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Jane Elizabeth Harris *Editors*

Stephen Harris—Writer, Educator, Anthropologist

Kantriman Blanga Melabat (Our Countryman)

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Foreword

I first met Stephen by chance in Albuquerque in 1974 when he was planning on going to Maningrida to undertake the research for his Ph.D. I suggested Milingimbi as an alternative and promised that I would assist him to get the necessary approvals as well as providing accommodation through the school. That was the start of our 46-year friendship. During my own Ph.D. research years at Lajamanu, Stephen was a great support, writing a regular flow of encouraging letters with practical advice. During my years at Batchelor we saw each other quite often and I came to better appreciate Stephen's wide-ranging interests, particularly those focused on the rural life. Tamworth, therefore, seemed to me to be the ideal place for him to retire to. Retirement, however, proved not to be easy for Stephen but something closer to the trials of Job as he battled with various chronic illnesses. Undergirding everything in his life was his unshakeable faith and this never faltered. Stephen really was a remarkable person.

David McClay

Preface

Stephen Harris began his long association with Kriol speakers in Australia's Northern Territory as a child in Angurugu and Ngukurr. This continued at Gunbalanya when he was a young man, working as a cattle station manager and buffalo shooter alongside such remarkable stockmen as Tom Thompson. Later, as an adviser and scholar, he never forgot those links. So it is entirely fitting that Terry Ngarritjan Kessaris should refer to Stephen as *Katriman blanga melabat* ('our countryman'). In response, the other editors and I have used her inclusive Kriol phrase in the book's title to honor that connection.

From start to finish, this book has been a collaborative effort. Perhaps unusually for a scholarly work, it was conceived as a joint project involving Stephen Harris's family, friends, colleagues, and students. While the book begins with reminiscences, it builds to a more critical, analytical, and contextual perspective. It is, however, based on research throughout: whether formal postgraduate theses (such as Fry, Chap. 22) or family documents (as in the chapters by Harris family members). While the book is focused primarily on an Australian context, the global relevance of its main themes should also be apparent.

The book has been loosely organised into three parts. The first provides an overview of the life and work of Stephen Harris. The second documents the influence of his work, particularly with respect to bilingual-bicultural education. The third set of chapters touch on some related topics prompted by Stephen's written work or his other interests.

When particular Aboriginal languages have been mentioned, some care has been taken to include the most common spellings. The Ethnologue was used as a guide, on occasion; for example, when constructing the index entry for languages such as Murrinh-patha (Murrinhpatha, Murrinh-Patha).

Dr. Joy Kinslow-Harris recently asked me:

> Do you think it comes through—from my and Jonathan and Jane's writings—that Stephen's life was 'giving God the glory' and not seeking acclaim? I've been using his Bible for devotions and the underlining from his own use is over and over the majesty of God' and the wisdom of 'letting Him direct our path'. On the big and little scale, we saw over and over how God had the bilingual programme in mind for the Aboriginal communities and I hope that's coming through.

I leave it to the reader to judge whether this aspect of Stephen Harris's life does 'come though', as Joy wondered. I think it does.

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Acknowledgements

The font used in this book (Gentium, AuSIL) was specially developed by Professor Charles ('Chuck') Grimes at my request several years ago, and I am grateful to him for this assistance. I would also like to acknowledge the help that was received from many others as the text of this book was being prepared.

When preparing an honour roll there is always the fear that someone will be missed out, but I hope that this list covers those who helped with proof-reading and reviews of each chapter. I would like to thank all the anonymous reviewers as well as Dr. Rob Amery, Dr. Wendy Beresford-Manning, Prof. Steven Bird, Dr. Cathy Bow, Dr. Neil Chadwick, Dr. Karen Courtenay, Jennifer Devlin, Michael Devlin, Dr. Kevin Ford, Leonard Freeman, Dr. Mary-Anne Gale, Eric Lede, Dr. Patrick McConvell, Dr. David McClay, Dr. David Nash, Sue Reaburn, Prof. Nick Reid, Rev Dr. Helen Richmond, Dr. Nicoletta Romeo, Dr. Margaret Sharpe, Dr. Bea Staley, Dr. Bruce Waters, Leon White, Dr. Michele Willsher, Yalmay Yunupiŋu, Dr. R. David Zorc, as well as staff at Charles Darwin University library, the Northern Territory Archives, the Northern Territory Department of Education, and the Yirrkala School Action Committee. It has been a pleasure to work alongside all the chapter authors and co-editors in compiling this book, and I thank them for their many, varied contributions. Finally, I thank Grace Ma, and others in her team at Springer in Singapore, for making the publication of this book possible.

Regrettably, as this book was being compiled, and we were almost ready to send to Springer's production team, we received news of Cathy Bow's untimely death. Cathy was a wonderful colleague: gentle, honest, and highly competent. We will miss her. Vale Cathy!

Darwin, NT, Australia
October 2021

Brian Clive Devlin

Short Timeline

Stephen George Harris (7 March, 1942–10 August, 2020)

1942, March 7	Stephen was born in Coledale, New South Wales (NSW), to Dick and Nell Harris.
1944	In October he and his brother, Wilfred, were taken to Angurugu, Groote Eylandt when their parents transferred there (Harris and Kinslow-Harris, 1998, p. 53). He lived there until he was seven. When not doing his schooling by correspondence he 'played with Aboriginal children down the river' (Harris, 2003, p. 2).
1949	In June Stephen moved with his parents to the Roper River Mission at Ngukurr. His love of horses and cattle work dates from this early childhood period. 'As soon as they could hold the reins, their dad had the Harris children on horseback. The mustering crew at Roper would ask if 6 year old Stephen could join them, and much to his glee his dad said yes' (Joy Kinslow-Harris, Chap. 2). As leprosy and hook worm were prevalent there, Stephen was kept apart from the community (Harris and Kinslow-Harris, 1998, p. 66). He continued his schooling by correspondence at Ngukurr.
1950–53	After being taken south by his parents on a two-month road trip in a three-ton Canadian Chevrolet Blitz, he stayed with his Aunt Helen and Uncle Geoff at Weerona, Wee Waa in north-west NSW. Stephen loved his time there and regarded it as his second home (Harris and Kinslow-Harris, 1998, p. 68; Harris, 2003, p. 7).
1952	Stephen attended Wee Waa Central School.
1953	Stephen and his brother Wilfred left Wee Waa and moved back in with their parents at Gerringong (Harris and Kinslow-Harris, 1998, p. 71).

1954–1955	Stephen's father was assigned to the parish of Pitt Town, on the Hawkesbury River, north-west of Sydney, so the family lived there.
1955–60	Stephen attended Trinity Grammar, Sydney. Christmas 1959 was spent with his parents at Angurugu. On 18 August 1960 his parents were sent by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) back to Oenpelli.
1961–3	B.A., University of Sydney.
1964, February	Stephen went to Oenpelli on a short-term assignment, while his parents completed their last years of service for the CMS. Stephen was assigned to do stockwork (Harris and Kinslow-Harris, 1998, p. 80; Harris, 2003, p.18). It was there, at Oenpelli, that he met Joy Kinslow (see Chap. 2). Stephen recalled later that 'unlike me, Joy saw a crucial future in Aboriginal languages' (Harris, 2003, p. 23).
1966	Stephen and Joy were married at Wiseman's Ferry by Stephen's father.
1966–1969	After teaching at The King's School, Sydney, until October 1966, Stephen worked as a Research Officer in the Aboriginal Welfare Section, Department of the Interior.
1969–1970	Stephen was employed in the buffalo meat industry at Oenpelli and, partnering with Gulbirrbirr Djorlom, who acted as spotter, would regularly shoot 15 buffalo bulls a day for that enterprise (Harris, 2003, p. 27).
1970–1971	Short-term assignment, Village Literacy project, Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL, PNG.
1972–1974	Ph.D. studies, University of New Mexico (UNM), Albuquerque, USA.
1975–1976	In March 1975, after a delay of two months because of a cyclone which had demolished most of Darwin, Stephen began his Ph.D. research at Milingimbi.
1977	Ph.D. dissertation submission, UNM, Albuquerque.
1978–1981	Senior Education Adviser—Anthropology, Northern Territory Division of the Commonwealth Department of Education. In 1980 an abridged version of Stephen's Ph.D. thesis was published as *Culture and learning*. This proved to be a very influential publication.
1982–1985	Principal Education Officer Bilingual, NT Department of Education. In Easter 1985 Stephen's father died at the age of 84.
1987	Research Fellow in Education, Flinders University, South Australia.
1988	Senior Lecturer, Aboriginal Teacher Education, Batchelor College.

1989–91	Senior Lecturer in Aboriginal Education and Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Education, Northern Territory University.
1992, 2nd semester	Study leave in Canada and the United States.
1992–1997	Reader, Faculty of Education, Northern Territory University
1997	Stephen retired and moved with Joy to Tamworth, NSW, close to the family farm at Barraba. Stephen relished the countryside in northern inland NSW, as it was familiar to him from his Wee Waa childhood. He also wanted to be near his mother in her old age. At 'Wongala' he happily joined his brothers in cattle and sheep work and spent plenty of time with his nieces and nephews. He was able to pursue his passion for acquiring and breeding Australian Stock Horses.
2000	Stephen's mother died in April at the age of 96.
2020, August 10	Stephen passed away in Tamworth, NSW, after a long illness.

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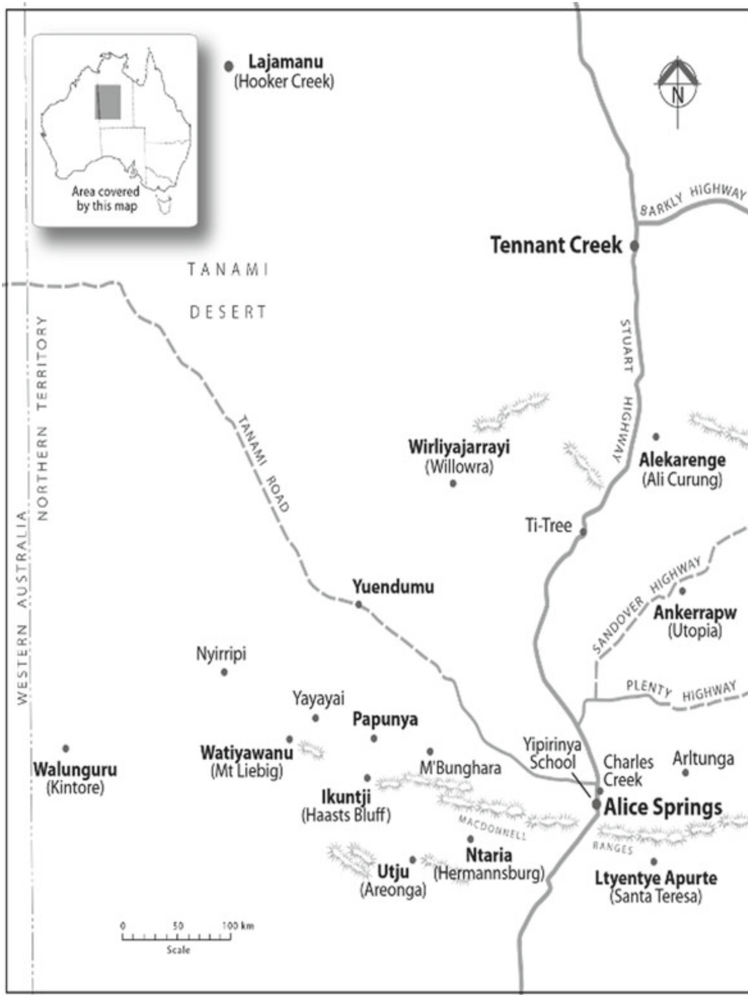

Map 1 Central Australian Region

Map 2 Northern NT region (or 'Top End'), Australia

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Part A

Chapter 1
Introduction: An Overview of the Life of Stephen Harris

Jane Harris

Abstract This chapter is an overview of Stephen Harris's life from his early years in Angurugu and Ngukurr, Northern Territory (NT), and Wee Waa, New South Wales (NSW), to retirement in the Tamworth area, NSW. Primarily, it is about Stephen's early influences, both the places and people, written from the perspective of his niece. Stephen's parents, Dick and Nell, were large figures in Stephen's life, as were his paternal uncle, Geoff Harris, and Geoff's wife, Helen. Dick, a farmer, and Nell, a teacher, were missionaries in the Northern Territory. The communities they lived and worked in were integral parts of Stephen's life. Arnhem Land had huge personal significance for Stephen as did the NSW northern inland, particularly Wee Waa, Barraba and Tamworth. Farming, cattle work, and horses remained an enduring passion for Stephen for the duration of his life. These were part of his growing up years in the NT, and at the family farm in Wee Waa, and always remained important to him. Harris family stories of adventurousness, loyalty, hard physical work, and strong mindedness influenced Stephen's character. Stephen was also influenced by his mother, whose attributes as an educator, story-teller, and natural historian he shared. In 1969 Stephen deliberately chose a life of work in Aboriginal education, as working with Aboriginal people was one of his greatest interests.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Arnhem land · North-west New South Wales · Dick Harris · Nell Harris · Joy Harris · Aboriginal education

Stephen Harris was two years old before he could be hoisted up on his father's shoulder to view the world. His world at that time was Angurugu on Groote Eylandt on Australia's northern coast, his parents, Dick and Nell, and his older brother, Wilfred. His older brothers, David and Jim, had been sent to boarding school in Sydney, and his younger sister Barbara had not yet been born. Angurugu was the place of Stephen's earliest awareness. Stephen often talked about the Aboriginal memories from his first eight years of life being powerfully embedded in his consciousness (Harris, 2003, p. 56) (Fig. 1.1).

J. Harris (✉)
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Fig. 1.1 Stephen with big brother Wilfred taking their toy boat down to the river at Groote Eylandt

Also ingrained in Stephen's consciousness was a passion for cattle, horses, and farming. He loved soil and trees and country. He loved saddles and bridles. These lifelong passions arose in the two different contexts of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory (NT), and Wee Waa, New South Wales (NSW). Stephen said of himself, 'Aboriginal education has been a motivating cause and a highly fulfilling career which I'm relieved that I took, but it never surpassed the dream of being a breeder of cattle and horses, or more accurately, of being a steward of a farming environment' (Harris, 2003, p. 34).

This chapter, while an overview, is primarily about Stephen's early influences, both the places and people. Parents Dick and Nell were large figures in Stephen's life, as were his paternal uncle, Geoff Harris, and Geoff's wife, Helen. The two areas of Australia with huge personal significance to Stephen were the New South Wales northern inland and Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

Stephen Harris was born in 1942 to parents who worked as missionaries with the Church Missionary Society in Arnhem Land. Stephen's life-work was education and anthropology across cultures, particularly in Australian indigenous communities. He

worked in the Northern Territory Education Department, Batchelor College, and later at the NT University, preparing teachers to work with Aboriginal children. Stephen was my uncle, the younger brother of my father, Jim.

Stephen's father, Dick, was a dairy farmer at Wee Waa before he became a missionary. Stephen's mother, Nell, was a primary school teacher, whose ambitions to be a single headmistress altered when she married Dick at the age of 29. Nell's missionary life started at Oenpelli with her husband. Her work included spontaneously beginning the work of translating English into Kunwinjku there in 1937.

Stephen got on very well with his mother and also admired her deeply. She was an unusual person. Ellen Tansley, called Nell, was born in 1904 in Sydney. When she was 10, Nell came home from school to find her mother had died in childbirth. She and her elder sister, Anne, then largely took care of the household of six children, including the newborn. Nell describes their home in the southern Sydney suburb of Carlton as being boisterous and easy-going. She was always aware that she was different from her family. Nell was a highly energetic and academic person. She did very well at school, and later university, and set her sights on spinsterhood and being a school headmistress. Nell was ambitious for herself. I believe her main motivation was to be able to support her family, rather than holding a prestigious position. There was an authentic humility about her. She said of herself, 'I think because of my home background—we didn't have a book in the house, and no one ever read—I never had tickets on myself' (Harris and Harris, 1998, p. 3). Later her husband received several significant recognitions of his life's achievements (including an MBE), and she received none. It did not seem to even cross her mind that this was an oversight.

Nell met Dick Harris during her first teaching stint in Wee Waa in 1926. She occasionally told me, over making scones or fruitcake or other sorts of household chores, that she had never had any intention to marry. She said the Holy Spirit caused her to marry Dick. But she believed she and Dick were well-matched and she had not regretted marriage. After they married in 1933, she accompanied Dick to Oenpelli. Nell's working life was mostly on the mission. A lot of her work involved feeding people and managing the workings of a household. She 'taught primary-aged Kunwinjku children in the mornings, taught some teenagers and women's sewing groups in the afternoons, provided meals for any single staff members, looked after the clothes, [and] entertained any visitors' (Harris, 2003, p. 45). Nell remained a teacher throughout her working life, before and after marriage. Teaching was her vocation.

Nell had become a Christian at Teachers College and she had a deep and enduring faith, including a belief in the miraculous and that God answers prayer. To her, Jesus was a real, living person, part of her every day. She would say earnestly, 'Jesus is alive you know'. I'd reply, 'I know'. But, of course, some she told would be a bit startled and embarrassed. She did not care. Stephen had the same deep faith that his mother and father had, throughout his whole life.

Stephen said his memories of his mother from his childhood were of warmth, acceptance, patience and unselfish love, sometimes resignation, often reading books

together, occasional hysteria from exhaustion, and always working (Harris, 2003, p. 43).

Stephen's father, George Richmond Harris, called Dick, was born in 1901. He grew up on dairy farms in Casino, the family later expanding to growing sheep, wheat, and beef. His middle name was for the Richmond River that flows through the Casino district. When he was 10, Dick's family moved to Wee Waa and Narrabri, where they raised sheep. All six children worked in the family enterprise, and they worked hard. Stephen described his father as 'capable, hard-working and ambitious' (Harris, 2003, p. 45). Dick did not finish primary school because of the demands of the family farm. But Nell described the Harrises as a family of readers, noting that they would read the Bible and the Oxford Dictionary if there was nothing else.

In his mid-twenties, Dick became a Christian. He went to Croydon Bible College in Sydney and planned to do overseas missionary work in Borneo. The Church Missionary Society thought his farming experience made him a good fit for Oenpelli, an Aboriginal mission which was also a cattle station, and where most of the food had to be grown on site.

Dick began his first term in Oenpelli in 1929 as a single man, returning down south in 1933 for a break and to marry Nell. They married in the evening so Dick's relations would be less self-conscious, because of their poor garments. Nell observed, when he returned from Oenpelli prior to the wedding, that he was so tired that he could barely talk. She said, 'After you've lived in Oenpelli yourself under those conditions, you realise why' (Harris and Harris, 1998, p. 9).

Dick had grown up in a strict home. He was taught not to question authority. Throughout his life Dick was a highly disciplined person who ran on a strict schedule, right until the end. Stephen said, 'If Mum was a talker, Dad was not…his language was action. He was physically powerful, tough and courageous…indifferent to money and materialism' (Harris, 2003, p. 5).

Dick and Nell's life involved considerable hardships. At Oenpelli, their first home was a bark hut, the last shack from Paddy Cahill's time, standing next to a mango tree. Paddy Cahill, his wife Maria, and his business partner William Johnston had settled in that spot in 1906 and established a farm to grow cotton, fruit, vegetables, and other products. Dick and Nell's worldly goods were not much more than a pair of stretcher beds, mosquito gauze, and two cane chairs. The cane chairs, wedding presents, were allowed by the shipping company to be used during the voyage up north. Later they lived in a 60-by-30-foot, unlined, corrugated iron, Sydney Williams house. Throughout their career, their homes were basic and sometimes unfinished.

There was no sense from Dick and Nell that their lifestyle was one of self-sacrifice. Nell said she felt she always just fitted in at Oenpelli. There were two supply deliveries a year, everything else had to be grown locally. The nearest hospital was 300 km away on an impassable route. The mission needed to grow its own food and mill its own timber.

Health was precious. Antibiotics were not available until the 1940s. Nell talks about the sense of relief when sulphur drugs arrived. Nell provided medical treatment when needed, in the absence of anyone else to do it. This included nursing the community through a measles epidemic at Roper River just before Christmas 1949,

with the help of two Aboriginal boys who had had the disease before. Nell was in Arnhem Land for 22 years over a 32-year period (1933–41, 1944–50, 1958–65). Dick was in Arnhem Land for 30 years over a 36-year period (1929–52, 1958–65).

Stephen's paternal uncle, Geoff, and his wife Helen at Wee Waa were also an integral part of Stephen's growing up. Dick and Nell both had supportive brothers and sisters who did a lot for them and their children. The relationships were reciprocal, if occasionally uncomfortable. The siblings provided practical support to each other, including sharing savings when they were poor themselves. There was family connectedness and deep loyalty between them. Stephen spent much of his first 20 years living with Uncle Geoff and Aunty Helen and their two daughters at Wee Waa in New South Wales. Stephen felt this was his childhood home, attributing some of that feeling to the fact that his family had been farming there since 1910.

Uncle Geoff and Aunty Helen made a scant living at Wee Waa from two small farms, *Runnymede* and *Weerona*. *Weerona*, which has the deep black soil the area is known for, is bound by the Namoi River on two sides. It is dotted with old River Red Gums and Coolibah trees. *Runnymede,* on the edge of the Pilliga, has deep red soil, box trees, and Cyprus pine and looks out at the Nandewar Ranges including Mt Kaputar. I mention the soil, trees, and shape of the landscape because these were all important to Stephen.

The properties where Stephen's parents and brothers, Jim and Wilfred, lived later on, from the 1970s, looked at Mt Kaputar from the other (eastern) side. The Wee Waa and Barraba farms were important to Uncle Stephen, not just as the places where his family lived, but also for the country. This part of New South Wales around Kaputar, Gomeroi country, also called the North West Slopes and Plains, remained important to Stephen the whole of his life.

Stephen was born in Coledale, south of Wollongong, just a month after the Japanese bombing of Darwin in 1942. His mother Nell had been required to evacuate from the Territory ahead of the anticipated Japanese invasion. Dick returned to the Territory when Stephen was six weeks old. Nell took Stephen and her three older boys, David, Jim, and Wilfred, to live at Wee Waa with her Harris relatives. Her husband Dick remained at Groote Eylandt for the remainder of the war. Nell and the children lived with both Dick's sister, Mary, and husband Charl Collett at *Weerona*, and at *Runnymede* with Geoff and Helen for a lot of this period.

Collective living and mutual support were conspicuous for his parents' generation. My father, Stephen's brother Jim, told me that the Harris family got through the depression and its aftermath by pulling together and sharing resources, and also through having the Wee Waa farms, where they could live almost self-sufficiently.

Picking up the timeline in October 1944, when Stephen was two, Nell was able to return to the Territory to join her husband at Angurugu on the west coast of Groote Eylandt. She took Stephen with her and his brother, Wilfred. Stephen was two and a half by then, and his father had last seen him as a six-week-old infant. The older brothers, David and Jim, had been sent to board at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney.

Stephen had many powerful recollections of life at Angurugu. Some were about playing in the crystal-clear Angurugu River above the crossing with his brother Wilfred in a small dugout canoe given to them by an old Anindilyakawa man. This

river features in both the private memoirs of Stephen and his mother as being a place of great happiness. Their home had no bathroom, so every evening Dick and Nell took the children to bathe in the river with them. 'That walk to the river in the cool of the evening remains one of the happiest experiences of my life', Stephen's mother recalled (Harris and Harris, 1998, p. 56).

Stephen also spoke and wrote about the people he knew at Angurugu. He wrote about a man called Old Charlie, who was a woodcutter for the mission house. 'He let me spend hours watching him cut wood or make spears. He never rushed. One day I was playing with one of Charlie's very sharp shovel-nosed spears, the large knife-like head…and cut myself badly across the ankle. Charlie fitted a blade of grass into the cut to stop the bleeding and calmly carried me home to Mum. All my life I've looked at that scar with affection as I put on my socks' (Harris, 2003, p. 3).

When Stephen was seven, the family moved to Roper River (Ngukurr), a very different landscape and community. The family now included a baby sister, Barbara. At Ngukurr, Stephen had two horses to keep him occupied in the absence of anyone to play with, as Wilfred had been sent to school in Sydney. He said, 'My head is full of childhood horses' names and that began at Roper: Jimmie, Kitty, Roadman, Stormbird, Splinter, Murderer and so on' (Harris, 2003, p. 6). Later, in his youth, Stephen had a horse named Bet Bet in Wee Waa, and there were also many horses significant to him at Wee Waa and later at Oenpelli. I remember that Stephen could always enjoy a conversation with his father, brothers, and sister about horses they had known.

