themselves were (and are) a proclamation of land ownership (Djirrimbilpilwuy Garawirrtja, in Williams and Fidock 1981; Guyula 2013). Each and every language has its own territory, no language is owned by all, and speaking a particular language is an issue to be treated with an appropriate level of delicacy and attention to exclusiveness, as a part of kinship practice. This connection through language is practised within the kinship system and needs to be understood collectively. Gaykamaŋu (2017) claimed this collective ownership of languages as “Yolŋu Intellectual Property” at a special NAIDOC event titled “Our Languages Matter” at CDU. As mentioned above, with great kindness from the Yolŋu lecturers and advisers, the three non-Yolŋu coordinators adopted into the Yolŋu kinship system became part of a team teaching YM in the Yolŋu Studies program.

Lastly, Yolŋu advisers seek to maintain respect for secret and sacred knowledge. The terms “secret” and “sacred” are translated in many Yolŋu languages as “*djinagawuy*”, literally meaning “associated with inside”. The inside can be enacted in languages, in designs of objects, in songs, in dances, and so forth. This is knowledge to which only certain specific authorities are allowed to have access. It is never the case that someone has authoritative access to all inside knowledges across East Arnhemland. This is again solely due to the ineluctable localness of any Yolŋu language and the cultural resources indissociable from it. This fundamental localization, and the forms of inclusiveness and exclusiveness that go with it, constitutes a Yolŋu socio-cultural regime onto which Yolŋu lecturers are always very cautious not to trespass (Guyula 2015).

## 4 Yolŋu Pedagogical Practices—Three Teaching Duos

### 4.1 *Waymamba Gaykamaŋu and Michael Christie*

In this section I describe the curriculum and pedagogy that the three teaching duos have practised in the Yolŋu Studies program at CDU throughout its history. In the 1970s, during the NT’s bilingual education period, Gaykamaŋu was teaching at

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<sup>4</sup>In the Graduate Certificate in Yolŋu Studies, two core units primarily focus on learning and teaching Dhuwala’mirri Gupapuyŋu and in two specialist electives (conversation and language research units) students are introduced to other Yolŋu languages such as Djambarrpuyŋu, Warramiri, Gälpu, and so forth, depending on Yolŋu consultants’ availability.

Milingimbi School as a bilingual teacher's aide. In the 1980s she became a qualified secondary teacher and continued working at the school. In the 1970s Christie started his job as a classroom teacher at Milingimbi School. He took learning Yolŋu languages and culture very seriously, and regularly attended a Gupapuyŋu language class organized by a missionary linguist, Beulah Lowe. Later, while still learning Gupapuyŋu language in class and also other Yolŋu languages within and outside of work, he took up a position of teacher-linguist in the literacy production centre where he worked collaboratively with Yolŋu colleagues, including Gaykamaŋu and other language authorities, in developing and collecting Yolŋu literature (Christie 1997). With this shared background, nearly 20 years later these two were crucial as the Yolŋu Studies program was established at CDU using the significant number of stories and books that were produced in Gupapuyŋu and other Yolŋu languages at the literacy production centre in Milingimbi.<sup>5</sup>

According to Gaykamaŋu, the principal pedagogy she practised in class was teaching and learning Yolŋu languages and culture through the “stories” shared and written by Yolŋu authorities. She described how Yolŋu culture and Gupapuyŋu language were articulated in those stories, which encompassed a selection of verb forms, pronouns, demonstratives, suffixes, and so on. Instead of learning linguistic explanations of Gupapuyŋu language, students were being immersed through the description and understanding of the inseparable concepts—kinship, songlines, story, arts, land. In addition, she ensured that the learning experience in class was not only about Gupapuyŋu, that is, her patrilineal language and culture knowledge, but also her matrilineal knowledges, that is the Djarrayapuy Djambarrpuyŋu of her mother and Walamaŋu of her mother's mother (Gaykamaŋu, personal communication, 2018). Under Yolŋu intellectual property practice, Gaykamaŋu lawfully has access to these three groups' knowledges, which are intertwined and validated through the Yolŋu kinship that ties Yolŋu individuals to mutual social obligations and responsibilities. As a senior Gupapuyŋu woman, Gaykamaŋu expands upon and simultaneously limits her articulation of each distinct corpus of knowledge. She did not explicitly explain this aspect of territorial governance in Yolŋu languages and culture in “theory”; it was through the stories shared with students that they spontaneously acquired a sense of how collective sovereignty and ownership of intellectual property are embedded in East Arnhemland and practised by Yolŋu.

After she shared her love of and profound immersion in her languages and culture in each class, Christie would then follow her lecture with teaching grammar explicitly, while responding to the students who were learning to appreciate Gaykamaŋu's methods. As Christie recalls, one of the primary reasons why he did not attend the first part of class was needing to restrain his own habitual pedagogical impulses:

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<sup>5</sup>These resources have been digitized and archived in the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages (2012). For scholarly publications, refer to Bow et al. (2012), which explores technical, cultural and linguistic challenges that emerged during the process of creating, populating, and implementing the archive, and Christie et al. (2014).

I cannot trust myself not to be interrupting all the time, and letting students realize the work that needs to be done in order to understand each other across [the cultural boundaries]. Students have to learn how to treat [Indigenous] people [as knowledge authorities]. (Christie, personal communication, 2018)

The pedagogical practice Christie tried to achieve in class expressed the interdisciplinary approach which appears in his research works.<sup>6</sup> He aimed to connect two different sets of knowledge practices, while simultaneously holding them apart so the differences were evident. This approach appreciates “the other” while expressing the intention to produce knowledge collaboratively together.

## 4.2 *Yiŋiya Guyula and John Greatorex*

Guyula is a senior L̄iya-dhalinymirr Djambarrpuyŋu man. He formerly worked in aviation as a mechanic, and became the first Yolŋu to gain a private pilot licence. Even before being appointed as a Yolŋu lecturer after Gaykamaŋu retired from CDU in 2008, he had known Greatorex for more than 20 years. Greatorex first went to Arnhemland in the 1970s as an English teacher at Shepherdson College in Galiwin’ku. When he realized that Yolŋu were speaking their own languages, he immediately started to learn the languages, chiefly for communication, but more profoundly he regarded learning languages spoken by the people of the country where he was as a mark of respect and faith. As well as attending a regular Djambarrpuyŋu language class coordinated by missionary linguist Dianne Buchanan, he spent an enormous amount of time with Yolŋu family both before and after work. Greatorex started working with Yolŋu Studies as a coordinator prior to Guyula replacing Gaykamaŋu in 2008. They delivered the existing undergraduate units and also modified the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of those units to develop a postgraduate level course (Graduate Certificate of Yolŋu Studies) in which students focus on learning Yolŋu languages and culture from appropriate Yolŋu authorities.