Stockmen he had observed and admired were an important part of Stephen's memories; for example, Sam Thompson, who was head stockman at Ngukurr. Stephen also remembered Tom Thompson, Douglas Daniels, and Roger Rogers. They were each highly esteemed by Stephen. Skilled stock handling was high in his value system. Jonathan Harris talks more about Tom Thompson in Chapter 5 of this book.

When Stephen was nine, he and his family traveled back to Wee Waa in a three-ton Chevrolet Blitz truck, a journey of around two months. Stephen then lived with Geoff and Helen Harris at Wee Waa, where he finished his primary schooling and later joined his older brothers at Trinity Grammar School. Stephen was not to live in the Territory again, except for summer holidays, until 1963–1964, when he returned to work at Oenpelli, principally to spend time with his parents.

Geoff Harris was Dick's older brother. Geoff was a political type of man, interested in news and world affairs. He was actually a reluctant farmer who had wanted to be a mechanical engineer. He had a lanky frame and a laconic type of personality. His easy-going nature was a strong contrast to that of Dick, Stephen's father. Stephen recalled that he often had 'meaningful but one-sided conversations in which Uncle would express a sense of helpless rage. What upset him more than anything else was a lack of integrity' (Harris, 2003, p. 14). Two other things that could enrage him were Bob Menzies and a milk jug that would not pour cleanly.

Geoff's philosophies about the world and machinery became part of Stephen's. Stephen always drove around corners in an idiosyncratic way (when there was no

Fig. 1.2 Trinity College, Sydney, 1960. Stephen Harris is sitting in the front row, holding the ball

traffic about) because Uncle Geoff had said it gave you more wear on the tires. It was pretty annoying as a passenger.

Helen Harris had been a nursing sister who had trained with Stephen's aunt, Agnes Harris. Helen lived a simple life of work and of prayer on the farm. Stephen said he never had a tense moment with Aunty Helen and described the level of peace and harmony in their household as remarkable. Stephen said her main vocation seemed to be loving people. I remember an elegant, willowy woman in her eighties making us feel at home during a family visit.

Stephen learned a great deal about farming, housework, and sheer hard work at Wee Waa. He also said he learnt 'that if you roll up a double page of the *Queensland Country Life* and tease a huntsman spider with it he will jump on you from two yards away and scare you witless' (Harris, 2003, p. 9).

Stephen wept uncontrollably when he was told at the age of ten that he was leaving Geoff and Helen's. He went on to board at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney for his high school education with his older brothers. He enjoyed a lot about school there, benefiting from the protection and sporting prowess of his brothers. He followed his brother Jim on to the University of Sydney, where he studied Arts. His career intention after graduating was to teach at a high school, which he did do for a year at The King's School in Parramatta, Sydney (Fig. 1.2).

Later Stephen studied anthropology at the University of New Mexico in the USA. This is detailed by Aunty Joy in the following chapter.

Stephen was very like his mother Nell, particularly in his ability to talk and tell stories, and he was also very close to her. But the family stories and mythologies were largely from the Harris side, in my observation. Stephen recorded an important family story in a private memoir about his father Dick droving cattle a long distance as a boy.

> By the age of fifteen dad [Dick] and his mate Wilf Collett, in the middle of a severe drought at Wee Waa/Narrabri, drove a mob of twenty-five cows and calves from there to Ellangowan, just south of Casino on the north coast, 300 miles (500km) away, where an uncle was able to offer grazing. They were on their own for over a month, one boy on a horse and the other driving the sulky with swags and food. (Harris, 2003, p. 44)

When I was telling this story to my own teenage sons recently, one asked me if I told it to shame them. I had to think about it, and replied, honestly, that I re-told the story partly to shame them (for some flagrant laziness and low-goal setting), but mostly it was to inspire them, and also to remember my grandfather, who was remarkable. I suspect these family stories have been told for similar reasons for generations, and I believe they had a strong effect on Stephen, as well as my own father.

Other identity-forming stories were about John Joseph Harris, the first Harris man to arrive in Australia in 1827. Joseph was a Welshman who served the Australian explorer Charles Sturt as a Batman in the Peninsular Wars and in Canada and was part of Sturt's explorations of the Murrumbidgee and the Macquarie Marshes.

The stories of Joseph's adventurousness, loyalty, hard physical work, and strong mindedness formed part of the family folklore that influenced Stephen and his siblings. Joseph Harris's story is referred to in more detail in a later chapter by Jonathan Harris, his great-great-great grandson, and nephew of Stephen. Joseph was rewarded by the British Crown with a land grant in Australia in West Dapto, near Wollongong. He and his wife Anastasia, who had come with him to Australia, settled there to farm *Stream Hill* following Joseph's last tour of duty with Sturt at the Norfolk Island garrison in 1832. Stephen and his brothers saw themselves as farmers and descendants of farmers, but also descendants of someone who was capable of heroic endeavor.

Since 1977, the extended Harris family has spent a lot of time together on the farming properties belonging to Stephen's brothers Jim and Wilfred near Barraba, in north-west New South Wales. Stephen's parents, Dick and Nell Harris, lived there along with their sons, Jim and Wilfred, and their families. Stephen and Joy made a long visit from their Darwin home over the summer most years, and Stephen's brother David and his family, and sister, Barbara, and her family would travel there too.

Jonathan Harris, my cousin, writes about Stephen's presence lightening the mood in our family at the farm in Chap. 5. A lot of this was through conversation. The Harrises were a family of very serious people. Work and duty were foremost. Stephen too was serious and could be consumed by projects, responsibility, and worry. But at *Wongala,* Stephen was the younger brother assisting with other people's responsibilities and he was freer. It was also clear that just being with his parents and siblings

gave him joy. His willingness to talk about a wide range of subjects was anomalous in our family context and a really marvelous thing for his 14 Harris family nieces and nephews. Stephen was curious about the world and also about us, even though we were children. After he returned from studying in the USA around 1972, when I was five years old, I asked him very shyly why he did not now speak with an American accent. He gave me a detailed reply. Stephen crossed over a line that existed in our family, where there was women and children's business, and the actually important business of men. Talking seriously to nieces was an aspect of his disregard for that world view.

Stephen and his wife Joy are why we have a record of my grandmother's Nell's life and in her own voice. The family folklore going back to Joseph Harris in 1827 included nothing about his wife Anastasia Carroll. She remains an enigma, much as Stephen's paternal grandmother Florence Rippingale does. By contrast we have a great treasure in the record made of Grandma's stories, even though we all heard them many times. Nell had a phenomenal memory for history, as did Stephen. When Stephen could not speak at the end of his life, there would be family conversations in my generation that he was part of, where we speakers could not remember details of dates and names. We would acknowledge, to him, that he knew the details but could no longer remind us. We hoped he did not despair of us; we feared he did. He told me once that he accepted that the rest of us could not recall details from the past, but he could not understand it. It came very naturally to him.

Sometime around 2000, Stephen recounted to me something that had upset him and left him with a sense of failure. He and Joy were by now living at *Wongala* before retiring to Tamworth. Stephen had been invited to address a men's bible study in the region about his work in Aboriginal education. He prepared at length, and earnestly, in a typical fashion. He told me that the group was made up of people he regarded as good Christian men, who had met together faithfully with prayer and studying the bible for a very long period. Stephen told me while the men treated him with respect, he encountered their deeply entrenched racism against Aboriginal people. He felt he had not been able to shift them from their viewpoint at all. He said he asked them to imagine how they as Australians might feel if they had lived under Japanese occupation for the last fifty years. Stephen recounted with disappointment that it seemed the men could not, or would not, imagine this scenario at all. Terry Ngarritjan Kessaris, Ngukurr woman and student, colleague, and friend of Stephen's, says in Chap. 3 of this book that she saw him as 'declining to be white the way white was expected to be'. It reminds me of this story.

There is a little leavening in this story about the bible study visit. Vic Turner was a local horse trainer of considerable reputation and ability with whom Stephen had become friendly. Vic came along to this bible study meeting out of friendliness to Stephen. Afterwards Vic asked him if he wanted him to take those men out the back and sort them out. Vic saw beneath the surface respect those men had shown Stephen to what lay beneath. Stephen was cheered by Vic's offer and ever afterward would offer to punch someone for me if I had a grievance. Something about my peaceable Uncle's gesture would cheer me up too.

In 1969 when he and Joy were at Oenpelli, Stephen said he knew he was at a career cross-roads. He was choosing between 'an academic life with Joy in Aboriginal education or a farming partnership with two of my elder brothers' (Harris, 2003, p. 24). Stephen recounts a few reasons for his choosing Aboriginal education, which included that working with Aboriginal people had always been one of his strongest interests and wanting to see Joy use her talents in linguistics. Joy was the person Stephen shared everything with since they met in 1965 at Oenpelli. He said, 'Joy saw a crucial future in Aboriginal languages. My conversion to that perspective charted my working life for most of the next thirty years' (Harris, 2003, p. 23).

Stephen and Joy retired in the late 1990s to the Tamworth region. He loved the country in northern inland NSW, so familiar from his Wee Waa childhood, and he also wanted to be near his mother, Nell. He died in 2020 in Tamworth.

The most conspicuous thing about Stephen's personality was his intense interest in people. One of his quips, used humorously to concede he did not have the upper hand in an argument, was 'I'm a trained observer of human nature, you know'. We did in fact know this about Uncle Stephen. Not about his training so much, but as his family we each experienced Stephen's genuine, deep interest in us. We knew he noticed and valued us. He would punch someone for us.

Acknowledgements I am grateful for the assistance of my aunt, Joy Kinslow-Harris, who collaborated with me in the preparation of this chapter.

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Jane Harris is a writer and journalist. One area of strong professional interest is re-interpreting technical and bureaucratic language to make it more accessible. She has been engaged by organisations in a range of sectors, including agriculture, pharmaceuticals, banking and finance, to write plain English versions of their materials to communicate more effectively to different groups, especially employees, an oft-forgotten audience. Jane also has a background in the visual arts and convenes an annual regional arts festival in the northern inland area of New South Wales (NSW). With her family she runs a cattle and sheep property near Mt Kaputar, NSW. Jane is Stephen Harris's niece.

Chapter 2
From Start to Finish: A Man of Many Parts

Joy Kinslow-Harris

Abstract This chapter is an exploration of Stephen Harris's journey from his graduation from university to his death in August 2020 in Tamworth, NSW, from complications of Parkinson's disease. After graduation he took a short-term appointment as cattle work manager at Oenpelli, NT, where he met Joy Kinslow, a missionary linguist with Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics (WBT/SIL). Adventures began there as they married and became short-term missionaries with WBT/SIL and started learning about cross-cultural education first in Papua New Guinea villages, then in his PhD studies at the University of New Mexico in First Nations country in the US, and on to PhD research on Aboriginal learning styles at Milingimbi, NT. Responding to a Christian call to work in Aboriginal bilingual education, they resigned from WBT/SIL and Stephen was first with the NT Department of Education then a lecturer at the Northern Territory University, now Charles Darwin University. Interspersed among those years he wrote extensively on cross-cultural education issues, on Australian Stock Horse personalities, and on family histories. During various breaks in this journey Stephen did a term as buffalo shooter when setting up an economic enterprise for the community at Oenpelli, did stints as horse breaker at the family property in NSW, and established an Australian Stock Horse stud at that same property in his retirement. His deep Christian faith led to his being ordained and pastoring a Home Church and refuge centre while studying in the US during the 'Jesus Movement' in the 1970s. Truly a man of many parts.

Keywords Bilingual education · Oenpelli · Papua New Guinea · Buffalo shooting · Australian Stock Horse

Background

As a 27-year-old linguist from Texas, I was given my first assignment as a member of Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT/SIL). It was to Papua New Guinea (PNG). I had studied linguistics and anthropology at Wheaton College in Illinois, then trained in

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linguistic field research and translation methodology with the then Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) based at the University of Oklahoma. These included stints in Haiti and Mexico.

When I disembarked at Sydney Harbour in February 1964 en route to PNG, SIL's summer school in Brisbane was just finishing. I was asked to delay going on to PNG so I could help the Australian Aborigines Branch members by typing their Workshop papers so that they could be printed as part of a casual series. Once that project was finished, I was asked to stay a bit longer and help in other secretarial jobs as new candidates for membership in SIL were interviewed. The Directors of the Australian and Papua New Guinea Branches as well as the Southeast Asia Director were there for these meetings. When they had wound up, we all got ready to 'return to base', but I got the impression in my spirit that I wasn't to leave Australia. (I thought, 'What?!').

I recalled the Bible verse where Paul and Barnabas were told in their spirit not to go on into Asia Minor. So I said to the Lord, 'Well, I can't just say to the New Guinea director, "I've changed my mind". I've got three questions. If I have to stay in Australia, the answers will have to be good enough to convince the directors of the validity of my decision'. The three directors who would have to agree to my re-assignment were only going to be together for 40 minutes before flying out (to Vietnam and Papua New Guinea, then driving to the Australian bases there). I had to have this prayer guidance nailed and concise. I said to the Lord, 'I'm just going to open my Bible … ', and there it was: a passage in the New Testament with the answer to all three of my questions. I don't remember now which text I read from the Bible then, but it seemed to confirm to me that God was leading me in a different direction.

I took it to the directors, who were winding up their meeting and preparing to leave. They listened graciously as I told them that I felt the Lord required me to stay in Australia. (I told them my questions and the answers I had received.) Being spiritual men, all three accepted my guidance—a miracle in itself. Thankfully, the Papua New Guinea director then released me, so the Southeast Asia director was free to reassign me to the Australian Aboriginal branch of SIL.

Just in those 30 minutes my destiny changed. The Australian director, who was about to drive back to SIL's Australian Aboriginal Base, said, 'You can just come back with me if you like'. In the car on the way he asked, 'Do you know what I was telling them? When you knocked on the door, I was opening my mouth to tell them I was resigning. We hadn't had a person offer to work with the Aborigines branch for three years and I had said to the Lord, on my drive up, if we don't have a candidate, then obviously I'm not the appropriate director. I'll resign. Then you pop in, 30 minutes before I can resign'. It turns out that I was the first candidate they had had in three years.

Even more providentially, it turned out that there was a linguist waiting for a new work partner, and the Lord brought me. The trick though was that we would have to drive ourselves to our allocated site, although I hadn't learned to drive. I had to learn to do that, get my licence and be ready to go, in a week. Our director had been assigned a Land Cruiser from a government survey unit for us to use. I learned to

drive in a Volkswagen, and my partner hadn't ever driven a manual shift, so we were truly set!

The other linguist and I drove to the Top End via Brisbane where we loaded our Land Cruiser with a tent, other required camping gear, and three months' survival supplies. Lots of adventures were in store for these two 'learners' on the trip up the Stuart Highway. Once we got into the Outback there was very little traffic, so when we were stuck for a time behind a road train that was driving down the middle of the highway and stretched a block long, we just drove out into an adjoining paddock until we got around it.

One afternoon we pulled into Elliott, in the Northern Territory, for the last overnight stop and just as we had finished tea and were getting ready for bed, the proprietor came up and asked if we could come down to the bar. Two single missionary women (?!). We were a bit hesitant, but she said that a group of surveyors wanted to meet us. When we got down to the bar, the surveyors were speechless when they saw that we were women because the Land Cruiser we were driving bore the licence plate number that was in the middle of those attached to the four Land Cruisers they had driven across Australia from Perth, WA., on a surveying assignment.

The other linguist and I went on to our destination in the Top End, a small Aboriginal settlement at Borroloola near the MacArthur River. We were to begin research on the Garawa and Yanyuwa languages, but we soon realised that the younger men were all working on cattle stations. We recommended to SIL that a married team be allocated to work with this language, since single women weren't really welcome on remote cattle stations. This meant that we needed to think of another language for our research.

The Next Step in My Destiny

I went to Oenpelli (now Gunbalanya) at the invitation of SIL, as the Church Missionary Society had requested a linguist to begin work on the languages there. Also, at Oenpelli, on a short-term CMS assignment, was a young man in charge of the cattle work, Stephen Harris.

When Stephen had finished his BA studies at university in Sydney, he wanted to have time with his parents, who were finishing 40 years of missionary service. When he had been a schoolboy down south, he and his siblings would come up north to the mission on holidays each year, but that was all the time they had with their parents. The Harris brothers and their sister spent their other school breaks mostly on the family farms of their father's siblings, at Wee Waa in NSW.

Stephen's love of horses and cattle work stemmed from his early childhood, when he had been with his parents at Roper River Mission in the N.T. As soon as they could hold the reins, their father had the Harris children on horseback. The mustering crew at Roper would ask if six-year-old Stephen could join them and, much to his glee, his dad had said yes. Better than going on a picnic, staying overnight with the men fostered a deep-seated love of the sounds of Kriol conversations, the clinks of tethered

horses, the soft movements of corralled cattle, the smells and tastes of camp oven damper and roasts. So, it was second nature for Stephen to spend these two years at Oenpelli, where he was in charge of the mustering crew, horses, and cattle work. That was his love. Most of these horses were descendants of Walers, let loose in the area many years before and still of magnificent heart. The original Walers were horses used by Australian troops in World War 1. Stephen loved working with them.

The room behind the store, which was next door to the house where he and his parents were living, had been assigned to me. When Stephen would finish work, he would stop by and argue with me about mission policy. There were lots of debating points to fuel our discussions, since SIL policy is to not interrupt the local culture and language, but to go in and be a part of it, and to learn the language, whereas government policy required the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to foster English language learning and work skills that would lead to jobs in an English-speaking context. We argued about anthropological, linguistic, and spiritual issues, and enjoyed the tussle of ideas and practices.

On Saturdays, if the horses hadn't been at hard work during the week, he would organise rides for all who wanted to go, and that was most of us younger mob. When the staff's children came north on school breaks, Stephen's skills, acquired in mustering camps, meant that they could be set up with campfire damper as they tethered the horses, went swimming at the local waterfall, or fished for barramundi at the famous Cahill's Crossing. Once he took us all with him when he had to slaughter meat for the mission. Now that was an experience! (Fig. 2.1).

Tracing the movements of language speakers took me to Bamyili about three months before Stephen and his parents were leaving Oenpelli in their retirement. It was a wrench for me because I had fallen for this charismatic young man. He had said, before I flew out, that he didn't want to lose touch, so he asked if he could write to me. *Well, sure.*

Those letters were the first indication I had of his ability to discuss issues in writing and keep the reader involved, though, of course, I had more motivation than most! In his letters he talked about what to do with his life next. His earlier ambition had been to study for an MA in education, teach in a private school and become a Headmaster, but now he also wanted to be a part of strengthening Aboriginal futures, though not as a stockman!

Once he and his parents returned to Sydney, his dad was appointed Home Missioner to the Hawkesbury region and based at Wiseman's Ferry. Stephen helped his two elder brothers in their dairy (at Wiseman's), while he considered what he wanted to do. Meanwhile I had moved to Canberra and begun doctoral studies at the Australian National University. During my field work on Aboriginal settlements I had contracted hepatitis and after treatment I needed a place to recuperate. I would have been desolate to be alone at University House in my student room all day, trying to manage food, etc. Stephen's family offered for me to stay with them, first with his brother David and his wife Marie, who were living in Darlington while David studied at the University of Sydney.

Stephen got a job as a relief teacher at the King's School in Sydney and would go to David's place on weekends, so we saw each other often and our relationship

Fig. 2.1 When Stephen was in his mid-20s, he helped set up a buffalo meat export venture to be sustainably managed by the community at Oenpelli. George Gamarrawu Gumurdul, the spotter, and Stephen, the shooter, would bring in 1000+ carcasses in a year. This photo was taken in 1968

deepened. With big grins they said, 'Oh, Stephen's interested in a girlfriend'. When I was strong enough, I went back to the university in Canberra, and David and Marie invited me to stay with them on weekends. I did that fortnightly, and Stephen and I talked about many things, including what he wanted to do next. He was enjoying teaching, but felt there was more for him to do, and I still felt a strong call to work with Aboriginal language groups, so there was lots to talk about. This was in 1965/66.

I had been through an inner struggle of finding out what to do when I first made a spiritual decision to commit my life to missions. Before that, I had been going into medical research, having done my first two years of pre-med at the local university in my hometown of Amarillo, Texas. I had been accepted at Texas Tech in Lubbock; I had my room and roommate, and a job in the chemistry department; everything was settled.

Then God had taken me in a different direction, to work with Indigenous people. I thought: *What am I supposed to do?* They have doctors on the mission field, but in my spirit, I knew it had to be a complete break from my own plans, if I were now to follow the call to missions. And through innumerable steps without 'plans', but just following nudges in my spirit, I went to Wheaton College in Illinois just outside Chicago—strange country for a Southerner and a Texan to boot. So now, through it all, I knew that if we stayed focused on the Spirit of God, we'd know the next step. I still had my PhD dissertation on the Gunwingguan languages to finish and I needed to know where our relationship was taking us.

At this juncture a friend who was working in the Public Service in Canberra told Stephen of a job opening in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and that, if he were married when he applied, there would be rent assistance to relocate him from Sydney to Canberra. Well, the spirit of God has a humorous side, as that caused Stephen to decide to propose marriage to me and then apply for that job. We were married two weeks later, after needing to 'post the banns'. We wanted Stephen's father to marry us in the home mission church, where he was rector, at Wiseman's Ferry.

Stephen got the job, and we moved into an apartment in Canberra. His work involved writing answers to the letters and queries on Aboriginal affairs which came to that section. His attempts were edited by more senior staff, and over the two years he spent there he developed a more polished writing style.

Meanwhile, one of his dairying brothers, Wilfred, had been accepted into the CMS mission at Oenpelli and given the task of establishing some economic enterprises with the Indigenous community. On Stephen's first holiday, he and his dad drove to Oenpelli to work with Wilfred for two weeks. After that time Stephen became more interested in working with Aboriginal communities than working in a public service role with government. I still had at least a year's work ahead of me to finish the dissertation, sit for the orals, and do any necessary corrections before submitting the final work. Stephen stayed with the Public Service for that year, but in that time he and Wilfred planned to set up an abattoir project to supply buffalo meat to other communities as an economic venture.

In 1968, as I finished writing and submitting my dissertation, Stephen, in consultation with his brothers, Jim and Wilfred, bought vehicles to be used in the buffalo meat industry at Oenpelli. These were designed to tow specialised trailers for carting animals from the field to the abattoir. All of this preparation Stephen fitted around his workday in Canberra. A friend from his university days, Les Thompson, was now an army chaplain at Duntroon and had previously had a panel-beating business. Much to his delight, he was co-opted by Stephen to check out progress on the vehicle acquisitions. It also helped that we were ready-made babysitters for his family.

Resignation from his public service job and the submission of my dissertation then freed us to move to Oenpelli with Stephen and Jim transporting all this equipment ready to start the business. Wilfred meanwhile had worked with the CMS mission at Oenpelli to get the abattoir facilities in place, and to organise the local workforce. Any work in the cattle or buffalo industry held prestige, so training for specific positions was the criterion for establishing the first team from among the available workers. Wilfred was the on-site supervisor/trainer in his position as CMS missionary. Jim handled the entrepreneurial arrangements with the mission and was financial manager, and Stephen worked with an Indigenous spotter to bring in the buffalo.

During that first Dry Season, he and his off-sider brought in just over 1000 buffalo. My brother Don was between business ventures in Texas and open to adventure, so he answered Stephen's invitation to come across the ocean and handle the mechanics of keeping the vehicles on the road and drive the frozen meat in to Darwin for storage. Don was (and still is) into motors and had experience working in the pit at race car

rallies in the U.S. and supervising power generators on several NT settlements. With all hands on deck, the buffalo meat venture was a success for the community.

Then, once again Stephen was at a crossroads. The Summer Institute of Linguistics, of which I had been a member when I first worked on the settlement at Oenpelli, asked if I would be available to teach at the summer school, which was starting, fortuitously, just as Stephen's stint at Oenpelli finished for the season. His wage was enough to support us for the three months of the Institute's training, so Stephen suggested I take the role and he join the Linguistic Institute course. He thought that being among staff and students who were geared to a spiritually directed mission would help him in his search for his calling. It was a seminal time for him, as he impressed the lecturer in the course on the culture of language, so much so that Stephen was encouraged to do further study in the field. It was something we would never have thought of otherwise, it was so out of left field. After much discussion with the Institute staff, and prayer we took the step of applying for short-term status with SIL/WBT (Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators). Wanting to know what he was in for, Stephen asked if we could stop in Papua New Guinea and see firsthand what he might be required to undertake. With that in place, we headed to the US where I would introduce my Texas family to their Aussie son/brother, and he would apply for graduate study 'somewhere'.

We planned for two weeks in PNG, but again our steps were spiritually directed, and we ended up being there for 20 months! On our first night at the SIL/WBT base at Ukarumpa a friend invited us for tea, and we discussed their plans for beginning reading schools in the villages. They said they were just waiting for an appropriate person to help. As they explained what help was needed, in answer to Stephen's questions, I was bowled over when he asked, 'Would I do?' Hey, we were on our way to the US and I had been away six years, but obviously this was another seminal event.

Our two weeks' jaunt catapulted him into quickly learning New Guinea Pisin, for which his upbringing in Australian Kriol in the NT had given him a head start. His part in the program was to do some of the teaching, in Pisin, and in that way help the village-chosen young men who were to be the teachers of the village children. He then joined the translation team to set up and support the new teachers in their villages. Our translator friends were single women, so they said having a man who spoke Pisin to deal with the village *luluai* ('leaders') lent the program prestige (Fig. 2.2).

God always has more than one thing going: Stephen was feeling his way into his life's calling, the translators were setting up village schools, the children were being prepared to handle the encroaching literate environment, and the newly translated vernacular Bible was gaining readers in each village. There was also a chance that classes could be arranged for adults to help them learn to read their own language, once all was in place.

Stephen shadowed the translator, checking the students' progress, recording the vernacular instructions she used, and learning them until he had them down pat. Friends he had made in our home village said he sounded more like them than the translator! Stephen periodically hiked into each village school over several ranges

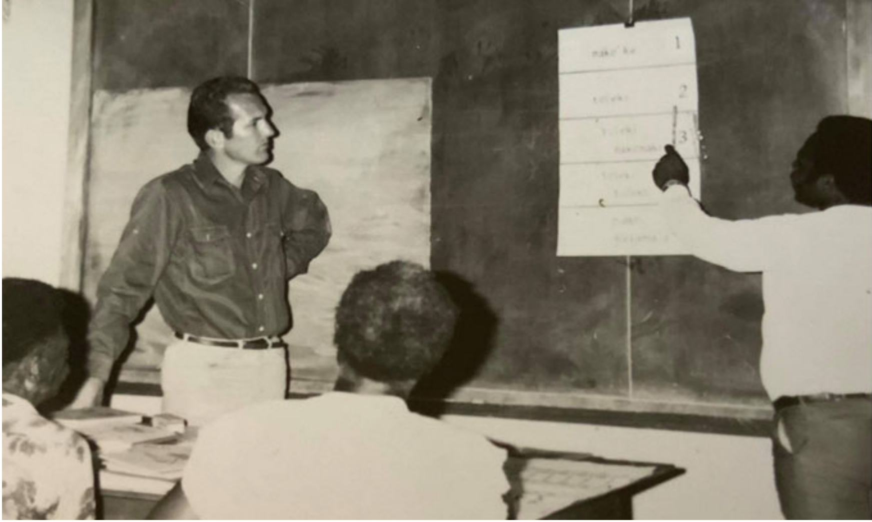

Fig. 2.2 In 1970 Stephen taught young people who had been chosen by their villages in Papua New Guinea to assist with literacy instruction

and across rivers without bridges; sometimes this required climbing trees with overhanging branches to then drop down on the other side of the river! Several courageous young men always went with him to carry a blackboard, new primers, chalk, and so on, along with awards for the teacher and students to keep encouraging them. He checked progress, rearranged classes according to ability, handed out new primers and lesson plans. To establish the academic status of the project, the local government asked for a report, which Stephen wrote and published in Pisin. Together we wrote a number of workbooks for practice reading, some in Pisin, English, and Kanite (the local vernacular). One used 'getting work' as a theme, causing a minor incident at the Ukarumpa base! The translators got a call on the radio asking for someone to come and retrieve three teenage girls who were going door to door requesting 'work' in English! However, it proved to be effective reading practice for them.

The program was a very demanding endeavour, both physically and emotionally. We and the translators took a fortnight's break in Ukarumpa just when a motivational speaker was there. Through his guidance, Stephen discerned that his next step was, as we had anticipated, to do graduate study in cross cultural education, and the teaching of reading. He was keen to start straightaway, not next year!

Once again, I was asked to teach at the SIL summer course, but in Oklahoma, USA, this time, which was right in line with what Stephen was hoping to do. He did an advanced SIL course in Norman, Oklahoma. There we applied for membership in SIL and followed their suggestion of applying for admission to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. We were accepted both by SIL/WBT and the university and also had time to be with my family in the Texas Panhandle on the way to Albuquerque. The two venues were only a four-hour drive apart.

Dr Miles Zintz was the professor Stephen had in the Master's program in the Teaching of Reading Across Cultures. Over many years he had been closely involved in local Navajo vernacular reading programs in which students later transferred to English. It couldn't have been more appropriate. He was au fait with Stephen's work in PNG and shared our goals to work with people in their vernacular. The first-term exam Dr Zintz set for the class was in essay form. He asked Stephen if he would be willing for him to seek a publisher for his resulting essay. It was published with very little editing. He was on a roll! The next term, Dr Zintz encouraged Stephen to begin a PhD. However, Stephen didn't feel he had the background to do two foreign languages as required by the university at that level of study. Professor Zintz was quite persuasive, pointing out that, 'You've published in PNG Pisin, and published triglots in Pisin/Kanite/English. I think I can swing it with the "authorities"'. Which he did. So Stephen went on to study the Anthropology of Education and wrote the dissertation which later became the book, *Culture and Learning*. He talked with Dr Zintz about writing it in instructional story format so it would be useful to teaching staff and educators in cross-cultural situations, not just be a tome placed on a library shelf. It took some persuading for such a departure, but the authorities agreed, and his resulting dissertation was one of the two entered for the University prize. He didn't get that one, but as we know, the abridged version was printed, and reprinted in Australia, which was more in keeping with his desire for it to be useful.

Field Work

Being accepted into the Ph.D. program meant doing field research so the next questions were 'where' and 'what'. By this time, after three years in Albuquerque, Stephen was becoming homesick for Australia, so the choice was obvious. He wanted to focus on Indigenous Australian culture and education. The laborious applications for funding and permission to work with Indigenous groups in Australia began. Stephen first thought he would need to research learning styles in a number of language groups in Australia to cover the field. The more experienced of his professors, having gone through this themselves, encouraged him to go into depth in one language group. However, even after paring it down in this way, the funding groups weren't positive. We had three weeks before our appointed time to leave for Australia, with still no positive answers on whether his research would be funded. This led to a bit of tension in the family!

One of our student friends asked Stephen to sit in on a seminar he had to give, so he would have one friendly face in the audience. After the seminar, the presiding professor motioned for Stephen to come up so he could introduce him to a visitor from Australia. Stephen invited him back to the house for supper. Bill McCleod was on a Churchill Scholarship looking into cross-cultural education among Indigenous groups in the US, and the Navajo were on his agenda. Bill asked Stephen what his studies were leading to and where he wanted to research. The result? Stephen was

offered a position as an anthropologist on salary in the Northern Territory Department of Education.

Three weeks before we were to leave and without all the application procedures and hoops! We believed this was God-directed for sure. Bill asked where we would do the research…well that was a question for sure. Our student friend was going to deliver his follow-up seminar and again he invited Stephen. Again the professor motioned Stephen over and said, 'it must be Australia week', and introduced him to another Australian visitor. Stephen invited him home for supper as well. The fellow said, 'My wife would love a shower with the supper! We've been backpacking around the country'. It was a done deal. As they talked about Stephen's plans and the need for permission to carry out his research on an Indigenous settlement, the guest said that he was principal of a school on the settlement of Milingimbi, an island along the coast from Darwin, and he thought they would love to have us there.

The guest said he could obtain permits for us, as he was on his way back, and they would be there by the time we arrived. That's how David McClay entered our lives. He would become a good friend and colleague.

It was December 1974, and as we sat in an airport in the US, waiting for our flight to Sydney, Australia, we were shocked as we watched news reports of the devastation caused by Cyclone Tracy. Stephen's brother Wilfred was in Darwin with his crew from the buffalo meat venture. Our flight was called, and no news was given about the effect of the cyclone on people. We just saw pictures of the levelling of the town. When we arrived at Stephen's parents' home in Sydney, we learned there was no contact possible with individuals in Darwin, as all lines of communication were down. It was several weeks before we found out that Wilfred and crew were safe, and that he was helping with the cleanup. We couldn't get to Darwin, of course, and thus not to Milingimbi, so we waited in Sydney. It was a month or more before we could get to Darwin, where we stayed with friends at the SIL headquarters, which had escaped the devastation of central Darwin.

As we flew into the humidity of tropical Darwin and stepped from the plane, native Territorian Stephen literally embraced his homecoming, whereas I wilted from the heavy monsoonal heat! Our first priority was finding Wilfred, who with his crew was living in the remains of his recently built home, now roofed just with tarpaulins supplied by the government. There was lots of catching up, and we felt huge relief that he was alright. With that concern settled, Stephen checked in at the Department of Education to go through the particulars of his assignment as anthropologist working with Dr Maria Brandl. We then set off for Milingimbi.

While at Milingimbi, Stephen had hoped to learn enough of the Indigenous language to conduct his research. However, since there was another PhD researcher (Joe Reser) in the area, as well as other teachers and mission staff practising the vernacular language, the Yolŋu townspeople were a bit overwhelmed by the attention. Even that turned out to be an unexpected boon because it showed the areas of cultural stress on a personal level, which is what Stephen wanted to access. It was an unexpected bonus having the other researchers there with whom to compare notes, as well as a coterie of teachers and mission staff who wanted to work within the Indigenous culture rather than just impose western culture (Fig. 2.3).

Fig. 2.3 Stephen Harris and Joy Kinslow-Harris at Milingimbi in 1976

Stephen's brother sent one of the Toyota bush-bashing vehicles from the buffalo enterprise for us to use on the island as a kind of fun bus for the school kids. It turned out to be useful for taking the elders around. As well, we bought a dinghy and motor to ferry local adults to the mainland and smaller islands.

These initiatives led to Yolŋu adults seeing him as a resource rather than just an interloper. One of the older women from a non-prestigious camp came and asked him if he would help her make a *prity plower gatten* or 'name place' for her clan on their part of the island. With his support, she and her seven-year-old granddaughter set about making a garden patch of veggies and flowers. This developed into a rich relationship and in the process of making the garden Stephen could observe their culture of learning. There were no lectures or drawn-up plans, just a granddaughter mimicking every action and posture of her grandmother. Every day the two of them carried buckets of water for the *gatten*, finally gathering the produce to sell at the store. The next step was that she asked Stephen to help her build a house out there. He said if she could get a man from her clan for each man Stephen got, and raise the money for the lumber, he would provide the rest. It took some persuading in discussions with her clan, but the young men arrived, as well as the lumber, and a cottage that had two separate rooms with their own front doors and a covered front verandah eventuated. She and her granddaughter moved into one room and, much to our surprise an older man moved into the other. When we asked who he was, she said, 'The light of our clan, this is his dreaming place here'. A much more significant *gatten* than we had realised had been in the making: for it included the culture of learning, the language of listening and mutual giving and receiving**.**

When we returned to Albuquerque in 1977 to write up the research under Dr Zintz's tutelage, one of the young teachers from Milingimbi School, Michael Christie, came with us. Sometime before that we had noticed, back in Milingimbi, that he was often overtired and living on his own, so we had invited him to share one of the larger teachers' houses with us in the new term. Well, that actually meant also inviting mobs of children and young men from his classes at the school, so we called him the Pied Piper. His fluency in their language and natural fitting into their culture brought the very essence of the community right into our home. We didn't have to have the language; we had the Toyota, the dinghy, and Michael!

Albuquerque

Stephen had encouraged Michael to do a Master's degree at the University of New Mexico, where we were studying. Michael shared accommodation with us and joined in with our Home Church called the Assembly, which had many young people his age who had come to their faith during our previous time in Albuquerque, whereas Stephen and I were considered 'elders' in age and faith experience. This was the time of renewal in church life in America with the 'Jesus Movement', and we were connected to church ministries working with young people who would stop off for a meal and a night's kip. Some were counselled by social workers in our Assembly and nurtured and housed in the homes of members of our Home Church. It was a rich and challenging time, as young people came off drugs and left the begging culture of the itinerants. It was not without its dangers, as one of the young men in our home was tracked down by a drug cartel and murdered. Many friends from those times have remained in contact. They have visited us in Australia and credited Stephen's love, teaching by example, and encouragement for their strength to change.

It was an emotional wrench leaving this faith community when Stephen's dissertation was submitted and accepted, and we were again at a decision point. He was offered several local alternatives which our Home Church were keen for him to accept as it would keep us in their fellowship. The pull of Australian Indigenous work, however, was stronger, so he took up the offer from the N.T Department of Education which had been extended from the time of his research.

Back in the Northern Territory

So, we returned to the Northern Territory, signing in again at the Darwin office and meeting with the Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr Jim Eedle, who was that day on his way to England for a family break. Knowing we were staying at a local hotel, he said he would be happy for us to house-sit for him while we settled into our future placement. Such a warm greeting was entirely the opposite of the Tracy episode and set the scene of hope for what would follow. Stephen longed to

put into practice what he had learned in a school on an Aboriginal settlement, so he talked about that with Jim Gallacher, Assistant Director (Special Projects) in the Department of Education. However, the post of Anthropologist was based in Darwin and fitted our perception of Stephen's role more closely than being based in one school. Stephen was assigned the job, and we settled into a flat in Casuarina, while awaiting a house allocation.

Dr Eedle had invited Dr Mitsuru Shimpo, a Professor of Sociology from Canada, to assess the educational issues facing Indigenous communities, and had given him a copy of Stephen's dissertation. Dr Shimpo saw its value and readability and suggested that a shortened version be published by the Department and made available to teachers and schools in these communities. This was exactly the use Stephen had envisaged when he proposed the 'parable style' of his dissertation which Dr Zintz ushered through at the University of New Mexico. It was such a boon. Since Stephen and I had worked so closely together in the research, I was asked to abridge the work, which was subsequently published as *Culture and Learning*. It was humorously referred to as 'the most stolen library book' in schools. Dr Shimpo and Stephen were close colleagues who formed a rich friendship, with practical results for bilingual education coming from their collaboration.

During Stephen's research at Milingimbi I had worked with Sue Harris, the adult educator, and met a number of the local families including the Yolŋu (Indigenous) pastor, who had come in to Darwin to enrol at Nungalinya, the newly established Aboriginal theological college. He and another student came to our flat to ask if I would help them learn the English they needed for classroom study, a very different language style from everyday English. The teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) was a facet of my PhD studies, so I took it on and set up the program at the college, as well as one for the wives, who needed to learn to operate in English-only social contexts. Stephen's and my background in the communities in the Top End gave the students a trusting confidence in what was otherwise for them a confronting experience. As an offshoot, it gave these adults an appreciation of the bilingual education aims for their children in the schools in their communities.

One of Stephen's tasks in the team, which had been set up to get bilingual programs operational in Indigenous community schools, was interviewing applicants for the teacher linguist and printer positions and then mentoring them as they settled into their various roles in the schools. We made many close friends, and they became a fairly cohesive unit as he regularly brought them together for in service training events in Darwin. As they worked on knotty problems, Stephen researched the issues and wrote up his findings, publishing widely. Other educators in similar international programs found that the materials from his Australian work also answered some of their questions. He was often invited to speak at conferences, which was a challenge, given his shyness. He meticulously wrote out his speeches and many were the basis for published papers. He enjoyed the give-and-take of question time when his inherent cheekiness displaced the shyness. His colleagues in the bilingual program team changed over time, and Stephen became Principal Education Advisor, Bilingual, working with colleagues such as Cos Russo, Beth Graham (from 1986), and Dr Bruce Sommers, the Principal Linguist. There were over two dozen bilingual schools at this

stage, and the College at Bachelor was begun in order to train Indigenous teachers for these classrooms.

In late 1985 Dr Bob Teasdale invited Stephen to spend a year at Flinders University in Adelaide writing on any subject pertaining to Indigenous schooling and education that was on his mind at that stage. The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Studies (AIATSIS) funded the resulting book. After several months of discussion and spiritual soul-searching, he accepted the generous invitation. He knew that the bilingual education team, both in the office and in the schools, was well grounded and would do well, although it would be a wrench for him to leave. My classes at Nungalinya also had capable staff to carry on for the time I would be gone, so we made our various arrangements and Stephen resigned his position with the Department of Education. After a decade, and so many milestones in the program, his farewell was very moving, and he felt really very honoured to have been a part of it all.

We expected to come back to Darwin but did not know in what capacity. We rented out our house with the proviso that the tenants feed our resident cat, then we packed our clothes, books, and dog in the car and drove to Adelaide in 1986 for a whole new experience.

Accommodation was initially provided by Dr and Mrs Teasdale in exchange for mentoring overseas students, until we found our feet. Later, the principal of one of the South Australian bilingual schools where Stephen had consulted, offered a small house for rent, which allowed for a dog, so we were set. The bible college offered a year of study in counselling, which intrigued me, and they accepted my application, so I now had an interesting goal as well.

Another unexpected tie-in with previous deep relationships came when Stephen went to see where he would be working and was shown his office at the university. As Dr Teasdale opened the door to the office, he explained that the switchboard hadn't yet been notified of its allocation to Stephen, or of his name, so the phone wouldn't be operative yet. However, just then, the phone rang, and Dr Teasdale said he'd better answer it. Then, blankly, he said, 'It's for you, from America'. One of our close friends from the Christian Assembly in Albuquerque said he had tracked us from Darwin to 'a' university in Adelaide, had rung each one until this particular switchboard acknowledged that Stephen was to be in this office but perhaps not yet. Our friend, Michael Hays, his wife Nancy, and their young family needed support following the loss of a child and asked if they could live with us for a year. It was too serendipitous an encounter to ignore, so Stephen said 'of course' once agreed to by the principal.

The arrangement was approved by the principal, who had rented us his house, so Michael, Nancy, and their two littlies arrived. Mike helped Stephen with library research, which was a big help, and eased Mike's pain. The local community college had a visiting artist who offered tutorials in gold leaf use in calligraphy, which was a craft Nancy had long desired, so this was another pain-assuaging gift. There was even a Wiggles concert for their little girl. There are always so many tiers to God's plans in our lives, more adventure than anticipated.

The resulting book was *Two way Aboriginal schooling* (1990), which drew on Stephen's research and thoughts following a train of enquiry prompted by an Aboriginal Elder who had said that the new generations needed their own culture's learning but also wondered how to negotiate the wider knowledge needed to live in Australia. The book was not without opponents, and some of these were very outspoken. Others, however, had encountered the same concerns from Elders and entered the dialogue. Several of these authors are included in this volume. An unexpected blessing on our time at the University of Adelaide was that Dr Teasdale introduced us to Merridy Malin, a graduate student working towards her PhD in a closely related field. Following on from that time of friendship, Merridy took up an appointment at the University in Darwin while Stephen was there and co-taught several courses. It was a rich association.

When the book was completed and our year in Adelaide came to a close, Stephen was approached to write a final-year course for Batchelor College. He had felt this to be the natural follow-on from his work in bilingual education for children; that is, the preparation of Aboriginal teachers so that they could be accredited to work in their schools. He had thought his work at Batchelor would be a new long-term venture. I understood his thinking, but I was not convinced and it did not turn out the way he had hoped. My misgivings seemed to be borne out when he met extreme opposition from guest staff, from a southern university, who were supported by a few of the resident staff at the College. It was a rather painful time. Although these staff attempted to turn the final-year Aboriginal students at Batchelor College against Stephen, his own work and his family's service on the settlements from the early 1930s consolidated the students' loyalty to him.

When he had finished that year of course writing, a colleague from the bilingual program, Dr Brian Devlin, who was then a senior lecturer at the university in Darwin, encouraged Stephen to apply for a lectureship which had opened up in the Aboriginal Studies section. After prayer and seeking spiritual guidance, we felt this was the right move, and his application was successful. This university work turned out to be rewardingly productive in preparing teachers to work in cross-cultural classrooms, as well as personally rich in the academic friendships there. One of his special delights was getting to know some of the Indigenous academics and encouraging them to follow their talents. Enabling Aboriginal education at all levels was embedded in Stephen's approach. His mother had not only taught children on the settlements where she and his father had variously served, but would partner with, and bring into her home to tutor, any adult who wanted to learn to read and write. After working with horses and cattle, several young Indigenous stockmen stopped by on their way back to camp to get in more practice reading and writing. Stephen's mother also used these times to translate the English Bible into Kunwinjku while they were at Oenpelli, completing the Gospel of Mark, which was later published. (Her work was revised when the whole of the Kunwinjku New Testament was published by the Bible Society in 2018).

Long service leave in the second half of 1992 at Queens University in Ontario, at the invitation of Dr Arlene Stairs, was a stimulating experience and a highlight in Stephen's academic career. Arlene introduced us to several First Nation educators

and community education committees. As well, we attended the Inuit anthropological conference in Montreal, Quebec. There we heard painful stories of social, cultural, and environmental desolation, as a result of European contact, which match our Australian history. One Elder of the Blackfoot community took us to task for not sending an Australian Aboriginal educator instead of ourselves. Stephen would have liked to have seen that happen too and to have spent a whole 'nother career empowering Australian Aboriginal Educators. However, when we returned home, following a routine health examination, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. A local Darwin surgeon with very little bedside manner slapped us with a 'one year or possibly two' prognosis. I asked for a second opinion which we were reluctantly granted and we saw a cancer specialist visiting from Adelaide. He was irate at the lack of professionalism of the first opinion and said he had over 250 cases with histories of remission after surgery. We found out that he was the top man in the field in South Australia, and he was willing to treat Stephen. So began a different and challenging journey again for us.

Retirement

This health issue brought into bold lettering where we wanted to be for this stage of our life. While in Darwin we had been near my brother and his family, and now Stephen needed the closeness to his family. His brothers and sister were down south, one in Toowoomba, two brothers and his widowed mother on a property near Tamworth, and his sister in Sydney. So he resigned from the academic life. We sold our house and the two of us and our dog moved south. First, there was the cancer treatment to be arranged with the surgeon in Adelaide. Our 'second family', Cos and Sue Russo were then in Adelaide, so we stayed with them as we prepared for the surgery. We joined their family and were welcomed in their church, which we appreciated. The prayers for healing were such a positive experience that I asked the surgeon for a further test to see the current stage of the cancer. He thought this was unnecessary and said that everything was on schedule, but I insisted. The results came back 'normal'. He said he couldn't explain it, but could only say to go home and be happy. Stephen asked if he would like to hear our explanation and, surprisingly, he agreed. When we told him about the prayers for healing, the surgeon said, 'Well, prayer doesn't heal, but it can comfort'. It had 'comforted' Stephen into remission. We went home to his brothers' property, where we shared his mother's cottage, while we thought about 'what next?'.

The 'what next' that eventuated was buying a home in Tamworth, and Stephen working with his beloved horses as he became a cowhand (my Texan description) on his brothers' beef cattle and sheep property. Once again, he was living out the magic of oneness with a horse he had broken-in, now mustering cattle and sheep for the varied tasks of farming. He took on the maintenance of the leather gear: mending reins and bridle, hands mucky with saddle grease from conditioning all the working gear, all the while roping nieces and nephews and Danish backpackers into

projects. The Danish wife of Wilfred, one of his brothers at the farm, often invited her countrymen for farm/work stays when they arrived at Barraba's backpackers' venue. They were a rich mixture of young people, from those experienced with Icelandic ponies, to a catwalk fashion model, to a contract shepherd broadening her expertise; it was a Viking invasion. Stephen and our Danish sister-in-law, Louise, shared a love of horses and of training them, so they took us to see the original Horse Whisperer at work and brought home his training videos and books. And, yes, they put his tips into practice.

Our trips to cattle shows and auctions (we had a small holding in the brothers' Santa Gertrudis stud) were slowed down by stopping at any saddlery shop and talking with the artisans. He and Louise each had a personally fitted saddle made by renowned saddlers. And, of course, their working whips were specialist made with weighted ends to the crackers; also their working boots and Akubras for the paddocks, and dress boots and hats for the meets (Fig. 2.4).