When Guyula was appointed as a Yolŋu languages and culture lecturer, the principal teaching resources used in the program were mainly limited to Gupapuyŋu language. The resources featuring Djambarrpuyŋu were not sufficient for teaching that language alone in the program. Following the protocols previously outlined, which stipulate that the languages should be taught by appropriate authorities, he made sure not to teach, but to “support” students wanting to learn Gupapuyŋu, as well as teaching his Djambarrpuyŋu language. What made him able and eligible to support the learning of Gupapuyŋu language in Yolŋu eyes, were the (socio)linguistic interrelations of the two languages, and the mutual social obligations in which he was positioned in the practice of Yolŋu kinship.

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<sup>6</sup>See Yolŋu Research @ CDU (CDU. Yolŋu Research n.d.).

Differences in the linguistic characteristics of Gupapuyŋu and Djambarrpuyŋu are by and large quite subtle. The major difference lies in whether grammatical morphemes possess vowels at the end of a word or not. This is most evident in suffixes on nouns and verbs as well as in the forms of pronouns, demonstratives and interrogatives. Take, for example, *dhuwala/dhuwal* which are the demonstrative forms meaning “this”. Switching these two languages linguistically does not require significant effort, and in fact Gupapuyŋu native speakers in some speech acts employ both these languages.

Sociolinguistically this code-switching is observed through the emergence of communilects in East Arnhemland. Mission stations were established by the Methodist Overseas Missions (MOM) at Milingimbi in 1923, Yirrkala in 1935 and Elcho Island in 1942. Following the introduction of Christian doctrine and industrial development under the official MOM policy of tolerance and acceptance of Yolŋu culture, beliefs and practices (Kadiba 1998, p. 229), Yolŋu from homelands with their own languages came to live together in those permanent settlements where Yolŋu and their languages came into extensive contact. As a consequence, Yolŋu formed a relatively homogeneous group, speaking Gupapuyŋu and Djambarrpuyŋu in Milingimbi (Gale et al. 1981), while Djambarrpuyŋu became a dominant language for communicative purposes in Galiwin’ku (Devlin 1985), and Dhuwaya emerged as a new dialect due to social needs in Yirrkala (Amery 1993).

Through the lens of Western kinship names, Guyula and Gaykamaŋu are together in an uncle (mother’s brother) and niece (sister’s daughter) relationship, named as a *yothu-yindi* relation in many Yolŋu languages. This phrase literally means “child-big” without specification, implying both sides have the responsibilities that come with any and every child-adult relation. This *yothu-yindi* is a remarkably profound and durable social unit expressing mutuality. Both sides play their role in fostering each other’s language and the inseparable cultural institutions that come with language. In this sense, Guyula’s support for the students learning Gupapuyŋu, a Dhuwala language, is a proper expression of a role he is obliged to practise as a knowledge caretaker. It was a role with which he felt comfortable. Thus Guyula had a great impact on the students, by giving them multiple opportunities in learning.

Right up until his resignation, Guyula was passionate about developing languages and culture resources using digital technology, and dedicated to experimenting with its effective use. He “missioned himself” to reflect and find a better way to describe and teach the cultural institutional practices that necessarily accompany language work: kinship practices, enacting songlines, articulating stories, conveying the realities of the land. Representing a shift from the text- and photo-based teaching style that Gaykamaŋu practised, this “mission” was triggered by a question from a non-Yolŋu: “How can we non-Yolŋu feel and experience the spiritual connection to goanna as you Yolŋu could do?” It led to him spending enormous amounts of time developing visual and audio resources telling and showing how spirit Ancestors metamorphosed themselves into trees, rocks or other entities. However in the course of manipulating digital technologies at CDU campus, he found himself unsatisfactorily trapped in front of his computer screen and detached from his

land—the very source of his authority. He explained that when one person holds a pair of clapsticks and sings and talks while standing on his land, his grandfather and great-grandfather also do it with you. On this account he felt disconcerted and disempowered in Darwin, distant from the land so crucial to his being an authoritative Yolŋu man (Guyula, personal communication, 2018).

Greatorex's faithful respect and sympathy for Yolŋu languages can be summarized in this statement: "I think I can logically understand and use Yolŋu languages, but I would never feel the languages how Yolŋu would feel" (Greatorex, personal communication, 2018). The more Yolŋu voices are heard by learners as they develop their own style of speech, the better. While this is not possible when the teacher is just one man distant from his country and countrymen, it is possible if classes are delivered from a distance. With this as its aim, a unique pedagogical experiment was developed under the leadership of Guyula and Greatorex, with assistance from Christie. "Teaching from Country" (2011) became an international award-winning project that investigated and evaluated distance education using a digital technology platform.<sup>7</sup> Yolŋu authorities are teaching from their land and the students of Yolŋu languages and culture are learning on campus. After many years of dedicated commitment to the Yolŋu Studies program, Guyula and Greatorex moved on. Guyula returned to Milingimbi and started working for his community and people of East Arnhemland,<sup>8</sup> and Greatorex filled the position of full-time teacher at Mäpuru school, one of many homeland schools in East Arnhemland.

### 4.3 *Brenda Muthamuluwuy and Yasunori Hayashi*

The next team comprised Muthamuluwuy and Hayashi. We currently deliver the program that has been handed on to us from the two teaching duos who preceded us. The material in this section has been developed in part from listening to Muthamuluwuy give presentations discussing her work, supplemented by a recent interview (Muthamuluwuy, personal communication, 2018), and from my experience as her co-teacher.

Muthamuluwuy is a senior Birrkili Gupapuyŋu woman who formerly worked at Shepherdson College in Galiwin'ku. For 10 years she played an active role as a bridge-builder attending to cross-cultural conflicts and facilitating negotiations. In 2012 she was appointed as an administrative officer at CDU for the Masters of Indigenous Knowledge of Mawul Rom, then, in 2015, with an agreement made by the Yolŋu advisory group, she filled the Yolŋu lecturer position. I was at the time working with a service provider NGO as a senior community educator and, much to

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<sup>7</sup> See the website at <http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/inc/tfc/index.html>. For scholarly publications, refer to Guyula et al. (2010), Christie and Verran (2010) and Christie (2010).