The Australian Stockhorse was Stephen's choice for work, and he wanted to breed a line so that began another dream. This was interrupted for a bit when the cancer which had been in remission returned. This time we opted for radiation treatment rather than surgery, and a specialist from Sydney who made monthly check-up visits to Tamworth took on his treatment. Over six weeks or more, staying in an apartment near the Sydney hospital, Stephen had intermittent daily radiation therapy, which was successful. Once he regained his strength there were no other side effects and

Fig. 2.4 It was characteristic of Stephen to spend time with his beloved horses when he could.

this time no further cancer. Back to his Stockhorse interests again, and this time it led him into wanting to get the stories of some of the stalwarts written. He just had to write about whatever he was involved in! These articles were printed mainly in the *Australian Stockhorse Journal*, and a few longer ones in other journals in the field. The editor of the ASJ wrote him a note saying he always looked forward to the next article, as did I. And the pride of his Stockhorse breeding was a handsome violet-grey gelding which won two-year-old Champion of Show in Tamworth. The young owner and rider rode him over to Stephen to show off all the ribbons around his neck and the floral shoulder wreath of Champion.

At this time Stephen was facing his next health challenge, Parkinson's disease. But he was never deterred by being confined to a wheelchair. His gelding continued with some winning performances. Another of his mares won first prize at the Warialda Campdraft and the rider gave Stephen the winner's ribbon. This rider, Vic Turner, had become a good friend and was the subject of one of Stephen's articles early on. Stephen continued his creative writing and produced some articles at this time, not about language and culture, but champion horses and their riders. For example, Artie Hall, who lived near the Harris farm in Wee Waa, NSW, reminisced about seeing two young boys, Stephen and Wilfred, playing by the river as he rode home from a muster. Artie's son, Terry, a drover, winner, and breeder of champion stockhorses often took a young horse of Stephen's to work out in his droving team. Stephen wrote several pieces about him and the life he lived.

As Parkinson's disease progressed, it robbed Stephen of his speech, his mobility, and his manual dexterity, so he could no longer write or type, but it never touched his courage or positive spirit. It finally took its toll when he could no longer chew or swallow and needed palliative care. Even when depleted physically and very limited, he was interested in the lives of those around him and offered care and support when he could. He was especially concerned about one nurse, whose family had just been massacred in religious reprisals in Africa. In that same week, when he was concerned about his Carer, Stephen gently died in his sleep on 10th August 2020, just after I had been with him. We had been talking about all our adventures together over the previous 54 years. Stephen's 78 years were as full as he could make them.

Joy Kinslow-Harris is a research linguist from Texas, USA. Her 1968 article in Australian Territories was the catalyst for the establishment of bilingual programs in the Northern Territory, for it had argued that bilingual education was definitely possible, provided that Aboriginal people were allowed to do the teaching in their own languages through a system of team-teaching in partnership with qualified non-Aboriginal teachers. Her proposal was picked up in 1971 at a National Workshop, which recommended that '...pilot projects be established'. When Joy met Stephen Harris, she was undertaking research on Gunwingguan languages for a PhD thesis at Australian National University. They were married in 1966. Later, when they were in Darwin, she started a class in English for speakers of other languages at Nungalinya for theology students as well as a

women's study group, which studied English language use in the community. From there she went to Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to manage an access course leading on to university studies.

Chapter 3
Nomo Munanga, Main Kantriman ('Not a 'white' Person, but my Regional Kinsman')

T. Ngarritjan Kessaris

Abstract Stephen Harris's life, career and even his family's history were bound up with Aboriginal people, my people. This chapter tells one of many stories of Stephen and his engagement with Aboriginal education, focussing on his role at what is now Charles Darwin University, in the early 1990s. It is written from a personal perspective as a student of his, and also as a colleague based in an Indigenous learning space in the university. It is also written from an Aboriginal positioning, informed by colonially ordered Black and White relationships and the ascendancy of whiteness in Australian universities. A key theme is Stephen's visionary and strategic commitment to supporting Indigenous leadership and privileging Indigenous knowledge, and the methods employed to do so. A second and equally important theme, woven throughout the chapter, is the mundane, everyday expression of colonial whiteness in educational institutions and how, in varying degrees, the actions of Stephen Harris had the effect of disrupting, defying and displacing it by empowering individuals, and in multiple ways, supporting Indigenous identified goals.

Keywords Aboriginal education · Stephen Harris · Cross-cultural engagement · Mentoring · Institutional whiteness

Introduction

I cannot help but tell parts of my own story as I pay tribute to Stephen Harris, but I only do so to shine a light as brightly as I possibly can on a nurturing, faithful and wise man of vision. While it was easy to recall how Stephen made a positive difference in my life, it was not easy to choose the instances which had the strongest or most far-reaching effect, as there were so many. So, I just began writing and as I wrote, various principles came to light. These, which may otherwise have remained hidden and unacknowledged, mostly relate to his quiet activism.

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One of the themes which runs through this chapter is Stephen's commitment to mentoring, and his friendship with Indigenous students, and this will be illustrated with examples from my own life. The second is his visionary inclusion of Aboriginal education into the Master of Education curriculum at the Northern Territory University (NTU) and my engagement with the course and its effects, which I experienced as revolutionary. This necessarily includes many references to Dr Merridy Malin, a contributing author, because she and Stephen were inseparably associated with that course. The third theme is the mundane, everyday expression of whiteness in a tertiary education setting and more importantly how the actions of Stephen and Merridy had the effect of disrupting and defying it. Whiteness refers to the most common form of systematic, racialised dominance, which in Australia is steeped in colonialism (Anderson, 2002, Moreton-Robinson, 2013), embedded in the social practices of common life and Australia's institutions, including universities (Gunstone, 2009; Larkin, 2013; Shore 2004, 2010). It is discursively pervasive (Green and Sonn, 2005; Le Coutier and Augoustinos, 2001; Nelson, 2013; Pedersen et al., 2005; Priest et al., 2016) and 'continue[s] the processes of economic and social ordering initiated in colonial times' (Shore 2004, p. 93).

These themes are articulated here in story form using principles taken from Indigenous standpoint theory, as a way of knowing and being, in the context of everyday life experiences (Moreton-Robinson, 2013/2015; Nakata, 2007; Rigney, 2006; Smith, 1999). The final theme is to highlight how Stephen used his academic influence to support Indigenous-identified goals at the Northern Territory University (NTU), and how in doing so he and other non-Indigenous allies helped broaden the parameters of Aboriginal Education and seriously increased the Indigenous status institutionally at NTU (now known as Charles Darwin University) at that time. The place on which this all occurred was Larrakia country, where almost all of my formal western education took place—primary, secondary and tertiary—and I acknowledge that wonderful privilege and pay my sincere respects to the Larrakia people.

The Mentoring Begins

My office at NTU was located at the main back entrance of the Education Faculty building and it had an unremarkable view, for it looked out onto a large greywater tank situated on the edge of a bitumen car park and was right next to the external sliding doors that constantly and noisily opened and closed. The back entrance led directly to classrooms and wide halls that accommodated a lot of foot traffic and student chatter. Most of the other staff offices had views of garden greenery and quiet corridors or were next to administration areas. My allocated location was probably the least desired space in the building. However, it was strategically desirable for me, because I felt out of place academically and culturally, so being located next to the back door meant I could easily come and go and avoid constant socialising. Firstly,

I was newly graduated, so I felt educationally inferior among the main faculty body, many having taught me at some point in my courses. However, there were a few in the building who did not yet have higher degrees, at least not PhDs, and it included some adult educators whose offices were around the corner from mine. Greg Shaw was one of them and was especially welcoming to me in that corner of the world. Many years later, as a professor and Dean, he was very instrumental in salvaging my PhD studies after a long period of absence mainly because of ill-health. Secondly, from a cultural perspective, this less-populated part of the building meant I could work more comfortably with Indigenous students and not worry if we laughed too much, or too loudly or didn't speak 'proper' English or needed to talk or cry about the stresses and pressures associated with being Black and poor and studying.

The year was 1990, and I was employed at the university as a lecturer in the Centre for Aboriginal Islander Studies (CAIS), and I had recently commenced a new role in the Faculty of Education, as an Academic Counsellor for Indigenous students enrolled in Education courses. This was in addition to teaching Indigenous students in bridging and certificate level courses in the CAIS. The Education role was an initiative of the CAIS to support Indigenous students in mainstream courses. It was in this context that one day a stranger appeared in my office doorway, introducing himself as 'Stephen Harris'. I think he also said something about working in the faculty and that he was making contact with Indigenous academic staff at the university to see if we were interested in further study. He went on to ask directly if I was interested in enrolling in a Master's program. My initial reaction to his idea was 'Absolutely not'! I felt immediately anxious at the thought of more study. Having completed undergraduate studies as a single parent of two young boys on a limited income and a tight regime of constant deadlines, I found it was a stressful, lonely, strained existence and not one that I wanted to repeat anytime soon.

I had no idea that he was a big name academic who was highly regarded within the university and faculty or I would have had a greater sense of the intentionality of the stranger's visit, his encouragement of me to pursue further studies, and his overall interest in Indigenous staff. He seemed like a nice man, very genuine and friendly but, I figured I had already achieved what I set out to do. I had persevered with tertiary education not only for employment purposes, but because if I attained some letters after my name, it could prove my worth somehow. Now that I was an Aboriginal person with a diploma and a university degree, I had made it. At that stage there were also relatively few Indigenous graduates and my employability was high. So, I didn't immediately recognise that the stranger called Stephen had come bearing gifts.

Undeterred by my immediate rejection of the suggestion to start a Master's degree, he continued to provide some career advice and explained that I would need more than a Diploma of Teaching and Bachelor of Education if I was planning to remain working in a university context and he followed up with the offer of support and practical steps for the way forward if I was interested. He also explained that I should begin to write articles and get them published. The additional idea of writing articles was

even more outrageous, because it seemed excessive, unnecessary and time-robbing. I did not realise at the time how central publications were to an academic career, and it took some time for me to appreciate their importance. Even as I went through the motions of following Stephen's lead and had two or three articles published, I still had no real appreciation of what that meant. In any case, the advice of the stranger was taken, and my life trajectory changed course in a way that was totally unexpected, the impact of which will become clear. More importantly, an extraordinary teacher-learner-mentor-friend relationship began.

That was my first encounter with Stephen Harris, who was gently persuasive, but also quite convincing, for he encouraged me to see that what he was proposing was not only important, but doable. In retrospect I now understand that he was also willing to commit to a mentoring role that would require an ongoing commitment of time on his part. Anyway, I enrolled in the Master of Education degree. He must have already mapped out a program for me in advance because he recommended that I choose the combination of half research, which he supervised, and half coursework made up of four units. One was an Indigenous Education unit, which he wrote and taught, a special study unit which he supervised, and served as a vehicle for writing the literature review for the research, and two methodology units, written and taught by Merridy. One of Merridy's units was video-analysis, which was crucial to the research portion of the course. The combination course was no doubt a 'fast-tracking' plan by Stephen to equip me with theoretical understandings and skills in research as well as the practical experience of undertaking independent research.

Research as Healing

The research topic I decided on was a comparative analysis of Indigenous parent participation in Darwin school committee meetings. This was a topic that had emerged from my involvement with my own children's education at the time (Shane and Brenton were then in high school) and, in the end, the research was wonderfully pertinent and personally significant. I had expected the emphasis of the study to be on broad sociopolitical manoeuvrings and structural barriers to decision making and while this was generally true, the real heart of the study was sociolinguistic and turned out to be a study of Aboriginal English, Aboriginal ways of using language and Aboriginal meeting styles. I loved this research and was excited that I was working in the realm of Indigenous ways of knowing and being which was familiar, yet somewhat strange. That is, I operated instinctively in full working knowledge of Aboriginal English, yet here I was seeing aspects of language emerging before my eyes from the videotaped data that I was 'oblivious' to before, not knowing that I knew it. I had videotaped and compared an Aboriginal parents meeting (called ASSPA) with an all Anglo-Australian parents meeting and my findings on silence are described below:

> The School Council meeting contained almost continuous speech. There were only three silent gaps in the meeting, each for no more than five seconds. The ASSPA meeting had 35 separate incidents of silence, the longest totalling 90 seconds. In total silence made up for approximately 9% of the ASSPA meeting time. In contrast, silence made up for only around .2% of the School Meeting time. The ASSPA meeting had more than 40 times more silence in it than the School Council meeting
>
> (Ngarritjan-Kessaris 1997, p. 83).

This Master's course was truly exciting! Even more significantly, it was empowering and liberating. As I read the relevant literature for that research, which included Christie (1985), Eades (1988, 1991), Enemburu (1989), Harris, (1984), Liberman (1982), Malcolm (1982, 1992) and von Sturmer (1981), I saw a warm, courteous, positive representation of my language use and culture. The view of culture presented through a micro examination of language was incredibly affirming. Each article, chapter or monograph I read was replacing inferiority with pride and was freeing me of the colonial shackles of deficit language understandings. Until then I was only vaguely aware of the concept of Aboriginal English, but certainly not as a rule-governed dialect and a valid variety of English. I had grown up thinking of myself, family and wider community as speaking slang and a deficit form of English. Yet, reflected in the silence, was evidence of a great deal of caution and sensitivity and respect shown by the ASSPA group in their dealing with requests for funding that did not meet the criteria of the funding body. The importance of not offending was high and the silence spoke loudly to me about sophisticated civility. Also, the methodology employed by using video recordings of the meeting captured small and large body movements which were recognised as forms of communication much broader than a simple reliance on spoken words. There were many actions and *unspoken* words and ideas conveyed in the Aboriginal meeting which I was able to *see* as well as hear. I recognised too that language is also a practice and Aboriginal people often read the whole body not just what comes off the tongue. The Anglo meeting was much more dependent on written and spoken words, the emphasis being on *written* words. Stephen artfully steered me through with his background in ethnology and Aboriginal sociolinguistics.

Decolonising the Curriculum

The type of conceptual collaboration engaged in by Stephen and Merridy in the Northern Territory, a place where 30 per cent of the population were Aboriginal—the highest ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous in the country—was spectacularly overdue. I offer a couple of reasons for the timing of the shift. At the individual level, Stephen felt a personal affiliation with Aboriginal people, and so did his wife, Dr Joy Kinslow-Harris, who conducted fieldwork on the Kunwinjku language in the Gunbalanya area. (Later, she was also on staff at CAIS, lecturing Aboriginal students). Also, both Stephen and Merridy did their doctoral studies in the US, which has a longer history of racialised oppression and challenges to it. It is quite likely that

Stephen and Merridy had returned to Australia equipped with a critical 'outsider' perspective that could more easily penetrate the opaqueness of the colonially ordered and racially hierarchic Australian context, which so many are still conceptually and ideologically trapped in. At the institutional and political level, Aboriginal education policies were being developed, and a National Aboriginal Education Policy was in place (1989), directing and influencing institutional strategic plans (Robinson & Bamblett, 1998).

Merridy later introduced me to the topic of whiteness studies when we were experiencing resistance from students in the social justice unit she coordinated, and I tutored in. Whiteness theoretical development was well underway in the US but was hardly known here. This was a life-changing concept for me and I began to reverse the gaze.

Whiteness for so long had been kept out of view and considered unmarked, yet Indigeneity was exhaustively defined and kept within the White gaze. The official classificatory system that included 'full-blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', 'octroon', and the common terminology of 'tribal', 'part-Aboriginal' and 'coloured' was outright divisive with the effect of distinguishing between 'authentic' Indigenous people who were expected to die out, and the rest, who were not authentic and in different 'stages' of being assimilated and absorbed into White nationhood, meaning second/third/ last class citizenship. The cohesiveness of foundational cultural principles made visible by Stephen and Merridy, bringing together their research in remote *and* urban contexts, was wonderfully liberating. The binarism of authentic and inauthentic Indigeneity was being shown up as a false social construction. We are one mob, but we are also a different-different mob: same, but different.

There were many powerful lessons that came out of their collaboration in that Master's degree and one, in particular, was a video Merridy showed from her doctoral thesis about two family picnics. One family was white, and the other was Aboriginal. One showed signs of a lot of preparation beforehand, such as packing a picnic rug, plates, cups, cutlery and several Tupperware containers filled with fresh foods, and a very busy mum who spent all her time trying to organise kids and foods and manage play time and eating time. The other mum bought fish and chips and a large bottle of soft drink on the way to the picnic ground. The paper wrapping for the chips was used as plates, the kids ate when they were ready, food was saved for kids who wanted to eat later, older kids helped supervise the younger kids and the mum looked relaxed, enjoying the occasion. Through the mundane event of a picnic, Merridy presented an analysis of contrasting examples of childrearing practices. Each mum placed a different emphasis on what was important for that outdoor eating activity. One placed more emphasis on the children's nutritional needs, even though it was an irregular occasion. The other placed the emphasis on having a relaxing time for all, including herself, through a strategy of minimum effort, maximum enjoyment. However, western society has been conditioned to see white mothering as responsible and Indigenous mothering as neglectful. In reality, neither was the 'correct' model and each had its pros and cons for both the mothers and the kids. That day, another layer of deficit perceptions of my own mother had the rug pulled out from under it. Merridy's application of these differences in the classroom and the effect on Aboriginal children was also educationally enlightening (Malin, 1994).

So, the coursework units were seriously exciting! The first one I enrolled in was Stephen's Aboriginal Education unit, which I eagerly looked forward to each week. I was like a dry sponge that drew in every word and emotion of positive representation of Indigeneity and empowering theorists, exposing racism in education and reading articles; for example, by Fordham (1988), Delpit (1988) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). This was my 17th year of working my way through the levels of Australia's education system—12 years of primary and secondary schooling, and four years of tertiary education—and this was the first time in my formal western education journey that Aboriginal people and knowledge were *in* the curriculum and given privileged status and positive representation. Since Stephen co-taught the course with Merridy, an additional and precious teacher–learner–friend relationship formed with her too, creating a threefold cord. Other CAIS colleagues and close friends who were enrolled in the Master's unit were Burke, Wiradjuri man, poet, fellow-contributor to this book and author of award-winning *Bridge of Triangles* (2012) and Neil Harrison, who edited *Learning and teaching in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education* (Harrison & Sellwood, 2016).

Empathic Communication

Developing and maintaining relationships was a normalised teaching practice for Stephen (and Merridy). His 'first-contact' was not just a kick-start strategy. He was in it for the long-haul, always remaining in contact whenever he and Joy travelled or moved away from the Territory, or when I did. Always, he encouraged me to keep writing and achieving academic goals. An example of the many times he did this is provided in an excerpt from a letter he wrote in September 1994. My family and I had moved to Melbourne for my husband's work and my youngest child, Heather, was born there in June and was only about four months old.

> I'm glad you're getting back into study. I know it's not the most important thing in the world but it gives leverage later. And no, you are not too late to contribute to our next book. …I volunteered to take over the work in … classes. That, plus the AEP Review I'm on (8 trips to Canberra so far) has really thrown me. So I'm now a semester behind with the book. So if you could get a chapter to me by end of October (which is end of classes here) I'll give you feedback. If you can do it sooner that would be nice too. I think it will be easy for you to write.

He was a busy man and time was limited, but he made time for communication—affective, empathetic communication where logic and emotions were connected (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Eres & Molenberghs, 2013; Williams & Cooper, 2019). As well, conversations were spontaneously smattered with Kriol words, they seemed to be part of who he was and it resonated deeply with me, especially when he spoke like that in class. A very common word for him was *nomo*, which means 'no, not, no more, or no other' (Summer Institute of Linguistics online Kriol dictionary 1980–1990s). From my understanding, it can also mean 'do not, did not'. Even a 'simple' word like that struck chords at a deep level and buttressed my identity, which was always quite fragile in a western learning context. This was the first-time words from

my language and *kantri* (country) were spoken by a non-Aboriginal teacher in a teaching context, especially someone in a senior position. He also scheduled time to just yarn at my request, because I was very interested in his early life and family, especially because of the connections with my family and history and because I had learnt that his parents had been missionaries at Roper River Mission (Ngukkur, NT) and the Groote Eylandt Mission for 'half-castes'.

Stephen also spent some of his childhood at the Roper River mission and no doubt learnt Kriol then. As well, he told me he went back to the NT in the Oenpelli area, now Gunbalanya, as a stockman working in the buffalo industry with his brothers, after finishing his university degree. His stockman experience took him to a new level of respect in my estimation and I loved hearing about the horses he and Joy owned when he returned to his family property outside of Tamworth after retiring from CDU. I recall as a teenager, spending hours sitting up on the top rail of the cattle yard watching horses being 'broken-in' and ready to be ridden. At one stage I even bought my own horse, but that's another story. Stephen was practical, not just a man of theory, and over the years, he shared so much of his own philosophy about life and faith that I learnt principles and practical wisdom that have stayed with me.

Historical Family Connections

However, it was Stephen's family and personal history with the Roper River and Groote Eylandt Missions for 'half-castes' that held the deepest interest for me. These were institutions that I also had family connections with. My maternal grandparents had been sent there in a previous era, removed from their families under broad interventionist powers of *The Aboriginals Ordinance 1911 Act no. 16/1911* (HREOC, 1997). My grandfather, Simon Hume, who became James Wesley (names were changed at baptism), was sent to the Roper River Mission in 1914 via the Borroloola Police Station along with his sister Alice, who became known as Isabella. She was around four years old and Simon/James was two years younger. My grandmother Dolly/Dorcas Gray, who in adulthood married James, was taken there in the same year, when she was about one year old. Their mothers were from the Alawa, Mara and Garrwa clans in the area, but were classified as 'half-castes' since they had White fathers. Ten years later, when the more isolated half-caste mission at Groote Eylandt was ready for occupation, they were sent there as the first group in 1924. Dorcas and Jim were married at Groote Eylandt in 1928/29 and afterwards moved back to Roper River. I grew up hearing stories about their life on both missions because Nanna Isabella, my grandfather's sister, raised my sister Robyn and me for a good part of our childhood. We lived with her on a cattle station in Mudburra country, not too far away, which is where I first learnt Kriol. My mother was born at Roper River and she grew up speaking Kriol fluently. Her older sister, Helen, could also speak Rembarrnga.

For many Aboriginal people in the Roper River area, the mission was considered a safe place and families often camped nearby (Edmonds, 2007), even though the half-caste children were housed in dormitories within the mission compound. The Roper

was an area that had been devastated by systematic violence including massacres, not just sporadic reprisals, during the pastoral boom of the late 1800s to the start of the 1900s. Gabarla Minimere, whose English name was Barnabas Roberts, one of the very highly respected and lovingly remembered old people among my Alawa relations, shared with John Harris (2015) that his father had been shot in one of the Roper Valley massacres in the early 1900s and that perhaps all his people would have been shot if not for the arrival of the missionaries.

Genocide in the Pastoral North

At least 50 massacre sites have been identified in the Roper River and southern Arnhem region (Roberts, 2009). The massacres were often police backed and led, using high-powered rifles and no shortage of ammunition. Snider rifles, used by the military, were replaced by the even more powerful Martini-Henry rifles in 1881, which had devastating effects as he describes below:

> The enormous bullets caused horrific injuries to those not killed outright. If fired into a crowd, a single bullet could pass through one person and kill or maim others. The Martini-Henry could kill at more than one kilometre. Both weapons could kill an elephant. Why would a police force need military rifles that could kill elephants? The primary role of the police was not to maintain law and order but to make the Territory safe for whites and their cattle, regardless of the cost to Aboriginal welfare and life.… Successive governments issued the police with unlimited ammunition and the authority to use it; they also issued arms to civilian punitive parties. They kept sending the ammunition in massive quantities to the Territory, knowing it was being used for a single function: to shoot the blacks (Roberts, 2009, p. 48).

There were also mercenary mass killings ordered by The Eastern and African Cold Storage Company owners, who had bought up swathes of pastoral leases by 1903 covering a large tract of Indigenous lands in the Roper River region. Mercenary hunting raids were organised to clear the land of blacks and make way for cattle and moneymaking (Edmonds, 2007; Merlan, 1978; Roberts, 2009). For example, white contract musterer, George Conway, when he was interviewed in 1957, spoke of how he was 'hired to lead a hunting expedition into Arnhem Land in 1905 or 1906, and that his party had killed dozens of Aborigines' (Merlan, 1978, p. 87). Some groups sought safety from a sprinkling of benevolent station owners and some groups were afforded a degree of geographical protection by retreating into inaccessible hilly country such as in southern Arnhem Land, but the Roper area was flat country and there was nowhere to hide (Edmonds, 2007). The establishment of Christian missions in the area, such as the Roper River Anglican Mission in 1908, became places of refuge in those fearful times. Edmonds gives a summary of how that intense period of physical violence drew to a close:

> In 1908, the Church of England established the Roper River Mission through the administration of the Christian Mission Society. The 'Eastern and African' ceased operation in the same year and both events are remembered by Aboriginal people of the region as marking the beginning of peaceful relations. The charge (instructions) delivered to the missionaries in Melbourne in 1908 shortly before their departure, made it clear that the objectives of the

> mission were to be both spiritual and practical. The missionaries were bringing both 'Christianity and civilisation'. Yet the mission was perceived by the local people as a sanctuary, within the protection of which they believed they were safe from European violence. By 1909, over 200 people had gathered at the mission, the remnants of the Mara, Wandarang, Alawa, Ngalakan and Ngandi tribes, as well as the southernmost members of Rembarrnga and Nunggubuyu tribes. (2007, p. 195)

Australian history is steeped in imperial and colonial ideology that is infused with scientific beliefs in white supremacy, evidenced by policies and practices that were devastating for Indigenous people. From the outset, both physical and cultural genocide were actualised by corporeal and emotional violence. The aggressive subjugation of Aboriginal people by guns and poison, including massacres is well documented (Edmonds, 2007; Reynolds, 2013; Roberts, 2009; Ryan, 2012, 2018) and the most recent, an attempted mass poisoning happened in the 1980s in Alice Springs (Gosford, 2020). In this latest case, tragically two people were killed, and 15 others were harmed, but survived. Coroner Barritt, who presided over the coronial hearings, found that a bottle of wine laced with strychnine was left as poisoned bait on the 29th March 1981, with intentions to kill all who drank it. The bottle was deliberately placed at the back of the Uniting Church in the main street of Alice Springs, a well-known Indigenous meeting place. The identity of the murderer was not discovered, and the case remains unsolved (Gosford, 2020).

Transcending Distrust and Distance

I have presented the harsh frontier attitudes and actions enacted against Indigenous people in the Northern Territory as a sharply focused backdrop for the way history has helped shape commonly held white attitudes of unworthiness held about Indigenous people. In general, Whites and Blacks had been socialised into mutual distrust and white society generally required other whites to maintain distance (McGrath, 1987). However, despite strong societal pressure to the contrary, some white Australians have resisted and challenged the expectations of social and physical distance. Of all the distances created by white colonial ideology that need to be drastically shortened, the distance between mind and heart can be the hardest to reduce.

Looking back even further, to grade seven my final year of primary school, I had a teacher, Mr Steve Cinzio, who also encouraged me and treated me in a way that I felt valued. I cannot recall any specific incidents that stand out, but in general, he conveyed high expectations of me, and I graduated from grade seven with the highest marks in the class. I had felt like an individual, not like the poor 'half-caste' kid who wore no shoes and for whom lunch often depended on whether it was pay-week or grandpa's pension day. It was an era where the only presence of Indigeneity in the Australian school system was the bodies of the Indigenous students themselves.

There have always been White Australians who have stood with and for Aboriginal people and have refused complicity with expected notions of the superior/inferior essentialising of White and Black identities. Stephen Harris was such a person. He used his influence in the university to empower at the individual level and at the

corporate level. He used his positional privilege, knowledge power and his White-skin social capital to effect change, wherever he saw an opportunity to do so. He also had a conscious deliberateness to use his position and influence at NTU to empower Indigenous people. Stephen worked not only from the inside of the institution, some of which has been described, but also from the outside, influencing policy and external funding opportunities. As he mentioned in his letter, he was part of the national Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP) Review and was travelling frequently to and from Canberra for this purpose.

Between 1993 and April of 1994, I was acting Deputy Director at CAIS and had academic and curriculum responsibilities. (In April I left to go on maternity leave, which was extended to leave without pay while I was in Melbourne). Together with Dr Bill Perrett, we began work on developing two new postgraduate Indigenous courses at CAIS and Stephen was one of the key academics on the academic advisory committee for these two courses with the task of providing advice and ensuring academic integrity. The committee advised us to put forward a proposal for a Bachelor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (BATSIS) as well, to provide a 'home' for the post-graduate programs rather than 'floating' on their own. Joy Kinslow-Harris was on staff in CAIS as well, lecturing in the Aboriginal Field Officers' Course, so I have no doubt that she also provided behind-the-scenes support and input to the process. Since the academic structure of centres within the university generally limited their teaching capacity, attention was also given to the suitability of CAIS's structure to accommodate the changes and, in 1993, NTU Council redesignated CAIS as a Faculty (Berzins and Loveday, 1999, p. 204, cited in El-Ayoubi 2004).

> CAIS thus emerged as a Faculty in 1995 where it increased in teaching status becoming the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (FATSIS). The Faculty in a short time was to offer two new postgraduate programs, and the BATSIS undergraduate course. (El-Ayoubi 2004, p. 74)

This was a major achievement and it also attracted funding (Berzins and Loveday 1999, p. 204, cited in El-Ayoubi 2004), which El-Ayoubi notes was directly related to the implementation of the national Aboriginal Education Policy (2004). Stephen's frequent trips to Canberra on AEP business were evidently worth it.

As I progressed through the Master's course, the faculty building in general became an exciting place to be and as a staff member I stopped anxiously hiding out on the fringes. My Indigeneity had been so often a lightning rod for uninformed comments in casual conversations, that at one time I had even tried to avoid using the main photocopier in the administration area, to reduce any potential for that to occur. The photocopier had become a site of anxiety, until proven otherwise. Thankfully, I began to lay aside the multiplicity of tactics employed to handle my anxieties associated with the normality of whiteness in large institutions. Even though I had already comfortably spent three years in the building as an undergraduate, I was not alone; there were other Indigenous students in the course with me: Phillip Rankin, Doug Rosas and Geoffrey Shannon and together we created our own cultural safety until we got to know the rest of the cohort and then became one mob with them. The post-grad experience was not just a western process of jumping through hoops to get a piece of paper, a promotion and a couple *more* letters after my name. It was meaningful and fulfilling and for the first time, *Aboriginally affirming*.

Thanks to Stephen and his hands-on approach during that time, and a bit later, I had also produced more publications, which I would not have pursued by myself. I saw it it as a vague option, not as an academic necessity. He made visible the whole picture of academia, not just the formal qualifications aspect, and facilitated a pathway into it. My cultural and family responsibilities constantly pressed against that type of career where the workday did not end at 5 pm, Monday to Friday. I had eight siblings and a large extended family and Stephen (and Merridy) understood the reality of those responsibilities and pressures. I was able to keep going despite the challenges. The very first publication was a verbal story which he transcribed and gave back to me for editing, while he sought an appropriate journal, then submitted it. I wrote it using a writer's name to preserve ethical principles regarding one of my experiences on practicum. I was quietly delighted with the outcome. I managed to complete the Master of Education Degree, and of course, the ink had hardly dried when Stephen came to talk to me again about a good topic for my PhD! He was a man with long-term plans.

Main Kantriman

It is my enormous privilege to be part of this book, which honours an extraordinary man, who I owe a great debt of gratitude to. He not only helped me personally, but I witnessed him use his influence to advance broader Indigenous aspirations at the Northern Territory University. He was a determined, humble activist, whose actions spoke as loud as his words. When talking with Joy at the very start of this project, she told me a story that when Stephen was with the Department of Education he went out to Ngukurr with a colleague on official business and upon introducing himself to one of the older women, she realised who he was and exclaimed, 'Oh, *our* Stephen'. When he was a young boy in Alawa country, I believe his heart had laid down roots there. He would always belong and was seen through eyes of recognition. I also saw him as declining to be white the way white was normally expected to be. He was my regional kinsman. He belonged. *Nomo Munanga, main kantriman.*

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Chapter 4
Language, Heart and Mind: Can Aboriginal Languages Be Revived?

John Harris

Abstract This chapter explores John Harris and Stephen Harris's shared interest in Aboriginal languages and their intrinsic role in the maintenance of culture. The words of a rap song performed by Groote Eylandt youth say 'We walk two roads', a major theme of Stephen's life work in bilingual education, what he called 'two-way education'. The rap song also proclaims, 'Strong language, strong mind', naming the deep truth that language is the carrier of culture, without which culture cannot be labelled, envisioned or discussed. The chapter then goes on to consider damaged or 'sleeping' languages and whether they can be 'reawakened'. A major case study demonstrates that Bible translation into the endangered Nyoongar language has prompted language recovery and raised people's sense of identity and self-esteem.

Keywords Aboriginal languages · Aboriginal education · Bilingual education · Language preservation · Language and thought · Language revival · Stephen Harris · John Harris · Anindilyakwa · Nyoongar · Bible translation · Identity

On a beach in the north of Groote Eylandt, Aboriginal teenagers rap and sing, performing a new hip-hop dance, sung entirely in their Anindilyakwa language: *Yirra-langwa Angalya Ayangkidarrba,* 'Our Home Island' (Warnumamalya, 2019).

> *Mikbamurra*, this is our country where we live.
>
> This island belongs to us *Yirrandilyakwa* people.
>
> This language belongs to us people.
>
> This is *Anindilyakwa* we are speaking…

They tread on sand and rock and water. They dance with joy. They sing with conviction.

> Song, dance, story.
>
> We still carry it today.

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When we dance *alukwaya*, we can feel our ancestors.

Ngeniyerriya, Ngeniyerriya.[1]

Stephen would have loved this performance. Then the dancers sing two phrases which sound almost as if Stephen had written them himself.

Yirrama yuwarnuma ambilyuma manurukwa.

We follow two roads.

Stephen was convinced that the very survival of Aboriginal people as a distinct people depended on their becoming truly bicultural, fully able to live in two cultural worlds. He was convinced of the need for an education which 'simultaneously maintained Aboriginal culture and taught a power-giving knowledge of Western culture' (Harris, S. 2003, p. 57). He wrote Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling to set out this important concept (Harris, 1990). He and I had already co-authored an article on the need for schools and Western teachers to understand Aboriginal communication styles and ways of learning (Harris, S., and Harris, J. 1988). The sad thing for Stephen was that he felt, not only that he needed to educate teachers and officialdom about the value of Bilingual Education, but that he also increasingly found that he needed to defend it, particularly against sceptical decision-makers who controlled funding.

Stephen and his wife Joy made the difficult decision that he would choose Aboriginal education as a career path over the lure of farming with his brothers—and those of us who admire him and his work are glad he did. Fortuitously, as it happened, he made this commitment around the same time that bilingual education became an official reality in the Northern Territory.

Gough Whitlam, as Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament, wanted to find a new initiative in Aboriginal Affairs, something revolutionary and attention-grabbing, something he could implement as soon as he became Prime Minister, an innovative program which signalled his government's commitment to a new and progressive approach to the educational needs of Indigenous people. He began quietly talking to people in Aboriginal education and by the time he became Prime Minister late in 1972, he knew what he would do. He was going to promote the use of Aboriginal languages in Aboriginal schools, and he was going to do it immediately in the Northern Territory, because Whitlam knew he had the power to rapidly introduce a new way of schooling in the Commonwealth's own Territory. He announced the new and innovative program on the day he became Prime Minister.

The program was up and running with remarkable speed early in 1973. There was great excitement. Teachers, dare I say it, the best teachers, were enthusiastic. Specialist bilingual education teachers were trained and appointed. An Aboriginal Teaching Assistant course was commenced. A head office unit of advisors and support staff was formed. Stephen was invited to join this Bilingual Education Section, as it became known, before he had completed his PhD studies at the University of New Mexico.

Gough Whitlam, however, was ousted and very shortly afterwards the Northern Territory was granted self-government. In the Territory, the conservative County

Liberal Party government, with a different set of priorities, would hold power for a quarter of a century. It was easy to destroy the Bilingual Education program incrementally with a time-honoured political ploy—gradually underfund low-priority programs until you can point out that they are not working. It was true that funding was not the only factor in the slow winding back of Bilingual Education in the NT. There were too few trained Aboriginal teaching assistants, let alone Aboriginal teachers, and it was often hard to find suitable people in the community competent in the local language to work as untrained classroom assistants. There were linguists who disagreed about orthography and spelling. But funding was always the main factor behind most decisions. The cutting of funds led to a continual reduction of staff. Whenever there were large-scale cuts to the public service, bilingual education staff were disproportionately included. In 1978, for example, there were 10 advisors in the head office servicing bilingual education programs throughout the Northern Territory. By 1991, there was only one. In 1998, defunding bilingual education unashamedly became the stated policy: to 'progressively withdraw the Bilingual Education program, allowing schools to share in the savings and better resource the English language programs' (Devlin, 2021)[2].

Just before that statement appeared, Stephen and Joy left the Northern Territory. Partly this had to do with his health, his desire to be closer to his mother, and his disappointment at the way Aboriginal education was faring, as well his perceived inability to improve that situation. By the time his *Two-Way Schooling* had been published, official support for bilingual education was observably declining and would be taken away not long after he left. Stephen felt misunderstood, even by the new generation of Aboriginal teachers in whose hands would lie the future of Aboriginal education in Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory (Harris, 2003, pp. 53–55). Stephen would have welcomed the current awareness of the importance of preserving Indigenous languages and the many school programs now being implemented around Australia. It is sad that this community awareness and the Government-funded programs are happening beyond his lifetime.

Language and Mind—Conceptualising Reality

The rap-dancing Groote Eylandt teenagers sang another phrase that would have sent Stephen's heart racing, a phrase carrying an extremely important message with a very deep meaning.

Eningaba ayakwa. Marrbuda mangma

Good language. Strong mind.

Here, young Anindilyakwa speakers, singing from their own country, express deep truths. At one level, they proclaim the link between competence in mother tongue and cultural survival. It has often been said that the loss of language, the loss of culture and the loss of a people are one and the same thing. Language is by far the

most important means by which a culture is expressed. A particular language like Anindilyakwa names everything that matters to the culture of the Warndilyakwa, the speakers of that language.[3]

At an even deeper level, the rap dancers declare the indivisible relationship between language and thought itself. Take language away and you can no longer label your world, no longer fully conceptualise it. Take away the language pathways of the brain and you can no longer expand and develop your mind from the information gained from the language of others, no longer discuss, let alone defend, those issues of society and culture and the future that truly matter. Take away the specific language in which a people's culture is conveyed and the complex patterns and realities of traditional culture, all unlabelled and all unexpressed, cannot survive or can only survive in a very simplified and token form.

> The most important relationship between language and culture that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language. Take it away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers. The culture could not be expressed and handed on in any other way. What would be left? (Fishman, 2007, p. 72)

Stephen and I knew this long ago. Our lives were curiously interconnected. We were both sons of CMS missionaries who knew each other and had served together. We shared a childhood experience of Aboriginal children. We were inexorably drawn back to the Northern Territory. Our lives were sometimes parallel, sometimes not. However, at key times, our lives intersected. We shared a Christian community. Most of all, Stephen and I shared a deep interest in Aboriginal languages and a passion for their survival.

Thankfully, the last decade has seen a growing public awareness of the tragedy of the long destruction of Aboriginal society, culture and language. This has come partly from education, where a new national curriculum has helped a new generation of Australians know far more about Indigenous culture and history than did their parents and grandparents. It has also been helped by an ever-growing number of Indigenous people entering higher education and the professions, able to speak with knowledge and passion about their own people, about their past and their future.

One of the consequences of this new appreciation of Indigenous culture and language has been the willingness of Federal and State governments to develop policies regarding the support of Indigenous languages.

The languages of the first peoples of the land comprising New South Wales are an integral part of the world's oldest living culture and connect Aboriginal people to each other and to their land.

> As a result of past Government decisions Aboriginal languages were almost lost, but they were spoken in secret and passed on through Aboriginal families and communities. Aboriginal people will be reconnected with their culture and heritage by the reawakening, growing and nurturing of Aboriginal languages. (Preamble to the NSW Aboriginal Languages Act 2017)

For people to be able to 'follow two roads' as the Warnindilakwa young people sang, there need to be strong policies and well-funded programs to help these young

people achieve that dream: programs which enable the survival and use of traditional languages, as Stephen Harris had advocated. This is not exactly the same as bilingual education, but once there is a changed attitude, leading to the widespread and accepted use of traditional languages in the classroom, something not unlike bilingual education will emerge again, born of Aboriginal people's desires, born of the understanding and encouragement of the wider Australian community and supportive governments prepared to make positive language policies and fund the necessary programs.

Language and Heart—Can Language Be Reawakened?

'Not to lose you, my language' were words spoken by a young Aboriginal girl in Milingimbi when Stephen and Joy Harris were there, expressing her deep understanding of the importance of vernacular education. Her language may not have seemed to be diminishing then (it was in full daily use among all age groups), but the girl sensed and named something deeply significant. Her phrase became the title of an important film about bilingual education in the Northern Territory (Film Australia, 1975).

The languages of Australia's First Nations peoples are said to be dying. The losing of a language is a tragic process. The loss of language, the loss of culture and the loss of identity are inextricably linked. When the British invaded Australia in 1788 there were around 500 separate Indigenous languages. Now it is said that there are perhaps only 13 languages which could possibly survive into the next generation.

In the 2016 census, 65,000 or 10 per cent of Indigenous people reported that they spoke an Indigenous language at home. While many of these came from the few surviving communities where an Indigenous language is fully spoken, many other respondents who said they spoke an Indigenous language, came from places where the language was declining. These people spoke English with an admixture of Indigenous words. Using and perpetuating those words meant a lot to them, reinforcing their identity and their determination not to lose their language. These words which people still use daily came from 160 different Indigenous languages, but the most telling statistic is that of these 160 languages in which some words survive, only 13 Indigenous languages were fully spoken by children as their first language. Unless something changes, these are the only languages which may be able to be properly passed on to the next generation. Almost all these languages are spoken in communities in the north of the Northern Territory and in the Central Desert. Three of them are languages of the communities where Stephen lived and worked—Djambarrpuyngu, Kunwinjku and Anindilyakwa.

Australia cannot be complacent even about these 13 languages for they can be lost very rapidly, in less than a generation. When I was principal of Bamyili School (now Barunga) in the 1960s, older community members spoke Jawoyn as their primary language. The younger members spoke Kriol as their primary language. In a family I knew well, a woman born in 1933 spoke Jawoyn as her first language. Her younger

sister, born only 6 years later, spoke Kriol as her first language. The difference was that the younger woman had grown up during World War II when her family had been relocated to a wartime 'compound' where they mixed with people of different language groups and sometimes worked on a US base. In the war years, Kriol replaced Jawoyn as the major community language. I am not, of course, mounting a case against Creole languages, which I defended years ago in my PhD thesis. I am, however, pointing out how rapidly languages can be lost. It is true today that Kriol is gradually becoming the language of choice for people on the borders of 'Kriol Kantri'. It is also true that in other places, the use of smaller traditional languages is declining, subsumed by larger traditional languages, particularly if they are the languages of the powerful people. But it remains true that the greatest language loss has been due to linguistic imperialism, the conscious or unconscious imposition of English. And that continues today. It is no longer necessary to destroy languages by forbidding their use in schools. The modern world of television, computers, mobile phones and video games succeed very well in relegating traditional languages to fewer and fewer contexts.

A difficult issue is that people do not realise that they are losing their language until the process is well underway, a process that is difficult to reverse. I have often found that Aboriginal people in traditional communities do not really believe that their language can be lost. The adults speak the language all the time and the children all seem to understand it. They do not realise that the children are losing their traditional language, that they are using it in ever fewer contexts. The children are using English or Kriol or even a more widespread traditional language and consequently, their traditional first language is slipping into second place.

An encouraging sign, however, is that an increasing number of Indigenous people elsewhere in Australia are becoming motivated to relearn their languages. This is less difficult a task where there are still old people living who more fully speak the language. The task is much more difficult where no full speakers of the undamaged language remain. Many of these learners, however, do not think of their damaged languages as 'dying', but as 'sleeping'. Rather than reviving their languages, they like to speak of 'reawakening' them.

It is, nevertheless, very difficult to reawaken a language in which there are no accessible examples, no models of sustained continuous text. When a language is declining, the grammar is among the first things to be lost. People retain concrete nouns such as relationship terms, animals and implements, perhaps even short everyday phrases such as 'Come here', or 'I am hungry'. However, they lose grammar; that is, they lose the linguistic means to join more than a few simple words together into a coherent and grammatically correct sentence. They cannot engage in a sustained conversation without English.

It is very difficult, therefore, if not impossible, to reawaken a sleeping language without a model of how it was spoken, how it was put together. The most sustained texts available in any Indigenous language are parts of the Christian Bible. Having this Biblical material in an Indigenous language does not guarantee its survival—there are many forces which can destroy languages. But having a part of the Bible creates at least the possibility that the language can be recovered.

This is not necessarily because of the nature of the Bible itself. The same value could no doubt be given to any significant text, but there simply are no other substantial texts. Relearning a language requires a sizable body of examples to illustrate how that language is put together. The point is simply that no one other than Christian missionaries ever bothered to do this. While Indigenous people owe a great debt to linguists, anthropologists and others who compiled word lists, dictionaries and grammars, no one other than Christian missionaries gifted Indigenous people with such substantial models of continuous text. Some scholars recorded short traditional stories and that is very important and helpful, but the translation of even part of the Bible required a dedicated and concerted effort on the part of missionary translators and their Indigenous colleagues over many years. No one other than them valued a substantial text so deeply that they were willing to spend much, if not all, of their lives translating it into an Indigenous language.

Some part of the Bible has been translated and published in 50 Indigenous languages. The oldest of those translations are in languages which are no longer fully spoken, yet the published texts provide precious and irreplaceable resources for the reawakening of these languages. These include Ngarrindjeri (1864, SA), Awabakal (1892, NSW) and Worrorra (1930, WA). Bible Society Australia regularly receives requests from communities, universities and other educational institutions for permission to republish historic translations such as these for language-learning programs.

A highly significant recent phenomenon is the reawakening of Indigenous languages through the process of Bible translation itself. These new projects have invariably commenced through the initiative of Indigenous people themselves, who are acutely aware of their language loss and want the Christian Bible, or part of it, in their traditional language. This works as a catalyst in reawakening the language, simply because those people are prepared to dedicate themselves to the task over many years. Again, it must be acknowledged that, theoretically, spending years struggling to translate *any* substantial text would have a similar result—but there are simply no people inspired to do that, no text so important to Indigenous people that some are prepared to give their lives to translating it.

Of those Indigenous people who report that they are relearning their language, the single largest Indigenous group in Australia are members of the Nyoongar nation of Perth and the south of Western Australia. Their motivation to do this owes much to the Nyoongar Bible Translation Project.

The Story of the Nyoongar Bible Translation Project

In 1999, two Nyoongar women, sisters Lorna Little and Vivienne Sahanna, approached me about the possibility of a Nyoongar Bible Translation. At the time, I was Director of Translation and Text in the Bible Society in Australia. The proposal interested me greatly. The idea of translating Scripture into a damaged language was itself a statement of hope to an oppressed people. It was a challenge which, if we

could achieve it, if we could show that it could be done, would set an example to the Bible Translation world.

The response of some of the Board members and senior staff of the Bible Society was quite negative. This was 22 years ago and the notion of reviving and protecting Aboriginal languages was not widely contemplated, let alone declared a national priority. I was told this was nothing more than an academic exercise, an esoteric linguistic experiment. What is the point of translating Scripture into a dying language? Why should we waste Bible Society supporters' self-sacrificial donations?

Others, however, glimpsed the possibilities and were prepared to support the proposal. Finally, approval was granted to start a Nyoongar project, provided that the costs could be fitted into the existing translation budget and that donations could be raised to reimburse the costs. I agreed and, given the mixed support, also decided to take on the role of Consultant to the project personally. Thus began a project unique in the world, a Bible Translation Project unlike any other. None of us imagined at the time how significant it would become.

Nyoongar Christians attended a meeting later in 1999 in Perth where the Nyoongar Bible Translation project was formally established. Nyoongar Elder, Pastor Len Wallam, was elected Chair of the project and Vivienne Sahanna its Secretary. Other members of the translation team include Lorna Little, Tom Little and Joanna Corbett. Non-Aboriginal members were respected missionary linguist, Wilf Douglas, and I, as the Bible Society's Translation Consultant.