<sup>8</sup> In 2016 he was elected as an independent member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

my delight, I was appointed as the new coordinator of the program to support her in teaching Yolŋu languages and culture.

For me, learning Australian languages began with a commitment to communication with respect and modesty. This grew out of learning to play the traditional styles of didgeridoo in various regions across the Top End of the NT, a not uncommon interest for young Japanese men. On my first visit to Arnhemland I was encouraged by local didgeridoo players to learn languages because, as they explained, the players actually speak through this musical instrument.<sup>9</sup> Quite transported by such a wonderful idea, very soon after I enrolled in the undergraduate Yolŋu Studies course at CDU to study with Gaykamaŋu and Christie.

Our approach to teaching began with a commitment to the idea that the Yolŋu Studies program should address the experience of students actually sitting in classes. We focus on the learning experience of these novice learners who are growing into Yolŋu life through our classes. In the first introductory class of Yolŋu languages and culture, the primary learning focuses on Yolŋu kinship relations, in which Muthamuluwuy and I see possibilities of employing the way young Yolŋu children actually learn from adults. Our approach thus contrasts with other approaches informed more by anthropological and ethnographic literature concerning Yolŋu worldview. Others (importantly, not all), generally begin with an abstract explanatory description of the “moiety system”. “Moiety” is an anthropological term, adopted from French, that Yolŋu have appropriated; it literally means “half”. While it is used in Yolŋu languages, this term would never feature in Yolŋu pedagogy with children. (To do so would be like explaining the meaning of past-present-future to a two year old child in an English speaking community.) Such anthropologically inspired teaching then proceeds to the description of various moiety allocations of particular entities: different types of flora and fauna, of rocks and winds, and waters, all belong to one or other moiety—they are either Yirritja or Dhuwa.

Muthamuluwuy quite properly points out that no Yolŋu child has ever started their life-long learning journey with an abstract understanding of the moieties. Other learning experiences in the world as a whole come to educate them about how a moiety—their side of the world—fits to them and with them. Abstract understandings arise through situated learning experiences. It is not the other way around when it comes to the learning process. Muthamuluwuy begins by identifying for her students a perspective of Yolŋu neophyte learners and knowers. She inducts them into what they are bestowed with prenatally and postnatally and through their kin relations such as songline, story, land and art. This links into discussions of the students’ social connections and particular mutual responsibilities as beginning speakers of a Yolŋu language.

Muthamuluwuy incorporates into her language teaching various formal linguistic components such as kin terms, suffixes associated with kin names, and pronouns, demonstratives and interrogatives. Learning to use these formal elements supports

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<sup>9</sup>In Gupapuyŋu Dhuwala’ mirri language, the verb “to play the didgeridoo” is “*yidaki waja*” which literally means “the didgeridoo speaks”.

students, through their language learning, to develop their comprehension of deep layers of Yolŋu kinship relations. Subsequently, a description of moiety will later be introduced in class in order to cap and in a sense to “name”, what students already know, since they already enact the knowledge in their Yolŋu language utterances. This teaching and learning process avoids the necessity for students to build an awkward, disengaged, intellectual framework before learning to hear and say in accordance with the profound constituents of Yolŋu life and philosophy. It encourages them as initially inductive and constructive learners, proceeding in much the same way that Yolŋu neophytes actually learn on their country.

It is in the very “happening” of a class that “something” appears, maybe ephemerally. These “somethings” happening in class are profoundly respected in the CDU Yolŋu Studies program. *This* is what can ignite critical learning awareness among students as they come to understand how to treat people and communicate with them with respect and compassion. Sitting at the edge of class, I make every effort to remain silent and to let Muthamuluwuy and the students create the class as they will. I keenly observe the “somethings” that arise. By doing so, I can better judge the adjustments in teaching and learning and assessment practices required to maximize Muthamuluwuy’s capability as a Yolŋu native teacher. By adhering to the four Yolŋu protocols, every semester our teaching and learning processes involve attempts to react sensitively to the uncomfortable and the contested moments in positive ways to ensure our pedagogical practices continuously improve.

## 5 Concluding with Student Voices

Culturally and socially it is valuable for YM to be a routine part of the academic institution in the NT. A great deal of attention needs to be paid to ensure the maintenance of ongoing collective agreements with language authorities, since Aboriginal languages are recognized as contemporary living Indigenous cultural intellectual property that is collectively owned and practised.

The experience of the students themselves is also an important part of the process, and I conclude by giving them their voice. I thus present three students reflecting on their experience of learning YM and culture at CDU following the pedagogical protocols outlined in this chapter.

After graduating from the Graduate Certificate course, a professional working in educational content development and an enthusiastic linguist, interviewed Muthamuluwuy and me. Alex Payne later published an article in a community magazine, entitled *Mutha Tongue* (2017).<sup>10</sup> Learning an Indigenous

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<sup>10</sup>Mutha in the title of his article is a pun. Mutha is short for Muthamuluwuy and is often pronounced mistakenly by Balanda as how Yolŋu pronounce Matha.

[l]anguage felt like the first step to better understanding [...] of Indigenous culture [...]. Yolŋu language, kinship and culture are inextricably linked throughout the course: one cannot be properly grasped without some knowledge of the other [...]; the course has opened doors in to Yolŋu world to me.

As an undergraduate and while he was a student of Guyula and Greatorex, he spent several months in Milingimbi with a Gupapuyŋu family and their kin who adopted him. He deeply appreciated Yolŋu pedagogical practice in both CDU and the Yolŋu community, and acquired extensive YM skills in Gupapuyŋu. After graduation, this student became a respectful community educator working in a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic role in East Arnhemland. He has given permission to quote a reflection provided in a translation of an assessment task where Waymamba Gaykamaŋu introduces her family in Gupapuyŋu language (Anon., personal communication, 2018):

This story shows [...] kinship, which highlights the complex set of connections that form relationships. [...] I am getting better at knowing the *mälk* (one of the constituents of *gurrutu*, kinship) system “off by heart”. I enjoyed using concrete examples of Waymamba’s real family rather than hypothetical situations as it shows the complexity of the various systems of connection in the real world.