From the very first meeting to establish the project, the Nyoongar Christians unanimously wanted the first translation to be a Gospel—something I thought at the time would be a hard task. I suggested the Gospel of Mark, traditionally the first Gospel translated, because it is short. They did not want to work on Mark first because, they argued, it contained nothing of Jesus's birth and very little of Jesus's resurrection. That left a choice between Luke and Matthew and everyone accepted my assurance that Luke was the easier of the two. So began the long task of finding the words and the grammar to translate the Gospel of Luke, to re-express the life of Jesus in the language of the Nyoongar people, a language which they loved but which had been literally taken from them.

It was not a surprise that at their first meeting, the translation team asked whether, before we started Luke, we could translate the Lord's Prayer (a form of which is in Luke 11:2–4). This has frequently been a first request and a translation priority throughout the world, although it is surprisingly difficult. Thus it was that the first Scripture translated into Nyoongar was 'Our Father in heaven, your name is holy'.

Ngaala Maaman ngiyan yaaka yira moodlooka,

Our Father who stands above everything.

Noonang korl kooranyi.

Your name holy.

These deeply significant words were written on a Saturday afternoon late in 1999. Pastor Len Wallam returned to Bunbury to lead the Sunday service at his church. He

preached on the holiness of God. It was not until many years later, after Len's death, that the amazing story of that day was told. Len was a greatly loved and respected man as both Nyoongar Elder and Christian Pastor, but he was also an angry man, with a deep hurt inside him. Not only had he lost his traditional land and much of his culture, but his language had been wrested from him. As a schoolchild, he had been beaten if he was heard using Nyoongar and he had put his language away in a deep, dark place. Preaching in English, he always spoke with clenched fists as if restraining himself. When he stood to preach that memorable day, he used the Nyoongar language from the pulpit for the first time. He said those first few phrases of the Lord's Prayer in his people's own ancient language. It was a life-changing moment for him. He unclenched his fists and opened his palms towards his people. For ever after, he preached that way, with open hands.

We noticed the dramatic change in Len when he chaired the translation Committee meetings. Not only was he part of the translation of Scripture into the Nyoongar Language, but Len also got in touch again with the language of his people. His pride in his language became increasingly obvious to members of his family, bringing tremendous affirmation to their own desire to reawaken their language and to inspire those they taught.

The Lord's Prayer contains many translation challenges as it contains complex ideas and grammar. We chose not to finish it at the time, leaving it until later when the members of the translation team were more experienced. Instead, I suggested a narrative, one of Jesus's parables. The team took very little time to choose the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). Everyone knew exactly what a prodigal son was and it touched a chord with them. The little book, *The Lost Son*, was published in 2002. Cheaply printed, with Wilf Douglas's simple line drawings of an Aboriginal lost son, the booklet was an instant success. It was dedicated in a moving service at St George's Cathedral, Perth. Len Wallam read the parable in Nyoongar from the great Waalitj eagle lectern. It was the first time ever that the Bible had been read in a Christian church in the Nyoongar language, in the language of the land upon which the cathedral stood. It seemed to me that from that moment on, the people knew they could translate a whole gospel.

And they did. It took them 15 years. The Nyoongar words already known and used by the translators were a valuable beginning but far from sufficient for the Bible. Words had to be sought from wordlists compiled by settlers and sailors and missionaries. Old people were interviewed. Grammar was reconstructed from the bones of old sentences recorded more than a century ago. And people remembered the language they had heard in childhood. Words arose in their minds and hearts from the hidden depths where they had long been locked away. Some words and phrases came during sleep as people dreamed of their mother's lullabies or their grandfather's storytelling, words hidden deep within them but now remembered again.

After a year or two, we did indeed translate the whole of the Lord's Prayer. It was printed on cards the size of a credit card so people could carry it with them. A Nyoongar woman who was a gaol visitor gave them to Nyoongar prisoners. 'There was no way many of them would speak to me if I mentioned anything Christian', she said. 'They would turn away. But they took the little Lord's Prayer cards from

my hand because it was in their own language, the language of their ancestors and their land'.

Not all the translators lived to see the final result of their work and join in the joy of its dedication. Wilf Douglas died in 2004, Len Wallam in 2008 and Lorna Little in 2011. We were a very small translation group when *Warda-Kwabba Luke-ang* (Good News of Luke) was finally published in 2014. But the Nyoongar people rejoiced. Again at St George's Cathedral, smoke swirled around the great Waalitj eagle lectern as Tom Little read the Gospel in Nyoongar and Vivienne Sahanna was presented with an award.

The format of this translation of the Bible was a world first. It is a beautifully illustrated and presented book but, as the reawakening of a sleeping language, it needed to be very accessible to those encountering Nyoongar for the first time. On the left-hand page is the Nyoongar text of Luke and on the right-hand page is an English 'back translation', that is, an exact translation of the Nyoongar text as a learning aid. At the bottom of every page is a glossary of all the new Nyoongar words on the page with their English meanings.

Nyoongar educator, Charmaine Councillor, of the Nyoongar Language Centre, recently spoke about *Warda-Kwabba Luke-ang*. 'You have given us back our language', she said. 'We now have a model of how it should be spoken'.

Led by Tom Little, a new group of people are coming together to continue the Nyoongar Bible Translation project, aiming particularly to train a younger generation to take over. Tom knows that there is, nevertheless, a long and challenging road ahead. He has already translated the book of Ruth. Beautifully illustrated in colour by Daphne Davis, an Aboriginal artist, *Bardip Ruth-Ang* (The Story of Ruth) was published in 2020.

The Nyoongar people appreciated the book of Ruth for its insights into the practices of a traditional culture with features not unlike their own. A striking case was the Hebrew word *goel*, which was the traditional role of the man Boaz who rescued Ruth. This was the man whose role was to protect, redeem and restore a woman who, through the death of her husband, found herself without a protector and without an inheritance in the land. English Bible translations struggle to find a word to describe this role, unfamiliar in the Western world. Modern translations use the awkward term 'kinsman-redeemer', but it is a strange and difficult neologism to most people. Tom Little, however, knew a precise word in the Nyoongar language to describe a Nyoongar man with that exact role—*moorditj-moyiran*. The Nyoongar people know this word well and easily translate it as 'right-way man'. In Nyoongar culture, the *moorditj-moyiran*, the 'right way man', is the man in the correct relationship to a woman in need with the responsibility for her. He is duty-bound to become the protector, redeemer and even sometimes the husband of a woman in need of security. There is no language in the world with a better word to translate *goel*.

There are critics of Bible translation who say that to promote Christianity is to destroy Aboriginal culture and identity. But this is simply not true and especially it is not true when the translation is the desire and the responsibility of the Aboriginal people themselves. Receiving their language back again is the most powerful rejuvenation of culture. In particular, the translation of the Bible into their own traditional

language confirms the deep Aboriginal traditional understanding that the world is a created place, a spiritual place. It is a profoundly significant thing that Aboriginal Christian people, encountering the Scriptures in their own language for the first time, find their traditional identity reinforced rather than weakened. They feel even more strongly about their land when they come to see it as the gift of Boolanga-Yira, of the God for whom and in whose name they must care for it as a sacred place. This is no better expressed than in the 'Welcome to Country' which the Nyoongar Bible translation team members were asked to produce.

Boolanga-Yira, ngalang Maaman, baal warn nidja boodjer.

God, our Father, he made this land.

Boolanga-Yira miyalitj boodjer baal kwadja warn.

God saw the land he had made.

Boolonga-Yira waangki, 'Baal kwabba'.

God said, 'It is good'.

God put Nyoongar people in the land.

Boolanga-Yira warranga ngalang maam-inrama,

God told our ancestors,

'*Noonooka djarnyak karrodjin nidja boodjer'.*

'You must look after this land'.

Ngala yanganan noonooka nidja kooranyap-ak.

We welcome you to this sacred place.

Kana bedik-bedik boodjer-al.

Tread softly on the land

Walk on the land in peace.

Boolanga-Yirang kol-al. Kaya.

In God's name. True/Amen.

Yes it is indeed *kaya*. It is true, and yes, Stephen would have been pleased. Amen.

Endnotes

1. *Ngeniyerriya* is a complex Anindilyakwa word which conveys deep emotion whether sorrow or happiness. Here it expresses their depth of feeling when they remember their ancestors.
2. An extremely valuable chronology and documentation of the history of Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory is Brian Devlin's ongoing *Government Support for Bilingual Education after 1950: A Longer Timeline* on the 'FOBL

(Friends of Bilingual Education) website': https://fobl.net.au/index.php/au-MU/history

3. Today, particularly when speaking among themselves, the people of the Groote Eylandt archipelago tend to call themselves the *Warnumamalya* ('the people') and their language *Amamalya ayakwa* ('the people's language').

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John Harris retired as Director of Bible Translation in Bible Society Australia. He spent most of his life involved with Aboriginal people, from his earliest childhood on Groote Eylandt to teaching in Aboriginal schools, lecturing in Aboriginal education and, most recently, in Bible translation. John has written several books and over 200 papers on Aboriginal language, culture and history. He was awarded the rare Lambeth Doctor of Divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Her Majesty the Queen for his 'advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal people'.

Chapter 5
My Uncle and His Place in History

Jonathan Harris

Abstract My Uncle Stephen motivated his extended family to remember their ancestors and to respect their impact on the world around them. He had a passion to share the achievements of many generations since their part in the early exploration of Australia. Uncle Steve is emblematic of the love the Harris family had for Aboriginal people, and how they lived and worked with them. Through Uncle's intelligence, spirituality and sense of humour, he inspired many of us to continue the legacy of faith in God and to partner with First Nations people, bringing about cultural respect and reconciliation. His love of the Australian bush, horses and family has influenced us all.

Keywords Stock horse · Legacy · Heritage · Joseph Harris · Work · Family · Charles Sturt · History

As one of his nephews, I respected Uncle Steve as someone who had a deep interest in our personal lives. Every time I sat and listened to him around the dinner table on any of his visits to us on the farm, he seemed to be interested in the rest of the family, and those that had gone before us. People were not going to be forgotten on his watch. Right up until the time he passed away, Uncle Steve and Aunt Joy surrounded themselves with their family in photos and the history of family achievements. He also constantly prompted members of the family to 'write things down'.

One of the wonderful texts edited by Steve and Joy was my grandmother Nell Harris's memoir, *The field has its flowers*, which she begrudgingly and humbly compiled during her retirement at our family farm, 'Wongala'. This book is now treasured by the family and is an amazing snapshot of life and early mission experience in frontier Australia. It would have been unusual in the male-dominated world of the time, from the 1930s through to the 1960s, to hear the voice of a woman narrating her experiences. However, this text is now highly valued by our family and by the Indigenous descendants of people at Gunbalanya (Oenpelli), in Arnhem Land, where she served as a Church Missionary Society (CMS) Missionary with Grandad,

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Dick Harris. Grandad received an MBE for his services in the Northern Territory. He was also memorialised on a tile—'Dick Harris: Missionary' on the Darwin Bicentennial Park Esplanade—as part of the '200 Remarkable Territorians' project in 1988. Uncle Steve and Aunty Joy were frustrated that Gran wasn't recognised as well, hence the effort to encourage her to write the book. My favourite sentence in her memoirs reminds me of Steve and Joy's own feelings for their Aboriginal friends: 'I love the Aboriginal people. I feel at home with them'. As I was growing up though, I didn't sufficiently respect the life experience and achievements of my forebears, and I sincerely wish they were alive now, for I have so many questions to ask them.

Years ago we always seemed to be too busy to dig deep into our family history. Even so, Uncle Steve and Aunty Joy managed to inspire us to take the time to get involved in one of their projects. My family and I were in ministry for much of my early married life, and after returning to Tamworth from a pastoring role in Auckland, New Zealand, we met up with Uncle Steve at a time when his health was severely declining because of Parkinson's disease.

Uncle Steve wrote about my arrival at this time in his introduction to the family history project, *Joseph Harris' Australian Family (followed through one male line, from 1827– 2010)*:

> Jonathan, Wilfred's oldest son, decided to move back to Tamworth. He became interested in the project, and with his considerable computer skills and design, in typical Harris fashion [in other words, unconsciously continuing the Harris way of not being afraid of hard work, nor of responsibility, and of enjoying partnerships with relations] basically took all the burden for this project's development and completion off our hands.

Speaking or writing in his typical avuncular fashion, Uncle Steve would motivate us through glowing encouragement, and then educate us all on the importance of our history and generational character traits. The Anglican work ethic was deeply embedded in our family. We had big shoes to fill, with famous grandparents, and hard-working, high-achieving parents, uncles and aunts. With regard to the Joseph Harris project, I have to say, Uncle's perfectionism meant that there were many redrafts and corrections. These became increasingly difficult for him to manage because of his worsening ability to speak or use his hands to write. I would say that as much as he doggedly tried to get the job done, I was also becoming motivated, wanting to take things seriously, and so I learned a lot in the process. Steve and Joy had allowed me to operate my New South Wales (NSW) field office for Scripture Union from their front room. This was a bittersweet time, as I had many coffees and conversations and listened to many stories, yet at the same time, I saw the slow decline in Uncle's health.

Uncle Steve wanted to highlight the legacy we owe to my great, great, great Grandfather, Private Joseph Harris, and his Captain and mentor, explorer Charles Sturt. Stephen and Joy Harris's short family history book remains an important part of Australian history and begins the journey of contact and later deeper relationships with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Harris, S., and Harris, J., 1998).

In particular, the exploration of inland Australia brought an understanding of the river systems and access to farming land that many now enjoy. Mt. Harris near

Wellington, NSW was named after Joseph and was used as a base for supplies. Steve believed that the relationship Joseph and Charles Sturt had was the reason that the family inherited a solid Christian faith. One strong illustration of Sturt's ethics was a dangerous encounter with local Aboriginal warriors advancing on the explorer's campsite.

On his first expedition, Sturt had established a policy of making peace with, rather than shooting, Aboriginal people, and his journal records it was Joseph who was responsible, on several occasions, for maintaining Sturt's record of no Aboriginal people shot. For example, the following account is recorded in Sturt's journal:

> Harris was on guard duty one night when the whole party was alert because they knew a large group of Aborigines was advancing on them. Joseph said to Sturt, 'The blacks are close to me sir. Shall I fire on them?' 'How far are they,' I asked? 'Within ten yards, sir'. 'Then fire,' I said, and immediately he did so. 'Well, Harris, did you get your man?' (he was a remarkably good shot). 'No, Sir', said he. 'I thought you would repent of it, so I fired between the two'. The blacks vanished across the river (Harris, S., and Harris, J., 1998, p.51).

Just how remarkable a man Charles Sturt was, perhaps becomes clearer after reading the account of his third exploration (which Joseph did not join). This trip which explored the north-east of South Australia, south-western Queensland, and the north-west of New South Wales, lasted from 10th August 1844 to 19th January, 1846; i.e., 16 months (Rudolph, 2006). This account, which draws heavily on Sturt's personal journal, shows how profound Sturt's Christian faith was, under the most appalling desert conditions of thirst and starvation and facing death frequently for much of the 16-month venture. Sturt did nothing without prayer and trust in God's intervention in his life. And he believed in miracles, his very survival being the result of a whole string of them. For example, on one occasion, with some of his men becoming very ill, he sent most of his party back to Adelaide and he pushed on with four men. After he got as far north in the Simpson Desert as he dared under the severe drought conditions, he turned back, and faced one stretch of 225 kms of waterless country with weak horses and weak men. It rained just enough for horses and men to drink out of puddles and waterholes until they got back to their base.

The irony of Sturt and Joseph Harris's adventurous exploits and their care in not harming Aboriginal people, was that they were two of the many explorers who would open up the gateway for land-hungry and often ruthless pastoralists, in turn bringing violence and decimation to the First Nations people that the Harris family now deeply care about.

Joseph began the journey of contact with Aboriginal people, but his great-grandson George grew very fond of them (Harris and Harris, 1998, p. 9). George's son, Dick and Dick's wife, Nell Harris were in residence on the CMS Mission station at Oenpelli (Gunbalanya) in Arnhem Land from the 1930s to the 1960s. They began a wonderful legacy of mission work amongst our extended family (Harris and Harris, 1998, pp. 12–26). The Harrises as a family had more than their fair share of Christian missionaries. There are 10 family members who have been missionaries from my grandparents', father's and my own generation. Steve and Joy's reflection was:

> While being a missionary does not necessarily indicate any qualities superior to those required to live honourably at home, it does indicate a certain level of idealism, commitment

> to God's work and a willingness to forgo normal income levels, and a willingness to venture into the unknown (Harris and Harris, 1998, p. 53).

Stephen's grandfather, George Harris, loved to visit the Oenpelli mission to see how Dick Harris was managing and also just to enjoy being there. However, the intense heat was too much for him and he was believed to have died of heatstroke in 1938. His grave is still there today in the foothills of Argaluk, the sacred hill next to the township of Gunbalanya.

My father Wilfred and Uncle Steve loved the Aboriginal people, and as my Aunty Joy notes in Chap. 2 of this book, Uncle Steve would have liked to continue 'empowering Australian Aboriginal Education Statesmen/women'. Similar to Uncle's desire to empower, one of the last things my father said whilst he was alive, was that he wished he could set up employment services for Aboriginal people as he saw that as the key to their future was partnering with them. All of Dick and Nell's children had a deep love for the Indigenous people, and all of them—David, Jim, Wilfred, Stephen and Barbara—wanted to live on the mission with their parents after being separated for long periods of time in boarding schools. All of my uncles and aunts strongly identified with the title of the book, *We Wish We'd Done More,* by linguist John Harris (a family friend). They regularly talk about having left 'too soon'.

Jim, Steve and Wilfred's work catching live wild buffalo for the mission's meat supply at Gunbalanya is the stuff of legend. Another book could be written about their adventures as brothers, where together they invented the first mobile abattoir using three semi-trailers that were driven up from Sydney to the region that is now known as Kakadu National Park. After receiving permission from the NT Government to hunt wild buffalo for meat export, Dad, Jim and Steve drove the trucks to the Wildman River region as one of several campsites that were set up as temporary hunting locations. On one occasion, Dad and Steve were driving to set up camp with the convoy of vehicles only to have their access blocked by a hovering helicopter sent by a rival hunting group. Apparently, after some tense negotiations, they were able to drive through and camp. I have exciting memories as a nine-year-old driving out with the shooter of the day in a cut-down Toyota Landcruiser, crashing through the bush, chasing buffalo bulls, with green ants raining down on me. Good times! Uncle Steve was often one of the shooters on these trips. His professionalism and perfectionism were mentioned in his personal collection of memoirs *Barefoot Memories—Traces of an Arnhem Land Childhood*. When the brothers started the shooting venture around 1968, Uncle would be up before dawn to go and bag his quota of bulls. He says:

> I wasn't a gun person, [but] I always got my daily quota at Oenpelli, and always worried that I wouldn't. Any day that I finished my fifth load in sufficient light found me down on the edge of the plain practicing shooting at a target set up against a giant ant bed mound. Joy and I would often go to the edge of the plain in the late evening and, after my practice shots, drive a little further along the plain and watch a hundred brolgas dancing in the dusk. We were still on a long honeymoon really (Harris, S., and Harris, J., 1998, p. 53).

In later life when Stephen and Joy retired to Tamworth, they became more involved in the family farm. After the death of their parents, Dick and Nell, Wilfred and Steve gathered three suitcases and a battered travel chest of correspondence and

documents that included Dick and Nell's family letters, mission blueprints, love letters and official Department of Aborigines Affairs letters, and… put them in a shed. Little did they know that this would engage the next generation of Harrises in deeper relationships with the Aboriginal people of Northern Territory, which I will talk about shortly.

Uncle Steve's perfectionism was well known to all of his nieces and nephews, and he referred to it in conjunction with another of his passions: the bush and, specifically, trees. When Uncle Steve's handwriting became indecipherable, he started typing emails and notes to many of us. On one trip to the family farm around 2011, Uncle wanted me to walk him around for exercise. In addition to walking arm in arm to see his remaining horses, he wanted to visit the trees on the property. I could not understand him at all by this stage, because Parkinson's disease had taken his speech. I asked him to write about the trees. He painstakingly took the time to type a three-page story about the history of the trees on 'Wongala', which he called 'Christmas time tree plantings at Wongala, 1977–1996'. In this reminiscence, he described the different types of trees—the ribbon gums, willows, cottonwoods, red river gums, poplars and more—and explained why they had been planted.

> Now Jono and Pete, I'd like to tell you a bit of the history of the Christmas holidays tree plantings, of which you were an integral part in the early days... during 1977 and 1978 my private plan was to get at least three trees in, and, depending on the willingness of you kids to help with labour, up to six trees. The big deal here was the labour it took to build the tree guards; we had to build them like fortresses... all outside of working hours (Harris, 2011).

This is where the perfectionism trait was mentioned. I would have been 12 years old at the time, and my brother Peter was about 10. As the years went by, Uncle Steve press-ganged other nephews. The truth is that we loved him, but boy it was hard work. The posts had to be four feet in the ground—primarily to stop cattle or horses from rubbing up against the trees or eating the foliage. My cousin Michael Harris, who visited frequently, was engaged to work at one time; Uncle remembers this in his notes:

> One morning while we were planting those poplars, young Michael promised to punch me if I kept on riding him, so I made one of the best on-the-spot decisions of my entire life; I decided to grow up, and allow him, and in fact, all of you, to grow up too... (Harris, 2011).

During this time, I remember a heightened sense of Uncle and Aunt's loss, as their desire to have children had sadly never been realised. Several of Aunty's pregnancies had miscarried. I for one, saw Uncle as a father figure, and wanted to work for him and with him.

One thing that was not mentioned in the tree notes, was that after digging the holes for the posts and then putting mesh around them, we had to apply creosote to stop them weathering and being eaten by termites. During this painting effort, the creosote would always spray off the brush and often soak through our shirts and gloves to burn a layer of our skin. After hearing us whingeing about this, Uncle Steve would often say, 'It's character building, boy!'.

We were attracted to Uncle Steve because he had a sense of humour that tended to lighten the mood on the farm whenever he and Aunty visited. My father Wilfred was

trying to raise us with Gran and Grandad's help after divorcing my mother Cecily in 1977. Dad was constantly preoccupied with the stress of the farm, trying to survive the latest experience, whether flyblown sheep, drought, or declining stock prices. Uncle would tease us and Gran with a straight face, and cajole us into projects such as fencing, rock picking, or planting trees. Even though it was demanding work, Uncle's visits were a positive break from the atmosphere of farming stress that we grew up with during the years 1977–1984. Our grandparents, Dick and Nell Harris, were in their retirement, but had the challenge of raising three teenage boys when they should have been able to have some respite after their labour in the Northern Territory with the Aboriginal people on CMS missions. Our father Wilfred had the combined stress of trying to recover from my mother leaving him, and of making a living during an exceedingly difficult farming era. The regular two-hour return journey from the farm to Barraba Central Public school and then the cattle and horse work on weekends was onerous for my brothers and me. Dad was usually silent and whether in deep thought or worry, we could not tell, whilst Grandad and Gran were the disciplinarians and carers. Silence whilst we ate was the norm, before singing hymns from 'Golden Bells' around the dinner table at night. When characters like Uncle Steve turned up, it was a welcome break from the heaviness of farm and school life.

When I was reading through Uncle's memoirs in *Barefoot Memories,* I couldn't help but see a lot of Uncle Steve's character, especially his humour, in his own Uncle Geoff. In the chapter 'Uncle Geoff', Steve remembers growing up on his uncle's property at Wee Waa with my dad, Wilfred during their Primary School years. It was common for missionaries to send their children away to other family members and to boarding schools. I believe Uncle Steve's love of hats and riding gear came from his days at Wee Waa. Steve recalled this about his Uncle Geoff:

> Uncle Geoff and Aunty Helen were very poor, but it didn't seem to hurt us… But Uncle had style. Poverty didn't entirely curb a flamboyance in Uncle which came out in the original shapes of his hats, how he greeted his friends, and his sense of humour. Once the local police sergeant knocked on the back door and was greeted with the familiar 'Come in if you're pretty and stay out if you're not' (Harris, 2003, p.9).

Steve records how Uncle Geoff bought him his first saddle and first horse, and from this young age he was 'interested in horses, and saddles and everything else connected with them'. The first of many horses Steve would ride was called 'Bet Bet'. The saddle lasted him a long time and it was used 15 years later on the Oenpelli mission by my father Wilfred, and the famous Aboriginal stockman, Tom Thompson, over a seven-year period.