Another student who, on completing undergraduate study with a major in Yolŋu Studies with Gaykamaŋu and Christie, was appointed to a position as a public servant in East Arnhemland, found himself working intimately with speakers of many Yolŋu languages. He took very seriously the need to engage with, and listen to, the people in Arnhemland communities and townships and sought ways by which policy making and decision making in community development could be respectfully and collaboratively achieved. He recalls:

I wanted to be able to sit down and talk with Aboriginal people in their language [...]. I began to understand how worlds are created, truths negotiated and agreed upon, how disputes are settled and how worlds are constructed [...]. It was through the Yolŋu Studies lecturers that I was able to form meaningful, long-lasting and committed relationships with Yolŋu. The Yolŋu studies program at CDU has been nothing short of life changing (Anon., personal communication, 2018).

Learning YM and culture at CDU prepares the students to be able to continue carefully and respectfully their professional lives in Australia. The course represents an intellectual shift, from rendering Yolŋu people and their knowledges and practice as study or research objects, to partnering with them as knowledge experts and collaborators. It is now 20 years since I began the intellectual journey which brought me to my current role. My interest in language had been ignited by traditional Yolŋu music accompanied by the *yidaki* or didgeridoo. The great generosity and patience of my Yolŋu Studies advisers, and my Yolŋu family across East Arnhemland, have nurtured me and I feel honoured to be the coordinator of the current Yolŋu Studies program and work under the guidance and supervision of Yolŋu knowledge authorities.



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# How Universities Can Strengthen Australian Indigenous Languages.

## The Australian Indigenous Languages Institute



**John Giacon**

**Abstract** There is a considerable and growing interest in Australian languages, which are now widely used on ceremonial occasions in parliaments and other national institutions, as well as at sporting events. In the educational sector, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) offers a framework for Indigenous languages, while New South Wales now has Australian languages syllabuses which cater for all levels of schooling. However the severe lack of trained teachers and resources often means that the actual teaching of these languages is limited. Universities have a role to play in breaking this cycle, not only through their traditional and ongoing research into the maintenance and revival of Indigenous languages, but also through the increased provision of specialized teaching resources. It is proposed that these aims can best be achieved through the creation of an Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI). This will offer a means of developing university courses in languages that are accessible and supportive for Indigenous people and that will provide in-depth teaching of languages and related topics such as linguistics and revival and maintenance processes. By drawing on the resources of a number of universities, it can use different modes of course delivery, including summer and winter schools, online and regular semester courses, to award tertiary qualifications to prospective teachers. AILI is based upon the premise that universities are committed to Australian Indigenous languages and are prepared to play a far greater role in sustaining them.

**Keywords** Indigenous languages · Australian universities · AILI · Language revival · Language maintenance · Yuwaalaraay · Gamilaraay

When are Australian universities going to do something more about supporting Indigenous languages? When are they going to set up courses? Kevin Lowe, Gubbi Gubbi academic (personal communication, 2005)

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## 1 Introduction

This chapter<sup>1</sup> proposes a larger role for Australian universities in teaching Indigenous languages. After summarizing the current state of Australian languages it considers features of revived languages, some language revival programs and their hopes and outcomes. For many languages the current outcome is simple language use, emblematically powerful but not substantially communicative. The chapter then describes one initiative which aims to address these issues, the Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI), and outlines the essential role universities can play in language revival (LR) and language maintenance (LM), as well as identifying the challenges for universities in this area.<sup>2</sup> While the aims of AILI are to support both language revival and language maintenance, the chapter focuses on revival, since the author has worked extensively on the revival of Yuwaalaraay [YR] and Gamilaraay [GR].

Universities, by researching and teaching languages, can help revived languages be more traditional, more internally consistent and more extensive. In the early stages of revival the research and teaching are largely done by committed individuals, but this approach is not sustainable. Although the numbers wanting to learn the language increase, the original teachers age and sometimes move on, which leaves a vacuum. The consequence of this process is that only simple language comes to be known and used.

The Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI) is a structure which will enable cooperation between universities, easy cross-institutional enrolment and flexible course delivery, thereby opening up language courses to many more students. This will give Indigenous language courses more enrolments, and make them more sustainable.

A key assertion of this paper is the need for a broadly based team, including linguists and universities,<sup>3</sup> to be involved in LR programs. While extensive work by linguists has been the key to many, if not all, successful language revival programs, this contribution has often not been recognized, as has the largely voluntary work that linguists provide. Lack of recognition can also stem from the fact that linguists are often the lead authors of descriptions of revival, and may be reluctant to give due credit to their own contribution to the process. The consequence has been the persistence of the implicit, false, assumption that LR is simple and does not need expertise, so this need is often neglected in revival planning and funding.

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is an adaptation of a presentation at the 2017 LCNAU colloquium in Adelaide. Special thanks to Cathy Bow for extensive comments on earlier drafts. Thanks are also due to the LCNAU executive which sponsored the author's attendance at the colloquium, subsequent to his receiving the 2017 Patji-Dawes award.

<sup>2</sup>Amery (2007) and Gale (2011) provide an overview of the involvement of universities in teaching Indigenous languages. Amery also covers other aspects of university involvement in these languages and Gale looks at the role of TAFE in teaching them.

<sup>3</sup>Christie (2008) gives a detailed account of cooperation between Yolngu people and Charles Darwin University.

The revival and maintenance of Australian languages is an urgent task and universities have an important, indeed essential, role to play in that revival and maintenance. They are the places where most research is done into the languages, where high level learning occurs, particularly of revival languages, and where most research into revival and maintenance takes place. It is from here that a new impetus needs to come.

## 2 State of Australian Languages

While there can be discussion about the details, there is general agreement about the current state of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) languages—languages spoken in Australia since before European colonization. The two National Indigenous Languages Surveys (NILS), the first in 2005 (McConvell et al. 2005) and the second by Marmion et al. in 2014, give an overall picture and also map the direction of change. The second report (Marmion et al. 2014, p. xii) puts the number of Australian Indigenous languages at “over 250” and found a decline both in the number still spoken (down from 145 to 120), and in the number considered strong (down from 18 to 13). Hinton (2001, p. 3) points out factors which lead to such language endangerment, including in Australia: “A language that is not a language of government, a language of education, nor a language of commerce or of wider communication is a language whose very existence is threatened in the modern world.”

However, while for many years the situation was universally one of decline, there has recently been a change. NILS states that, of the 100 or more “severely endangered” languages “perhaps 30 or more are seeing significant increases in levels of use as a result of language programs.” (Marmion et al. 2014, p. xii).