Uncle Steve would often refer to himself as a cowboy, and jokingly talk about how he wanted to be 'cool' and styled his different Akubras and Stetson hats, like his Uncle Geoff, wearing them with pride. When Uncle Steve was too ill to ride, I asked if I could use one of his work hats to honour him. This hat is featured in several videos in my work for the Bible Society, that I will discuss shortly. Uncle did his own leatherwork and took pride in the purchase of good saddles and equipment. Each day around Australia, many of his relatives and friends wear a leather belt that

Fig. 5.1 After Uncle Stephen retired in 1997 he enjoyed spending time on horseback at Barraba

he created. And many of us wore them at his funeral in honour of his legacy. This was especially poignant, as many couldn't attend the funeral in person because of COVID-19 restraints. Uncle's horse work exploits were legend in our family. In fact, all of the siblings were excellent horse handlers (Fig. 5.1).

Uncle recounted many stories in his book *Barefoot Memories*, and I have been privileged to receive many photos and documents from Aunty Joy as I researched Uncle Steve's life. One exercise book I opened turned out to be his personal journal from his stint as Mission Stockman during the period between 1964–1965. He did a thorough job of typing out his notes to make a CMS Mission Stockwork Report. His entry for June 1965 records that:

> The mile of fence at the top landing was straightened up…preventing the buffaloes from entering Red Lily from this side, but they are entering in droves from the Cannon Hill side. Six horses were broken in—bringing total for 1965 to 45.

A July diary entry states:

> Castrated 14 colts—first time I have ever done it. Got horses in from Red Lily. Looking very well. Saddler's cancer not better [Steve's favourite horse]. Heard Tom Thompson wants to

> come over here and work….Man walked passed [sic] with spear through Jabbaroo- good eating (& Brolga) 'same like duck'.

It turns out that Tom Thompson (an Aboriginal man from the Ngandi language group near Roper region) was to have a big influence on Steve's life. In *Barefoot Memories* Steve writes a whole chapter on the man and his friendship with him: 'Tom Thompson was one of my childhood heroes and he remains a bigger one today. As time goes by my admiration for his genius with horses and wild cattle increases, as does my respect for him as a man of courage, patience, tolerance and forgiveness' (Harris, 2003, p. 17). From cattle work to horse work, Tom was a master. One of many descriptions of his skill in bulldogging cattle for live meat was recorded by Steve:

> Only Tom would take on the big strong bulls. He would run them until they were slow and tired…When the critical degree of tiredness was reached Tom would put his horse quickly up close to the bull, step off and in about three strides have the tail. The bull would turn to charge and Tom would pull the tail towards the head and flip the bull onto his side…fall on the animal…pull the tail between the back legs... and get the leg strap on. To my surprise I [Stephen] was good at this 'bumping' violence, with Saddler, the best horse I've ever ridden, not much afraid of anything (Harris, 2003, p. 21).

Uncle Steve would go on to grow in his interest in horses later in life, and in particular the Australian Stock Horse breed. Aunty Joy has touched on this in her chapter. During 2002 right through to 2010, Uncle crafted many stories of famous figures involved in the horse industry, including Artie Hall, Bruce McNaughton, Terry Hall and Fraser Ramsay. He told the stories of many famous horses with stories such as 'Ben Hall, born to win'(Harris, 2010) in the *Australian Campdrafting Magazine*, and 'Vale Blue Moon Mystic' (Harris, 2007) in the *Australian Stock Horse Journal*. His love of high-quality horses and breeding excellence extended to the horses he and Joy owned. He named them with family heritage in mind. For example, in one of his letters to the extended family he mentions 'Rippingale Joys Ragtime is being prepared for the National Stockhorse Yearling sale…'. This name combines his wife's name and the maiden name of his paternal grandmother, Florence Rippingale, who married George Harris. Another horse raised by them was 'Rippingale Joys Tempo…She was the finest horse we've yet managed to breed'. He adds, 'And more important even than our animals, are our relatives and friends, and they have been universally wonderful', as he became worse because of his Parkinson's disease.

Now that I am working with the Bible Society Australia, I regularly travel to the Northern Territory to visit the sites of our Indigenous language translation work, promoting and fundraising for their ongoing development. After I had been with that organisation for two years, it was announced that the Kunwinjku Shorter Bible had been published and would be arriving from Amity Press in Nanjing, China. Recalling conversations with my Grandparents and Uncle Steve, I mentioned this translation to Rev. Dr John Harris, and he said, 'Yes, Jonathan, that is the language translation your Grandmother Nell Harris started in 1934'. I contacted my father Wilfred Harris to find out if we had any documents from that era on the farm. He said, 'Yes, it's all out in the storage shed'. My sister Ellen Harris and I retrieved three suitcases and an

original travel chest, belonging to my grandparents, that had been packed away by Steve and Wilfred. In this way, we discover their correspondence about their mission work in Arnhem Land as they served the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory.

On opening up one of the cases, I found original exercise books with Grandma's handwriting in them. She had copied from her chats with Aboriginal women Hannah Mangiru and Rachel Guril Naboronggelmak, the five verses which they had phonetically transcribed once a day for years. The linguist Arthur Capell had travelled to Arnhem Land and become aware of Gran's work, which he showed to CMS and the British and Foreign Bible Society. When I dug into the travel chest of documents, I also found Gran's first edition of the Gospel of St. Mark, which had been published by the British & Foreign Bible Society in 1942. I was so excited about this history, that I submitted a proposal to the Bible Society executive to allow me to deliver the 500 copies of the printed Bible personally. They also sent a film crew from Eternity News to document the dedication ceremony (Kunwinjku Shorter Bible Dedication, n.d.). On 8 August, 2018, I handed the Bible to Rev. Lois Nadjamerrek in the Chapel which I had attended in Gunbalanya as a child. Lois is a daughter of Garlkgiwarra and Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek the famous artist, whose paintings are found all around the world, including the Darwin International Airport. He worked closely with Dick Harris, Jim, Wilfred and Stephen.

After the service I showed pictures of Rachel and Hannah to some locals, and a man named Andrew Maralngurra came up to me and said that Hannah was his grandmother. He said his father was from the *Nargojok* skin group and worked with my father, and that made me his 'brother' and part of his skin clan *Nabulanj*. He invited me to come outside the chapel and to meet my adopted family. I sat with them under the mango trees.

As part of the Bible Society Group, I work closely with Centre for Public Christianity, Koorong Christian Book chain, and Eternity News. I often discuss the Indigenous work with my friend John Sandeman, the founder of Eternity News. I told John about an upcoming journey to Nungalinya College in Darwin where we sponsor the Diploma of Translation Course for Indigenous students. John asked me to keep a journal of all future travel saying, 'The dignity of the First Nations people is crucial for the future of cultural respect and relationships within the Australian future. And you—with Bible Society Australia—sit at the very intersection of what is happening across Australia'. It is because of the constant conversations around those dinner tables at the farm, with Dad, Steve and Joy, Grandma and Grandad, that I am inspired to continue the legacy of Aboriginal partnerships and collaboration. John Harris, (no relation, but the Aboriginal people like to call us 'cousins'), the author of *One Blood* and *We Wish We'd Done More*, has tried to motivate me to document the family history of mission involvement after we uncovered Dick and Nell Harris's correspondence and original translation documents. I am now studying the history of Aboriginal Christianity through St Mark's Theological Centre and…(more serendipity) in partnership with Charles Sturt University!

One of the greatest impressions on me and many others, was Uncle Steve's determination to be healed from Parkinson's disease. His close friendship with his brother Wilfred saw them travel to California to a healing church he heard about.

Fig. 5.2 Calypso (Photo credit: Jonathan Harris)

His undaunted faith in God and His healing power was with him right to the end. I had the pleasure of worshipping with him in our home church in Tamworth, sitting in the backyard of the house belonging to dear friends Jonathan and Lyndy Smith, who cared for him over many years, offering up many prayers. One of those healing prayers finished with 'Jesus take me as I am, I surrender all my expectations. You are God, and I will praise You. Your Word is final and it is good. Jesus, what a beautiful Name, the hope that blows all fear away' (S. Harris, personal crafted prayer notes).

At about the same time when Uncle Steve was in his final months in hospital, I was returning from a hunting bushwalk on 'Wongala' in 2020. I walked past one of his horses in the house paddock. It was sunset and there was a beautiful purple light in the sky. For some reason, this horse, 'Calypso' was excited to see us and was galloping around the paddock in a wonderful wildness. I took a quick photo on my phone to send to Aunty Joy on Facebook Messenger to share with Steve in his bed. Uncle quickly asked for this photo to be printed and framed for his hospital room. (Fig. 5.2). Besides his beautiful wife, it may have been one of the last things that he gazed on.

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Chapter 6
Some Personal and Professional Reminiscences

Cos Russo and Sue Russo

Abstract This chapter includes a short reminiscence about Cos's professional relationship with Stephen Harris over a number of years, when they were working together in the field of bilingual education in the Northern Territory. Cos and Sue Russo also reflect on their friendship with Stephen and Joy over forty years. Both authors recall Stephen's character, values and personality.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Professional relationships · Personal friendships · Bilingual studies

Introduction (Cos)

During the European academic year of 1976–77 I studied for a Graduate Diploma in Bilingual Education at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth (Coleg Prifysgol Cymru). However, before Sue and I left for Wales, we were introduced to Stephen Harris at a Bilingual Education conference at St John's College, Darwin in July 1976. Joy Harris has reminded me of the moment when she and Stephen first became aware of me: 'We saw this young father wrestling with an annoyed 4 month old in the vestibule to the conference venue, trying to hear the speaker but keep the noisy baby voice from disrupting everyone else' (Joy Kinslow-Harris, personal communication). At the time, bilingual education was considered to be of huge importance by the Department of Education, so it provided a scholarship for me to study in Wales for a year.

I knew that Stephen had begun his ethnographic research at Milingimbi the year before, but at the time, I had no idea that our brief meeting would be the beginning of a long, close friendship spanning 44 years.

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Our Professional Roles (Cos)

I came to the Northern Territory (NT) at the beginning of 1974 to begin work at Numbulwar School as acting Principal. I was in that position for just under three years, until late 1976. In most respects, Numbulwar was an idyllic place compared to the desert country of the Pitjantjara lands that I had come from. So much so that, at the end of 1978, when Brian Devlin was interviewed for a teacher-linguist's position in the Northern Territory, I tried to persuade him to go to my old school. I told him that both the people and the fishing were great at Numbulwar!

While I was at Numbulwar I started a bilingual program, in 1975, in Nunggubuyu (Wubuy) and English. Carr et al. (2017) have suggested that the program began there in 1976, but this appears to be incorrect.

I knew from my own personal experience (Russo, 1973, 1977) that the first language spoken at home was important as a basis for starting school learning. When the children came to school speaking Nunggubuyu, which we now call Wubuy, we had some instructional materials ready for them. As we had teacher aides who were native speakers, and Kathy Warren, who was able to assist as a teacher-linguist, we decided to start a program for these students in the early years, beginning in the preschool. At the time, Kathy was working for the Church Missionary Society.

Sue and I went to Wales in August 1976, when our son Jon was four months old. As Joy has recently reminded us, it took some hunting around to find accommodation to rent for a family. A local farmer had a vacant, basic worker's cottage, which they rented. It was originally the cow byre which banked into the side of a hill with thick stone walls, and with the low doorways and ceilings, you often see in British rural areas. The farmer's wife commented that we kept the place heated like a tropical greenhouse. As it happened, the landlord and family were in the local Welsh revival community and invited us to join them. Probably as wonderful an experience as any, since it was the first to touch such spiritual depths in our faith.

My reason for undertaking postgraduate studies in Wales was that I could see the importance of getting a solid theoretical grip on bilingual education in an institution that was regarded as an important centre of learning in this field. While in Wales, we visited many schools to see how they were developing their bilingual programs. The thesis I wrote there dealt with the history of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory.

As a result of my studies in Aberystwyth, I felt I could see, with new eyes really, how these theories could be put into practice. That is, I felt confident that my newly acquired knowledge could be utilised in a bilingual program, and that the theoretical basis of bilingualism, as I had come to understand it, would help to validate what was happening in the NT. More generally though, my time in Wales suggested more forceful, stronger directions for I had never before met individuals who would die to protect their own language and the culture that goes with it. Bilingual learning was emotionally and politically motivated in Wales. In comparison, it seemed like we were just playing with it in the NT, but for them, it was a fundamental right. I think it is important to point out that, since so much culture and history was carried in the

Welsh language, the political argument in favour of including it in the curriculum was compelling. In the NT though we didn't have a strong political argument, nor did people generally understand the theoretical basis of bilingual education in the same way that many people in other countries did. In Wales, even though the people often spoke English really well, they wanted signs on the road in Welsh. They wanted recognition, whether through street signage or political rallies. That was the first time I've actually seen a political rally meeting to support language revival. The Welsh understood that education is key, from the earliest school years. For them, the home language needed to be included as an ordinary part of their schooling.

On returning from Wales in November 1977, I was privileged to work for nine months or so as Deputy Principal at Milingimbi School, which I had chosen to go to, for it had an exemplary bilingual program. After that, I joined the staff in the head office; that is, in the Bilingual Education Section, which in those days was on the third floor of the TNG building in Smith Street, Darwin. Stephen was the Senior Education Adviser, Anthropology at that time and I was appointed as the Education Adviser in Bilingual Education. I'll just add that our daughters, Carla and Teresa, were born in 1979 and 1980, when Sue and I were in Darwin.

Joy Kinslow-Harris (personal communication) has shared a story about inviting us over one time for tea: lasagna and salad, which she served to each of us. I was still wrestling with my energetic son, who was now three years old and stronger. When I only ate my lasagna, Joy didn't know if I had left the salad because I didn't like it or if I was so involved in corralling my son while in my new workmate's home. Finally, she asked if I would like her to remove my salad and just serve dessert? I was surprised, and said that I always ate salad last since I am from an Italian home.

Stephen and I used to travel—mostly separately, but sometimes together—to visit schools with bilingual programs to remote communities. For example, in the June-July period in 1978, I travelled to Areyonga, Haasts Bluff (Ikunytji) , Yuendumu, Hooker Creek (Lajamanu) , Willowra, Ernabella (Pukutja) and Fregon (Kaltjiti) . As Joy has recently reminded me, it was always a toss-up what accommodation was going to be available in the communities. One place had a 'motel room'. However, when Stephen and I went there, we found it hadn't been cleaned since the last visitor had stayed in it. Fortunately, we had brought our swags with us just in case. The nurse invited us to sleep in the clinic, as it had a gas ring which we could use to heat our tinned baked beans!

On each of those visits we made sure to meet up with the principals, teachers, assistant teachers, and specialist staff; that is, the linguists, teacher-linguists, literacy workers, and literature production supervisors. Our way of understanding what was going on was to listen carefully to what people in the field told us.

The other Education Adviser in Bilingual Education at that time was David Williams. It was agreed that he would handle routine operational questions from staff at Elcho Island, Garden Point, Bamyili, Bathurst Island, Numbulwar, Oenpelli, Goulburn Island, Docker River (Kaltukatjara) and Maningrida, whereas I assumed responsibility for such matters in relation to Areyonga, Haasts Bluff, Port Keats (Wadeye) , Yirrkala, Roper River, Yuendumu. Hooker Creek, Willowra, Umbakumba and Angurugu (*Bilingual Newsletter*, May 30th, 1978).

Stephen and I worked closely together in the Bilingual Education Section for two years. On 1st December 1981, in a reference that he wrote for me, he noted that 'Mr Russo has, during his time in the Bilingual Section, been heavily involved in staff development, including the organisation of some annual SIL training courses, Teacher/Linguist training courses, … workshops for clarifying school objectives, and the training of Aboriginal artists, writers and printers for the bilingual program'. It is worth adding here that both the SIL and SAL offered training courses for our teacher-linguists in the NT (see Chap. 16 by Black and Devlin).

We were blessed to have very good teacher-linguists in our remote schools. Talking to these like-minded people was like a breath of fresh air, a zephyr in the night. They had tough jobs, but it was their passion to do well, and to serve to the best of their capacity, that got them through.

On returning from these trips, we would do our utmost to write careful reports that accentuated the positive and suggested various ways forward, without ignoring or glossing over any of the key difficulties that had been raised with us by staff. I clearly remember Stephen's quite striking ability to craft these diplomatic reports, once he was back in the office. However, school reports were always discussed in group meetings before they were sent out and placed on file.

Not all our work was done together, of course. A few ventures were pretty much my sole responsibility; for example, two Aboriginal Writers' Workshops were arranged: in Darwin, May 13–16, 1980, and at Batchelor, June 2–6 in the same year, in conjunction with the School of Australian Linguistics. Both of these workshops were attended by a number of literacy workers from around the Northern Territory. Our aim was to help them to explore the potential of written language to help make vernacular books rich and interesting. It was important to acknowledge the important role of the literacy workers in producing vernacular literature (Russo, 1981a, b). Strengthening their skills, in my view, was an excellent goal, for it was a surefire way of improving the quality and appeal of the reading materials that they were responsible for producing, along with other school-based specialist staff.

While I enjoyed my professional role, there were certainly some frustrations. One limitation I could see in the early to mid-1980s was that language development had not been properly addressed at the policy level. What policies there were tended to be ad-hoc and reactive (Russo and Baldauf, 1986).

A Shared Faith (Cos and Sue)

Stephen and Joy Harris shared the same faith as us and they attended the same church. After a time, we realised that we all really liked the idea of home-based worship and, as I remember, we were aware of a house church movement at the time, so we began trying it out. Around 1981 we began doing church at home. At that time, we also explored the concept of mentoring, or shepherding, which led to a more intimate, deeper relationship.

As Sue and I looked up to Stephen and Joy, we saw them, in a sense, as our shepherds, as people who would help us to bring our latent talents into being. Shepherding was far removed from the idea of control. Once we had accepted Joy and Stephen as our shepherds, we gave them permission to speak about, and to be involved in, all areas of our lives; so, for example, we discussed our approach to child-rearing. We spent a lot of time discussing our dreams. Joy was an excellent exponent of dream interpretation, so she helped us to see how we were dealing with situations subconsciously, and how God was guiding us. This was, indeed, a time of deeper growth for all of us.

Joy has recently reminded us of one of those dreams; actually, a nightmare that our son Jon had. The setting was a high school, where a couple of older boys were taunting the other students with pins stuck in rulers, which they would drag along someone's bare skin. When Jon asked Joy about it, she said that it showed that he wanted to take karate lessons to defend himself against such bullies, but since I was against violence, he feared that to do that would deeply hurt me. However, I apparently said, 'go ahead'. As soon as the bullies saw John in karate classes, they stopped. He never had to confront anyone again.

A Sense that They Were like Family (Sue)

Joy and Stephen were so much part of our family that they were given the honoured titles of Aunt and Uncle. Our children loved them, and they have always had a special place of love and respect in their hearts, contributing to their lives even as they grew up. Joy was the big sister and Stephen the older brother I didn't have, since I was the eldest of five children and all four of my siblings were boys. I remember Stephen patiently teaching Jon how to tie some special knots that he considered to be a fundamental, practical and valued skill. He also was happy to pass on horse skills to us all, but it was Teresa, our youngest daughter, whose passionate love and devotion for horses can be attributed to him. Both Stephen and Joy supported and encouraged Carla in her love for singing and music, and especially in becoming an artist. They guided us all in finding our God-given gifts to use to support others, to stay close to God in our life's journey and, in this way, to fulfil our purpose in His Kingdom.

Ours is a relationship that has lasted many decades. It is the kind that has stood the test of time and separation, even though we have often lived great distances from each other. When we have reunited, it is as if only a few days or weeks have passed by.

A lot of Stephen's life was involved in academic pursuits and social justice reform through educational policy and practice, but the underlying foundation of his passionate involvement was his deep Christian faith, which he lived out on a daily basis. Stephen was an extraordinarily gifted man who was nevertheless a humble and, at times, shy person who didn't flaunt his skills, knowledge or wisdom. He had

a quiet, dry sense of humour which peppered conversations and situations. He was an honourable man who could be trusted implicitly.

We were privileged to also enjoy special times with Stephen and Joy, at his brother's farm 'Wongala', near Barraba NSW. We regularly visited that farm, and these were significant, relationship-building times. If it wasn't for those farm visits, our daughter Teresa would never have developed her love of horses. It was all part of 'doing life' together. It was there at the farm that Stephen's other passions and skills were evident: his love for his family, and his work with horses. Breeding them was his special delight (Fig. 6.1).

In a recent personal communication, Joy has given us some more information to remind us about our first visit to the farm at Wongala, where we found that the Harris family had a number of riding horses suitable for beginners. Stephen always led the children's horses until they were confident. Deciding that our family and the horses seemed to be mutually in tune, Joy and Stephen got us all riding boots from the local Op Shop. (Joy tells us that she has never seen boots there since!). Teresa, especially, went riding at every opportunity. It set a love forever in her heart and she asked me at every opportunity if she could have a horse. Living in a Darwin suburb, I always had to explain that we had no room for a horse.

Fig. 6.1 Just prepping the latest colt, eye to eye! Stephen broke in most of the riding horses on his brothers' farm

Joy has also pointed out that when Teresa was a teenager, her boyfriend's family were race car enthusiasts who went to weekend race meets, and invited Teresa along, with our agreement. However, the races and celebrations afterwards often meant midnight returns home. Cos and I became uneasy about the situation, then Joy concluded that Teresa was substituting the excitement of the race meets for her true passion—horses. So we asked Teresa how we could help her get a horse. She immediately had an answer, which showed how close to the surface this passion was. A local stable had horses to lease to anyone agreeing to all the upkeep—mucking out, grooming, equipment care—which were all very time and energy-consuming. Well, that did it. She enjoyed everything about it and had no time to go to the car races after that. Today, she follows that same passion, and has her own steed.

Teresa has a story worth sharing about how she recently came to buy one of the foals from Stephen's breeding program after visiting Joy:

> I did some internet sleuthing and googled for any stud that had any horses with the name Rippingale, which was the stud name that Stephen had used. I saw that Mains Stockhorse had a Rippingale mare so I contacted them and asked if their mare had any foals for sale. They said she had one, but they hadn't decided to sell him. I told them my story and why I wanted him. They hadn't heard that Stephen had passed away, so they asked me to pass on their condolences to Joy and agreed to sell me the horse once I came down to look at him and was sure I wanted him. Aunty Joy came with us to see him and the brood mares as well. The foal was named Mains Freedom and both his mother (Rippingale Joy's Sonnet) and grandmother (Joy's Wendy) were owned by Stephen and Joy. Stephen loved to give his horses names related to musical themes. So I called him Baritone, aka Barry. His lovely nature and endearing pedigree made him irresistible.

Going Out Hunting (Cos)

Stephen and I had a shared interest in hunting, and on many of these expeditions in 1978, I took my two-year-old son, Jon. We hunted to obtain food for distribution, not just for sport. We bought a Suzuki Jeep to get to hunting sites and to bring back buffalo meat. Stephen had often field-dressed animals when his family lived in remote communities, so we were all set. In Joy's estimation, I was 'a dab shot' and she hasn't let me forget that. Of course, she and Sue had to be ready to handle all the fresh meat when Stephen and I came back! Joy (personal communication) has a story about our next venture, which was magpie goose hunting:

> The problem was always retrieving the shot birds, but Cos had a solution. They would hunt at the local waterholes where the geese settled, and Cos would shoot the birds as they rose above the water. This left Stephen to retrieve the birds from the leech-infested waters! Cos had a solution: Stephen would wear panty hose, which leeches couldn't breech! So they brought back their quota each time and we had buffalo, feral pig, magpie geese, and barramundi from fishing trips. Just two bushmen providing for their families.

Although Stephen had been a professional buffalo shooter in the Oenpelli area, he generously allowed me to take the shot whenever there was a wild buffalo in our sights. Unlike shooters in the early twentieth century though, we didn't just take the

hide and leave the meat and bones to go to waste. All of the meat was cut up or minced and distributed to people in our church. Stephen and I also hunted magpie geese together in those days, when it was the right season.

Further Studies (Cos)

In March 1982, I began studying for my Master's degree at James Cook University in Townsville, thanks to Stephen's encouragement, and this was a key reason for my decision to undertake further studies. As Stephen was always one to look for the best in people and in every situation, he believed that this higher degree would provide me with an opportunity to think more deeply about Aboriginal education and the specific challenges inherent in administering bilingual programs. I applied for a Commonwealth Scholarship and, fortunately, that application was successful. Before going to Townsville, and after leaving the Bilingual Section, I worked briefly under Graham Benjamin in Aboriginal Education. A few of my publications from those years have been listed at the end of this chapter (Russo, 1973, 1977, 1978, 1979; Russo and Baldauf, 1986; Russo and Harris, 1982).