## 3 Language Revitalization<sup>4</sup>

Australian work on Indigenous languages has no doubt been influenced by similar language revitalization around the world. Austin (2014, p. 2) describes revitalization as “involv[ing] activities aimed at reversing language shift and redressing the

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<sup>4</sup>There is considerable variety in the terminology used in describing work on languages whose use is declining or has declined. Amery and Gale (2008, pp. 340, 342) use “revival” for such work. The term “revival” has become widely used in Australia since the development of the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) in 1993. This chapter uses “language revival” (LR) for work with languages whose speakers can use only a few words, or less, of their language, and refers to work with relatively strong languages as “language maintenance”. The term “language revitalization” refers to the continuum whose endpoints are revival and maintenance (Austin and Sallabank 2011, 2014).

loss of speakers and domains of use”. Austin and Sallabank (2014) document many instances. Hobson et al. (2010) cover much Australian activity in the area. A history of such programs is given in Amery and Gale (2008). They go into detail for three languages, including the two they have been closely involved in, Kurna and Ngarrindjeri.

Australian language revival has also been influenced by local factors. Amery and Gale (2008, p. 339) point out that “[c]ontemporary language revival efforts in Australia emerged in the wave of social reform following the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972.” Recent years have seen a significant increase in the number of languages being worked on and in the size of individual language programs. Many of these are funded by the Commonwealth government<sup>5</sup> or State governments.<sup>6</sup>

## 4 Outcomes of Language Revival<sup>7</sup>

Later sections of this chapter discuss in more detail the functions and properties of revived languages. They always have an emblematic function, but the extent to which they can be used communicatively varies enormously. There is great variation in the extent to which the traditional language is retained. There is clear potential for a revived language to fragment into many varieties. Currently there is political commitment to, and funding for, language revival. There is no guarantee, however, that this will continue.

A revived language may become fully functional, with Hebrew in Israel perhaps providing the only example. But the situation of Hebrew, as the dominant official language of a country, with all that that entails, is vastly different from that of Australian revival languages. The ideology behind the founding of Israel also strongly supports the nation having its own distinct language.

Currently in Australia the most common outcomes are more modest, such as simple songs (often “heads, shoulders, knees and toes”), learning a few words for body parts, rote-learned speeches of welcome or acknowledgement, and using Indigenous place names.<sup>8</sup> It will become clear that many hope for much more than this.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/indigenous-languages-and-arts-program>

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/our-agency/staying-accountable/ochre/nsw-government-aboriginal-affairs-strategy>. Other funding is through education departments.

<sup>7</sup> See Giacon and Lowe (2016).

<sup>8</sup> Events where extremely simple language is used are often reported as doing much more: for instance, “saving a language”. See Simpson (2016), also <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-10/artists-work-to-save-indigenous-language-through-music/9133118>, and many similar reports. These events, though important, are but one step on a very long journey, and I doubt it really helps to portray them as more than that.

I now consider some concepts important in discussing language revival. The outcomes of overseas Indigenous revival and maintenance may suggest what the longer-term Australian outcomes might be, but it is important to recognize the many local differences. Examples include: Māori and Hawaiian, which are spoken by much larger populations; many North American tribes, which have much clearer and more established governance than Australian language groups; and groups which have formal treaties with governments. Factors such as these have considerable impact on the future of languages.

## 5 Emblematic and Communicative Language

The author has met many Indigenous people who were forbidden to use their languages in school. Some school staff and employers punished those who used their language. Any use of an Indigenous language, particularly in public, is thus a repudiation of those practices and can be a source of pride to Indigenous people (e.g., Cavanagh 2005). The fact that the language is being used is what matters. This can be called emblematic<sup>9</sup> or symbolic language use. On many occasions the author has seen people weeping tears of pride on hearing a song or short speech in language, particularly when sung or spoken by Indigenous children. Recent speeches in Indigenous languages by public figures such as politicians are emblematic language use and are often reported in the media.<sup>10</sup>

However, many would also hope for communicative language use, that is relaxed and relatively fluent everyday use of the language to discuss a wide range of topics. This is a much more challenging task than simple emblematic use of language. The New South Wales K–10 Aboriginal Languages Syllabus (Board of Studies, New South Wales 2003) and the ACARA (2015) document on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) languages in schools certainly assume substantial communicative language. For instance, the latter proposed 670 hours of study of a language by Year 10.

The distinction between emblematic and communicative language is very important. Emblematic language can be very simple. Children singing “heads, shoulders, knees and toes” in language is very powerful, but they can learn this in perhaps an hour. Thousands of hours are needed to learn to speak a language communicatively and fluently. While emblematic language need not be communicative, communicative use of a revival language is emblematic.

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<sup>9</sup>Simpson (2014) uses the term “emblem language”.

<sup>10</sup>Not all reactions to language use are positive: the Prime Minister, Mr. Turnbull, was praised for speaking in Ngunawal the same week Bess Price was reprimanded for speaking Warlpiri in NT Parliament: <https://blogs.crikey.com.au/fullysic/2016/02/18/i-am-determined-to-be-tenacious-in-relation-to-the-use-of-my-language-bess-price-and-breaking-the-english-hegemony-in-nt-parliament/>

In some situations it does not matter much if emblematic language use is inaccurate. But as soon as the audience understands the traditional language, inaccurate language use is noticed. Some years ago two groups of Yuwaalaraay (YR)<sup>11</sup> people attended a conference. The first group gave a presentation in YR. Many others at the conference were greatly impressed by their confident use of YR. The event, for these hearers, was emblematically powerful. The reaction of the second YR group, who had learnt more, however, was very different. To paraphrase their comments: “It was a shame job. They pretended to be talking but they had so much wrong. Wrong pronunciation, no suffixes. They should not have done that.”

If the presenters had used correct Yuwaalaraay-Gamilaraay (YG), everyone would have been delighted. The issue is not so much that learners do not get it all right. Rather it is that there needs to be a pathway for learners to improve their knowledge and an explicit acceptance that in this journey all are learners.

## 6 Communicative Traditional Language

The very word “revival” says that the aim is to “revive” the traditional language.<sup>12</sup> In other words a revived language purports to maintain the features of the traditional language: semantics, syntax, phonology, pragmatics, and so on. The difficulty of this task is generally underestimated (Simpson 2016).

To be communicative the revived language needs also to be standardized and comprehensive. Any realistic approach to the revival of an Australian language takes into account that these are very challenging aims. In fact none of them are totally achievable.

For one thing, constant reference to “the” language can create the impression that there is a fixed and single reality which is being discovered or uncovered. On the contrary, a set of historical records can have many possible interpretations, depending, among other things, on the knowledge of the interpreter. In many cases of language revival one person has been largely responsible for the currently used interpretation, the *de facto* standardized version.

A “comprehensive” language is one which can be used to talk about all major aspects of life. In revival, there needs to be language development to fill the many gaps in the historical sources, and to provide the lexicon needed to talk about new realities. In the early stages of revival this tends to be done by an individual or small

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<sup>11</sup> The author has worked mainly on Yuwaalaraay (YR) and Gamilaraay (GR), together referred to as YG. YR is the smaller but much more extensively recorded language. It is very similar to the much more widespread GR. Much of GR revival has depended on traditional YR material. YG are from northern inland New South Wales (major towns include Moree, Tamworth, Gunnedah and Lightning Ridge) and adjacent Queensland. For information on Gamilaraay, see Giacon (2017) and [yuwaalaraay.org](http://yuwaalaraay.org)

<sup>12</sup> Ngarrindjeri is an exception, since most of the information comes from the community (Amery and Gale 2008, p. 367).



group, thus maintaining the unity of the language. This can easily change as more are involved in the revival. Multiple versions of the language can easily develop.

Often small groups, perhaps as small as one family or one teacher, work in isolation. They inevitably develop a local version of the language, and so multiple versions of the revived language emerge, many of them short-lived. This can be largely avoided if there is good analysis of the traditional language, if there is a process enabling an agreed approach to be taken when the analysis is not certain, if the normative or standard version of the language is taught, and if there is a central body to decide when, as inevitably happens, there are choices to be made. A structure which enables and encourages cooperation across the language group is essential.

Even in the most favourable circumstances, the revived language will include elements of the reviver's language, and will be hybrid. As Zuckermann and Walsh (2011) point out, Modern Hebrew is hybrid, combining elements of biblical Hebrew and the languages of the revivers, primarily Yiddish. While revived languages will inevitably be hybrid, there is some choice as to the degree of hybridity. Giacom (2017, p. 7) states:

Revived YG will be a hybrid of traditional YG and English. The degree of English in revived YG can be influenced by the material available about traditional YG and by the effort put into learning the traditional language. **Any features of traditional YG that are clearly stated can potentially be part of rebuilt YG. Any features that are not explicitly stated, taught and well learnt will not be part of rebuilt YG unless they also happen to be part of English.**<sup>13</sup> (my later emphasis)

That is, the extent of hybridity depends on how comprehensive the analysis of the traditional language is, on the extent to which language development involves traditional patterns, and on how much of the analysis is learnt by speakers. With ongoing research more is learnt, such as the politeness rules for Gumbaynggirr listed in Morelli et al. (2017), which are the result of over 25 years of work on the language. Similarly, the structure of YG exclusive pronouns (Giacom 2017, p. 341) and the complex rules for the use of free and bound pronouns in Ngarrindjeri (Gale et al. [forthcoming](#)) have only recently been described. If learnt, these features can be part of the revived languages.

The hopes for relative fluency are thus achievable, but they will require changes in the approach to LR. There are no systematic studies of the language levels achieved by Australian LR programs, but the writer's experience of the outcomes and the lack of emphasis on expertise in the awarding of grants both indicate that current programs are not structured to achieve fluency or consistency.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>In some cases adult learners engage with the historical materials and absorb complex structures of the language. In the author's experience this is true but quite rare.

<sup>14</sup>There is an urgent need for independent evaluation of language revitalization programs so that funding can be more productively allocated and programs made much more effective. See Simpson (2016) for comments on lack of evaluation of apps that are echoed by many working in revitalization.

## 7 Examples of Language Revival

Language revival builds on records of the language and generally on previous analyses and wordlists or dictionaries, and on broad linguistic knowledge, particularly knowledge of related languages. See, for example, Giacon and Lowe (2016) who discuss key elements of New South Wales revival. For the programs considered here, more recent work began with a small group consisting of community members and a non-Indigenous linguist. The linguists worked with historical materials, and, in some cases with very limited remnant knowledge of the language. Through their research the linguists developed an increasing, but always partial, understanding of the languages. Simultaneously they often took on the task of teaching community members, including some who would in turn teach others. A further result of the linguists' research was the development of learning materials, some published and others privately produced.<sup>15</sup> In some other languages the linguists researched and published grammars, but did not remain involved in the specific language long-term. When the revival expands or when the linguist moves on, learners rely largely or solely on written materials, rarely an effective way of learning language.

Often the initial core group do much unpaid work, as do some others who become involved in revival. A teacher who has a large number of high school Gumbaynggirr classes states: "Being 'on the spectrum' meant I could put in the long long long long hours needed to learn [the language]" (Larry Hancock, personal communication, 2016). This person was also an experienced Japanese teacher and so had many of the skills for learning and teaching language, as well as extensive Gumbaynggirr resources. The example shows what is achievable, but does not provide a model that most others can follow.

YG revival builds on GR material recorded from the 1850s to recent times, and on YR, whose records begin later but are more extensive, including tapes from the 1970s. From these were developed more recent YG analyses, including Williams' *Grammar of Yuwaalaraay* (1980), and Austin's *Dictionary of Gamilaraay* (1992), later published online (Austin and Nathan 1996). These effectively established an orthography for YG. The production and launch of the online dictionary importantly involved close cooperation between linguists and community. There was very limited learning or teaching of language at this stage.

The next phase of YG activity involved further research, community discussion, classes and cooperation with schools. Revival was initially based on Williams (1980) and Austin (1992) and then increasingly on research using original sources, including tapes from the 1970s of senior Yuwaalaraay people, mainly Arthur Dodd and Fred Reece. Publications included an edited historical source (Sim and Giacon 1998), a high school text (Giacon and Betts 1999), a wordlist (Giacon 1999), a word book with CD (Walgett Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay Language Program 2002), a dictionary with learner's guide (Ash et al. 2003) and later an electronic version of

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<sup>15</sup> Some of the main works published by these programs are: Amery (2000, 2010), Morelli (2015), Morelli et al. (2017), Grant and Rudder (2001, 2010, 2014), Giacon (2001, 2017), Ash et al. (2003).

the dictionary (Giacon and Nathan 2008), which included a substantial amount of spoken language from the Yuwaalaraay tapes.

There are many parallels between YG revival and that of other Australian languages. Wiradjuri and Kurna are based largely on nineteenth-century written sources. Gumbaynggirr has extensive and detailed historical sources. Using these and previous analyses Morelli has developed a much more detailed understanding of the language, which he used in teaching and later published (Morelli 2008, 2015).

There is the potential for many to achieve substantial knowledge of a revived language. However, in the absence of detailed research into the actual use of these languages, assessments of their use are generally impressionistic. Marmion et al. (2014, p. 8) give their assessment of Kurna, and this may well describe the situation of many reviving languages:

[it] had not been spoken on a daily basis since the 19th century, and had no full or even part-speakers throughout most of the 20th century. But over the last three decades there has been much intensive and dedicated work on reviving Kurna (Amery 2010), resulting in a *small number of people who can say some words and sentences.* (my emphasis)

However, Amery (personal communication, 2019), who is closely involved with the language, has a more positive assessment of the level of use of revived Kurna. Nonetheless, it is common for revived language to plateau at a relatively low level of knowledge and use.

## 8 Results of Language Revival

Discussion of Australian LR is limited by the lack of published research, particularly on the language outcomes. There is some information on the process and background, generally written by people closely involved in the process (e.g., Amery 2016; Amery and Gale 2008). Cavanagh's 2005 report on the positive effects of a Yuwaalaraay school program focuses on the social impact rather than on actual language learning. This discussion will therefore largely draw on the author's long-term involvement in YG and discussions with people involved in other programs.

There has been a great increase in the awareness of Indigenous languages and in the use of words, phrases and formulaic texts in many of them, as well in the use of newly assigned Indigenous place names. Signs which include Indigenous languages are more and more common. "Yaama" ("Hello") and other greetings and farewells are quite common in Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay country and elsewhere. Over 2000 copies of the *Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Dictionary* have been sold, and YG resources continue to be downloaded and sold. Tens of schools have YG programs. There are TAFE and university courses in Gamilaraay.

While the reaction of students and parents to school and pre-school programs is generally enthusiastic, particularly at the initial stages, both groups lament the lack of opportunity to learn more. The quality of language varies considerably, particularly once people move on from set texts (e.g., songs, greetings) and single word

uses, such as naming things. It is not unusual for even fundamental grammatical features such as case suffixes and verb inflections to be totally absent or badly misused. Pronunciation and inflection are often inaccurate. In part this is understandable, given that in most cases people now teaching YG in schools have done only introductory courses or are self-taught from published materials.

Even texts on prominent public signs often show a lack of language knowledge. For example the Indigenous area of an adult education centre in Gamilaraay country has an acknowledgement of country in both English and “Gamilaraay”:

The English begins: X acknowledges that this building ...

The Gamilaraay begins: X *winangay nhama nhalay*.

The GR “translation” is not a translation, but a series of GR words fitted into an English structure, at best a relexified English. Differences from traditional Gamilaraay include: X is the subject of a transitive verb, so would have an ergative suffix, *-gu*. *Winangay* is the citation form of a semantically complex verb, which in the *Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Dictionary* is glossed “understand, know, remember, think, love”. It has been widely used to translate “acknowledge” and “respect”. With the last two uses it is transitive. The normal translation of “acknowledges” is *winangaylanha*, the present continuous form, while *winangay* is future. Complement clauses such as the one in the above are formed with the subordinate suffix, not with a demonstrative. The word order exactly follows the English.

On the country of another group, a sign in the local language has the English “We X people welcome you...”. The language version, however, would traditionally be translated, “We welcome you X people” since the words “X” and “people” do not have the ergative suffix found on all the nouns and adjectives in the subject of a transitive verb.

One GR text for adult classes has numerous errors and shows little awareness of appropriate translation. It even calques the greeting “good day”.

These are examples of what one GR person with considerable experience in language calls “dictionary language”. People look up an English word in the dictionary, see a YG word, and without much or any attention to the detailed dictionary entry or to grammatical information, cobble together a sentence.

If people learnt more about a language there could be much more communicative use, and a language could be much closer to its traditional form. The aim of the Australian Indigenous Languages Institute is to make it possible for people to learn Indigenous languages in depth. Early in revival, the initial researchers did this teaching, but at later stages a different approach is needed, since the initial researchers are no longer as active and many more people want to learn. Formal qualifications are vital for those who are employed to teach language. Universities can provide the institutional support and formal qualifications and AILI can develop flexible and appropriate course delivery.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup>While there are instances of substantial non-university courses—Murrumbidgee/Steve Morelli’s Gumbaynggirr and Mary-Anne Gale’s Ngarrindjeri—they depend on those teachers doing much unpaid work and so are less sustainable in the long term.

Another vital need is for an organizing structure for each language.<sup>17</sup> This can prevent the language from fragmenting into many versions and can make more effective use of funding. Currently subgroups within a language can work separately, resulting in a wasteful duplication of resources.

## 9 Australian Indigenous Languages Institute

For language revival in Australia to progress there needs to be research into traditional language materials, soundly based language development and high level teaching of the language. By their very nature and function, universities are the ideal places for these tasks. Of course university staff need to be part of a team, headed by the people of the language, and including others from government and education authorities.

The development of an Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI) came out of many discussions about the state of language learning. These identified gaps in the current approaches to language revival and maintenance, and identified the need for:

- An expansion in the number of Indigenous languages taught at university level (currently only six);
- Development of more advanced courses for individual languages;
- Additional high-level language research and development, through university staff who teach languages and through the work of research students;
- More teaching of related subjects such as language revival and maintenance and language teaching methodology;
- Further research into the processes, outcomes and benefits of language revival and maintenance which would help to set the direction of future work in these areas;
- A range of qualifications from graduate certificates to PhDs in Australian language, including degrees that would qualify people to teach Australian languages at an advanced level in schools and TAFE;
- Flexible and creative delivery of courses, including summer and winter courses, mixed mode courses (with online and face-to-face components) to make such training more accessible, particularly to those outside the major cities;
- Close cooperation between universities to make cross-institutional enrolment straightforward.

Another factor to consider is the strong connection between language and country. Maintaining this connection is one of many challenges of language work. Often most of the people of the language live off country and it is generally much more

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<sup>17</sup>Gumbaynggirr revival is much stronger for being based at Muurrbay Language and Culture Centre. The New South Wales government has established language nests which may, in time, coordinate work across languages.

convenient to run courses where the facilities, teachers and most of the learners are, predominantly in large cities. AILI hopes to have courses on country in the future.

To pursue this work, an organization would need an administrative structure, probably small and part-time, similar to those found in overseas institutes. It could also work with existing bodies, including First Languages Australia and Living Languages.<sup>18</sup>

The first AILI activity was held in January 2018, coordinated by Charles Darwin University and using their Sydney premises. It offered three summer intensive courses in Sydney: “Introduction to Yolngu Languages and Culture” and “Linguistics for Indigenous Languages” [CDU]; and “Gamilaraay One” [ANU], but only Gamilaraay attracted enough students. These included cross-institutional enrolments and Gamilaraay people who were auditing the course. The same courses were offered in January 2019. Gamilaraay and Linguistics attracted sufficient enrolments for the courses to proceed.

AILI can learn from similar overseas institutes. The University of Arizona has hosted the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) for many years. It provides a wide range of programs and courses specifically targeting language revival and maintenance.<sup>19</sup> The University of Alberta has a similar program in its Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI), which provides a wide range of courses including many in each language.<sup>20</sup> Many universities in Aotearoa/New Zealand offer comprehensive Māori programs, including those where theses are written in Māori. The University of Hawai‘i also offers a wide range of courses in the local language, and theses can be written in Hawaiian.

The beginning of AILI was in fact prompted by Kevin Lowe’s attendance at both North American institutes. This led to three summer schools at the University of Sydney, 2007–2009, with Gamilaraay, Gumbaynggirr and Wiradjuri courses. Discussion of teaching Indigenous languages at university continued. Giacon and Simpson (2012) raised the issue at the 2011 Languages and Culture Network of Australian Universities colloquium and it was discussed at the Australian Linguistic Society’s (ALS) 2014 and 2015 conferences. At the 2016 ALS conference a sub-committee on Teaching Australian Indigenous Languages at University (TAILU) was formed. The 2017 LCNAU colloquium featured a stream highlighting the work of teaching Indigenous languages at universities and an Indigenous languages cluster was formed within LCNAU.

Currently Australian universities conduct substantial research into Australian Indigenous languages, but little of this is directly related to language revival and maintenance, or to the learning and teaching of Indigenous languages. There are currently six ATSI languages taught at university,<sup>21</sup> three of them relatively strong: Pitjantjatjara, at the University of South Australia, Yolngu Matha and Arrernte at

<sup>18</sup> Formerly RNLD (Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity). See [www.firstlanguages.org.au](http://www.firstlanguages.org.au)

<sup>19</sup> <https://aildi.arizona.edu/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-indigenous-languages-and-literacy-development-institute>

<sup>21</sup> See [ulpa.com.au](http://ulpa.com.au), which lists languages available at university in Australia.

Charles Darwin University;<sup>22</sup> and three being revived: Gamilaraay at the University of Sydney and ANU, Wiradjuri at Charles Sturt University, and Kurna at the University of Adelaide. Curtin University has a non-award Nyungar course.<sup>23</sup> Only Yolngu Matha and Gamilaraay go beyond a one-semester introductory course.<sup>24</sup> Yolngu Matha is available online, but the other courses require attendance in person. The University of Sydney also has a Master of Indigenous Language Education, a block release program which has been a major force in raising the standards of language revival in Australia and in preparing Indigenous people for that work. Most graduates, however, have not studied their language in depth.

Australian universities will continue their extensive research on the relatively few strong languages. AILI envisages that they will take on an expanded role in ATSI language revival and maintenance, researching and teaching the languages. While most past university research was on stronger languages, important work was also done on languages now being revived. Of particular relevance to both YR and GR is Williams' (1980) *Grammar of Yuwaalaraay*, based on her 1976 ANU Honours thesis. Donaldson's *Grammar of Wangaaybuwan* (1980) has also been important for YG, providing many insights into the closely related Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay languages. And obviously it is a key part of Wangaaybuwan revival.

While a number of recent revival grammars have originated in language centres (Lissarrague 2006, 2007, 2010), Morelli (2008, 2015), others have originated in universities, including Amery (2000, 2016), Eira (2010), Besold (2013), and Giacon (2017).

While grammars are essential for language learning, there are a number of challenges universities face in supporting language revival and maintenance:

- Universities do not have a tradition of teaching Australian Indigenous languages, so there is little internal experience, support or advocacy.
- Substantial preparation is needed to set up courses, and so substantial funding. For most languages there are few if any qualified and available staff, people with a good knowledge of the language, teaching skills, connection with the language community, and the desire and availability to work in a university. Most potential staff would need time to learn the language and develop teaching resources, and, very importantly, would need time to establish relationships with the people of the language. See Christie (2008).
- Few students are aware that Indigenous language courses are available. Nor do these courses generally enhance employment prospects, so classes tend to be small.
- There can be the assumption that a language should be taught by a person of that language. There are very few Indigenous people currently qualified for the task.

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<sup>22</sup>Charles Darwin University has an online course in Bininj Kunwok.

<sup>23</sup><https://www.edx.org/course/noongar-language-and-culture>

<sup>24</sup>At one stage three semesters of Pitjantjatjara were available at university level. Now only one unit is offered, as a summer intensive (Amery 2007, p. 335).

- Protocols can be challenging, including negotiations with the language group whose land the university is on. Often there is very little information about the local language, and teaching a language from elsewhere can be politically sensitive.
- Some community members involved in LR may be unfamiliar with working with universities.
- Published analysis of LR can downplay the role of linguists in existing programs, and so people may not realize the need for this expertise. At times they portray LR as relatively simple, so not needing advanced skills, and therefore omitting any role for universities.

## 10 Conclusion

Over recent decades there has been a wonderful growth in awareness of, pride in, and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Through the efforts of community and scholars some languages of which only a few words were being spoken are now much more vibrant. Greetings and songs are being regularly used, place names and signs in language are proliferating. Other languages hope to follow that path. Many language groups hope to climb the Everest of moving from generally simple, emblematic language to a much more complex, shared language, a substantial, communicative language which retains as much as possible of the traditional language.

To move beyond simple language, the language needs to be well described, it needs community energy, it needs a unifying structure which covers both linguistic and administrative functions, and it needs in-depth teaching and learning. In particular those teaching the language in schools and those developing resources need to know it very well.

Currently no reviving language has an adequate base for learning substantial communicative language. A very small number of languages have university or similar courses, and most consist of only one unit, nowhere near what is needed.

AILI is an attempt to provide accessible, in-depth teaching of languages and related topics such as linguistics and revival and maintenance processes. It intends to use different modes of course delivery, including summer and winter schools, online courses and regular semester courses. It draws on the resources of a number of universities and will award tertiary qualifications. AILI assumes that universities are committed to Australian Indigenous languages and are prepared to make the considerable effort needed to teach them.



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