New Roles (Cos)

For three years from 1985, I headed up a three-year project to introduce bilingual education in the Maldives. Then, at the end of 1988, I took up a new role as Assistant Principal, NT Open College. That marked the end of my direct involvement in the field of bilingual education, which had begun at Numbulwar in 1974. In 2009 I became the Manager of Transforming Training, which delivered Vocational Education and Training programs for adult learners and secondary school students (mainly those in Year 11 and 12) in Adelaide. That was a position I held until my retirement in 2016.

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Cos Russo is an educational leader and bilingual education specialist who worked in South Australia and the Northern Territory for many years before retiring in 2016. His various postings included Principal of Numbulwar School (1974 to September 1976), Assistant Principal at Milingimbi School (August 1977 to April 1978) and Principal, College of TAFE, 1990–March 1992). From May 1978 to October 1981 he was an educational adviser who visited remote rural schools in the Northern Territory on a regular basis, supporting staff and programs. He has long been an advocate of sound adult education programs for Aboriginal people.

Sue Russo is a teacher and educational leader who spent many years working primarily with students from disadvantaged backgrounds, Indigenous learners, those with identified special needs, and also new migrants and refugees who spoke languages other than English. Before moving to the Northern Territory to teach at Numbulwar in 1974, she taught Pitjanjatjara students at Yalata in South Australia, an experience which sparked a desire to support indigenous learners. Returning to Adelaide in 1995, she worked as an ESL coordinator and then Assistant Principal at Salisbury North Primary School, where she was responsible for the day-to-day running of the New Arrivals English Program. As English as a Second Language (ESL) District Service Provider, she also prepared and presented training programs to ESL teachers and principals throughout the allocated region. After obtaining a Bachelor of Education and Masters in Educational Studies, Sue taught in a number of Darwin schools over the years, specialising in ESL, literacy and special needs support. She worked at Transforming Training, a Vocational Education centre, supporting trainers with curriculum materials, resources and marking, before retiring in 2018.

Chapter 7
A Poetic Tribute

John Mukky Burke

Wittgenstein conceived THE CASE is known perhaps only by 'GOD'.
A tribute question poem for Doctor Stephen Harris, Sometime Reader, Northern Territory University.

<u>WHO IS ON TRIAL HERE? Stephen? God? C of E?</u>

prophetic warning –
'interesting times'
was
is
forever true
on our planet home
while ever human mob can say
'now that is interesting'
but it seem not right *somehow*
need tinker
round edge
and it was *true*
about a god who already
knew
you
Stephen where (like that other one)
you perhaps apostle now

(And every
Inindilyakwa
Wiradjuri
Druid
Inuit
Netherlander)

J. M. Burke (✉)
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and a silent killer
simplified to label
like ‘native’
(easier
than
‘Inindilyakwa’)
‘girl’ (OK)
not ‘boy’
(*he*’*s* a patriarchal Hebrew
she’*s* bit of *rib*)

mother nourished your gestation
turtle eggs (*with* parsley for the taste)
fish
goat milk
(make haste—it soureasy in stickyone tropic)

nearly silent killer
sleep islandtop
(a topic question later............)

stored weapons you never see
(but later hear)
from afar
between pandanus tree
that
peace-time (sic)
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
danger close!
contrast sunlightshaft
begin memory
sun shadows
canoe sunlighted up-stream
growing fearful don’t scream
dark down shrub,
black pandanus
crocodile back
missionary position
bit dangerous that one!

mind plane drone whirr –
close that school!
rush that airstrip!
parcel! letter! newspaper!
marked school work
(not last time your brain took *flight*!)
Don’t *fright* that one Peter

cos he getting secret men business
can’t talk
only run away away

this white man’s child
no business asking that one
‘E rude that one little boy with big mouth that plane going now –
little Barbara maybe crash
see them wheel bashtreetops
canoe men spear red emperor
(favourite)
Old Charlie splitting wood
you splitting ankle
that one (ol’ fella) deadly
shovel-nose spear now got *steel*
not true ‘E *steal*
though Dad not happy war
recycled you
final proud
goodfeel memory scar
woman death-adder *bite*
suck out poison!
life!
Haunt ghostly call –
(curlew)
Inindilyakwa bad man
creeping mission house
dull light guide boat back for *you*
the one God knew
(frighted you!)
you back missionhousemum
stop that panic
women business
make men shout
race get spear
get violent fight last one day
one night
day time
men eat wheat porridge
next time meet ochre skeleton
deathly white
next day whipping spear kill Gilagila
much big fight
two lady hit nulla nulla
new blue cattle dog pup dingo bait

finish that little one pup
time now up
no more that one yap eat
looking later orange eye
looking *you*
all yellow shining all that gloom lagoon

John Mukky Burke is a poet of Wiradjuri and Irish descent who lives in Wagga Wagga NSW. He worked as a Learning Skills Adviser at the former Northern Territory University where in 1992 he met Stephen Harris, who encouraged him to enter the David Unaipon Award. Mukky went on to receive this in 1993. This marked the beginning of a close personal and professional friendship. It was with deep sadness that Mukky learned of Stephen's passing. He is deeply honoured to be asked to share in this tribute to a humble and truly remarkable man.

Part B

Chapter 8
Learning How to Learn in School

Beth Graham

Abstract In the 1980s, after teaching in both an English-only and a bilingual program, I joined the Bilingual Section in the Darwin Education Office. There I became a colleague of Stephen Harris whom, until that time, I had known by reputation and by reading his doctoral thesis. He challenged me to write about many of the ideas that I had been developing while at Yirrkala and as I visited other schools in the Northern Territory. It was his support that kept me on task. Stephen was an insightful educator who during those early bilingual years continued to provide solutions to the many problems we faced in educating, not just assimilating, Indigenous children in remote communities.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Home learning · School learning · Colleague · Mentor · Friend · Insightful

My husband Leigh and I arrived in Arnhem Land, at the end of 1962, where I was to teach Indigenous children. The English-only approach to education caused me to question just what we were doing, but that was not my only concern. The children, while obviously very intelligent, did not seem to be as programmed to learn in school as children I had previously taught.

At about that time, we discovered that the Australian Government was establishing women's clubs throughout the Pacific, but no such action was taking place in Indigenous Australia. So, a friend and I decided to act. Three clubs were established and were a great success as the programs roamed across two cultures and two world views. These clubs added to the confusion I had experienced in the classroom. One day the Yolŋu members decided we should all make mats, but no one told or showed me what to do. When I decided that what was happening was very similar to 'blanket stitch' I got going but to the amusement of all concerned I muttered to myself about what I was doing. On another occasion we were making string. Many of the children who inevitably turned up on such occasions were also having a try. However, while I persevered, if the children had no success they just left the group.

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No adult demonstrated the technique or called them back to have another try or tell them how to do it. It had slowly become clear that when children were ready, they performed the task. If they were not ready, they tried again at a later date.

When I returned to Yirrkala in 1974 to become involved in bilingual education, my confusion about what was happening in the classroom increased. It soon became clear that Indigenous teachers had vastly different approaches to teaching/learning than I had. For example, if I was introducing a child to painting, I would explain and demonstrate that it is better to wipe the brush to remove excess paint so that the paint doesn't dribble down the paper. And if I showing them how to write a new sound/letter I would talk all the time and encourage the children to talk as they practise in the air before they put pencil/crayon to paper. If I suggested such an approach, the Yolŋu teachers shrugged and nothing changed. For me it was a puzzle, so I just put it to one side for the moment. There were so many other puzzles around me that I would probably never have sorted it out, but help was at hand.

Further along the coast at Milingimbi, a researcher called Stephen Harris was looking at how Indigenous children learn in their own environment (Graham 2020). When Stephen's doctoral thesis finally arrived, I read a chapter each night and then sat in the classroom the next day and said, 'Yes, he's right'. Those half-formed thoughts that I had never clarified, as I'd learned to make mats and watched the Indigenous teachers impart knowledge without explaining what was going on, became clear. The psychology we had been taught about how mainstream kids learn was not helping us, but most teachers of little Indigenous children knew intuitively that what Stephen was saying made sense.

He was telling us that, apart from some fun times when children were playing with their toy spears to catch tiny fish in the creek, or such like, they certainly didn't practise in a manner familiar to members of the mainstream culture. These children watched and when they were ready they had a go. No times were allocated in these Yolŋu cultures for dance practice or training sessions in spear throwing, as we understand these matters. As long as by the time people were required to actually catch fish, or perform some other task, they could do it, all was well. There were no schools, teachers or formal teaching in this ancient culture and no tests to measure progress along the way. Readiness, a key word in Western education, was not something that adults in this Indigenous world kept track of. Readiness was a matter for each child to decide.

I also began to understand why these children didn't learn by being told what to do and how to do it. This had always been a puzzle to me. Why wasn't I told what to do when I wanted to learn how to make a mat? Why didn't Indigenous teachers talk about what was happening and what was required when introducing new activities in school? Stephen referred to this constant talking about what to do and how to do it as 'verbalising process'. It is the way teachers, and parents who have themselves been schooled, behave.

Teachers like me talk much of the time without realising what we are doing. Such talk for children who 'hear' it helps them focus on important matters and collapses the time needed for learning to take place. This kind of talk that we go on with when showing children something new is unfamiliar in Yolŋu society. It is simply noise to

these little people and so is just ignored, and I would add if the talk is in English, it just provides another reason for children to tune out.

Stephen also pointed out that these children are much more independent than ours. They would hear when a mother called several times to them to bring something to the fire where she was sitting, but they would comply only when they were ready. When, in their own time, they carried out the task it would look almost as if they had thought of it themselves and were not responding to a request. After reading this, I would often keep score of the number of times children had to be told to carry out an instruction. It was not being naughty; it was, as Stephen explained, just the way it was.

Recently I sat watching dancing groups at the now-famous Garma Festival held in Arnhem Land near Yirrkala each year. Groups from a variety of clans, from communities both near and far, were dancing. Every group of performing adults was accompanied by a toddler or two. Not once did an adult tell the children when to start, which foot to start with, how many times to stamp or whatever. They, like all the Indigenous children before them, were learning to dance by watching and doing, just as Stephen had described.

For a time after Stephen's work became widely known, we toyed with the idea that school learning could follow the pattern of home learning that he had so carefully described. But school learning helps people to continue being able to learn throughout their lives about matters that are not part of their own traditional knowledge. It also teaches them to ask and answer the questions that are a feature of the conversation of the many officials and others who constantly visit these communities.

These were my understandings of Stephen's work when in 1979 I joined the bilingual team in Darwin. I was now a colleague of this man who had helped me understand just what was happening in the classrooms in which I and many others worked.

Moving to Darwin and taking an office-based position was, for me, a very new way of being an educator. But I soon learned that Stephen was the person in the team who gave me the most help and guidance in this new role. He challenged me to start writing and would help me to sort out and verbalise the many understandings that were gradually forming in my head about the need to educate, not just assimilate, the children in our schools. Throughout the time I was in the Darwin office when I was not travelling, with Stephen's encouragement, I would be writing.

Stephen, I discovered, continued to read widely in the areas of his concerns. I soon learned that if I read his books after Stephen had done so, I found a text that was underlined and had notations and comments in the margins. You knew straight away what was important. Stephen himself was always writing, as he extended the insights he had gained with his initial study into the realities of classrooms, where too many children were still failing. One of his great gifts was to encourage others into working with him to write about some aspect of learning in school, as well as the preservation of these ancient languages and cultures. He always did the editing, so many linguists and educators joined him in this activity. In this way the understandings of many experts were enrolled into the task of educating administrators, classroom teachers and ultimately children.

Stephen and I frequently travelled together to schools across the NT. On these long trips we shared our life stories, endeavoured to solve problems in Indigenous education, and from time to time shared our theological perspectives. One day we were flying in from Arnhem Land and the pilot announced he would fly low, as the cloud cover in that pre-wet season was too vast. But flying low is certainly not comfortable and I reached for a sick bag. Stephen decided to distract me and recounted many of his adventures, when as a young man he had hunted buffalo in the valleys at the western end of Arnhem Land, over which we were flying. I arrived home safely, much more aware of the trials of buffalo hunters in the Top End, and much more cognisant of this man who had lived so many lives before he encouraged us to look at what was occurring in the classrooms in which we taught.

Stephen's thesis was abridged into a more readily available document (Harris, 1980) entitled *Culture and Learning* and published by the Department of Education and Training in 1980. This enabled Stephen's research findings to spread more widely across the Indigenous education community throughout Australia.

But it was not only the insights that Stephen had revealed with his initial study that made his contribution so valuable. He was always open to discuss the difficulties we faced in schools. I had for some time been realising that questions created problems in classrooms, and I felt that most teachers who were new to the Territory had probably no idea that this was the situation. On one occasion, a professional development activity for Indigenous teachers from all over the NT was being held at Batchelor College. All the women were sleeping on the floor in a very large room. After the lights went out the gossip gradually ceased. The quiet was only broken when I heard someone say my name. When I responded she said, 'The kids won't answer my questions', and with that the chatter started once again. Everyone had a story to tell. 'What do the children say?' I queried. The answer was unanimous. 'The children say, "You know the answer so why should we tell you?"'.

There was more discussion before they all slept but I was wide awake. The people at the conference had all been schooled and had some degree of teacher education but not one of them knew why teachers asked questions in school. As an old Indigenous man said, 'You teach us English, but you have your secret English and you keep that to yourselves'. How true. But how to raise the issue of school language behaviour, that is the norm in mainstream schools, remained a challenge. On my return I raised the matter with Stephen. The issue was, how do we get children to ask and answer questions in schools and not take this behaviour into the communities where such behaviour is considered to be rude? In traditional Indigenous communities, oral knowledge is to be remembered and passed down for it tells you how to live and survive in the area where you live. It is not open to the kind of questioning our society, with its written records, regards as the norm.

As usual Stephen rose to the challenge. I had begun to understand that Western schooling needed to be seen as a language game. But I had then stalled, and Stephen came to the rescue. Australian Rules football, which was the game of choice in most communities, would provide a solution. In this game bumping is allowed. You deliver a good 'hip and shoulder' to your opponent to win—but you don't go home and do that to your mother. School needed to be seen as a language game, in which to win,

you ask and answer questions, but again you don't go home and do the same to your mother.

While at Yirrkala I had become aware that matters of concern in any situation were raised in a much more round-about way than we do. Since the arrival of a mining town just down the road many of the older people were concerned about the young people as they moved in and out of that new environment. But they would address these matters separately whereas I would pull them together by asking, 'What will happen to the young people if they keep going to the town where they will find alcohol, drugs and many other such things?' One day at Yirrkala at a Learning Together Session we had tackled the issue. 'What will happen if…?' was a question form that they found very difficult, and at that time, impossible to construct in their language. It was, however, important, because on a regular basis these kinds of questions are posed by people who then make decisions about Indigenous people's lives. It is also a form of questioning that is required if children were to progress through school.

It had become obvious that this question form would need to be introduced in English, but how to give it meaning when the children could not translate it? (Many mainstream children learn this form when parents ask, 'What will happen if you poke that stick in your eye?' or '…drop that brick on your foot?' These children go to school ready to engage in such conversations.) Again, Stephen came to the rescue. His suggestion was that we begin with 'What will happen when…?' Only after children understood this idea could the 'What will happen if …?' version be tackled. We began to introduce this idea to schools and it worked. Stephen not only explained what was going on in our classrooms but was a creative solver of really important matters in these remote classrooms—an environment in which he had never actually worked as a teacher.

As time went by, the work being done in the NT trickled through to educators of Indigenous children around Australia, particularly those working with children in very remote communities. I frequently accompanied Stephen to conferences and workshops of all kinds and in many different places. I soon realised that as we entered the room a hush would fall. Someone would have seen us and said his name and the chatter would cease. Stephen, who was really very shy, would frequently stop walking for he was overwhelmed by such a reaction. My task was simply to place a hand firmly on his back and accompany him as he moved forward. Stephen was the person who had explained to them what was happening in their classrooms and they were both grateful to him and yet in awe of him for the understandings he provided and continued to provide during his years in bilingual education.

Stephen was the most outstanding colleague I ever worked with. His knowledge of how Indigenous children from remote communities learn at home was a revelation. He modelled for those he worked with how to keep learning. He had high expectations of everyone around him to work at a level that they had never thought possible. And throughout, he remained a friend and confidant—someone you could trust. My life, like the lives of many others, have been enhanced by knowing him and understanding the work he did. His contribution will live on for decades to come.

Note

Portions of this chapter originally appeared in another publication, *Living and Learning in a Yolngu World*, and have been included here with the full agreement of the publisher. Andy McDermott, CEO of Publicious Pty Ltd., advised by e-mail on May 21st 2021:

> I can confirm that Beth Graham owns all copyrights to her book, *Living and Learning in a Yolngu World* and that the ISBN is registered in her name though Thorpe and Bowker, a check of the *Trove Australian National Library catalogue* will confirm this. Publicious has no objections or legal grounds to object should Beth Graham choose to submit any materials from her book to be used in other works.

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Beth Graham began teaching Indigenous children at Yirrkala in 1963. Returning in the early 1970s she worked with a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers to implement bilingual education. In 1979, as a bilingual education adviser, she focused on the early years of schooling, publishing widely and developing curriculum in all areas. Postgraduate study enabled her to extend, clarify and consolidate this work. Throughout these years she refined a team-teaching model to empower Indigenous teachers and enable more effective student learning. Her *Team Teaching* handbook allowed schools to do their own professional development. In retirement she still campaigns for bilingual education.

Chapter 9
Culture Domain Separation and Linguistic Interdependence: Correspondence with Stephen Harris 1982–1993

Jim Cummins

Abstract This paper describes correspondence between Stephen Harris and Jim Cummins between 1982 and 1993. The correspondence focused on the implications of the differences in worldview and ways of knowing between Aboriginal and 'mainstream' Australian communities for the linguistic interdependence hypothesis, which Cummins had proposed in the late 1970s and elaborated in the early 1980s. The interdependence hypothesis argued that there was a common underlying proficiency in conceptual knowledge and cognitive functioning that enabled crosslinguistic transfer among bilingual learners. This hypothesis helped explain why, in bilingual education programs, less instruction through the majority language resulted in no adverse effects on literacy development in that language. Harris suggested that the hypothesis required modification to account for the fact that crosslinguistic transfer might be significantly reduced in contexts of widely different world views between 'minority' and 'majority' populations. Under these circumstances, language of instruction in bilingual programs should be organised according to cultural domains, with western concepts and knowledge taught through the majority language and Aboriginal concepts and knowledge taught through the Aboriginal language, with little expectation of significant transfer across domains. Cummins agreed that this was a convincing argument that provided a coherent direction for bilingual program planning in Indigenous contexts.

Keywords Bilingual education · Culture domain separation · Indigenous students · Linguistic interdependence · Societal power relations · Two-way Aboriginal schooling

I never had the privilege of meeting Stephen Harris in person. Despite our mutual desire to get together, it just didn't work out during my visit to Australia in 1989 or Stephen's visit to Ontario in the early 1990s. Our acquaintance, and, I think, mutual respect for each other, evolved over the course of a decade from 1982 to 1993, during

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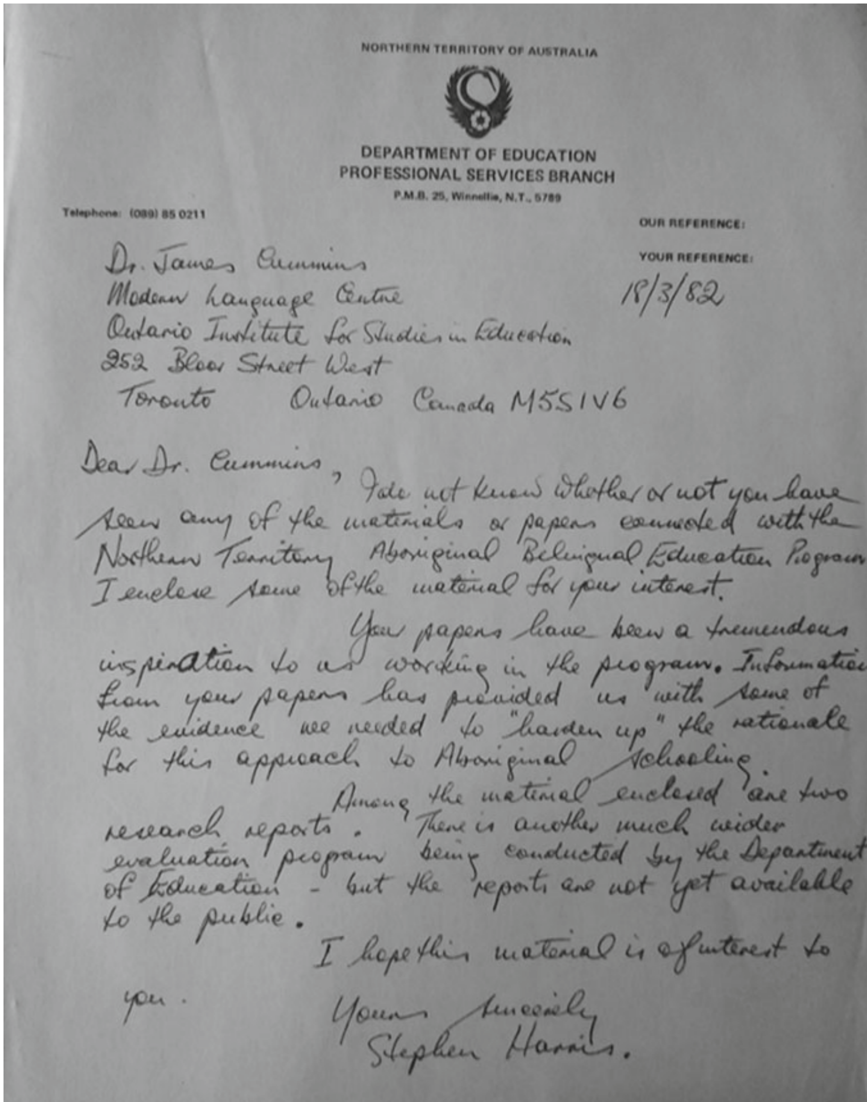

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BRANCH
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Telephone: (089) 85 0211

OUR REFERENCE:
YOUR REFERENCE:

18/3/82

Dr. James Cummins
Modern Language Centre
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto Ontario Canada M5S 1V6

Dear Dr. Cummins,
I do not know whether or not you have seen any of the materials or papers connected with the Northern Territory Aboriginal Bilingual Education Program. I enclose some of the material for your interest.

Your papers have been a tremendous inspiration to us working in the program. Information from your papers has provided us with some of the evidence we needed to "harden up" the rationale for this approach to Aboriginal Schooling.

Among the material enclosed are two research reports. There is another much wider evaluation program being conducted by the Department of Education - but the reports are not yet available to the public.

I hope this material is of interest to you.

Yours sincerely
Stephen Harris.

Fig. 9.1 1982 letter from Stephen Harris

which we corresponded occasionally by letter. Despite the sporadic nature of this exchange of letters, and our sharing of bulky typewritten research reports from the pre-Internet era that were ‘hot-off-the-press’, its impact on both Stephen’s thinking and mine was consequential, and I believe, of continuing relevance for the fields of bilingual instruction and the education of Indigenous students.

Stephen initiated our communication with a letter dated 18 March 1982 (Fig. 9.1) in which he kindly noted the positive influence of my work on the efforts that he and

colleagues were making to establish the credibility of bilingual education programs for Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory. The theoretical ideas and research evidence that I had advanced in several articles (e.g., Cummins, 1979, 1981) had served to 'harden up' the rationale for bilingual approaches to Aboriginal schooling. He shared several research reports and unpublished articles that had recently been written in relation to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Program.

I don't have a copy of my response to Stephen's letter. However, in my book, *Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy* (Cummins, 1984), I did reference the 1981 *TESOL Quarterly* article by Gale, McClay, Christie, and Harris entitled 'Academic achievement in the Milingimbi bilingual education program' that documented the positive outcomes of the bilingual approach in that community, to which Stephen had drawn my attention.

My next communication from Stephen came more than five years later, dated 14 July 1987. At that point, Stephen was a Research Fellow at Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia (see Hughes & Teasdale, 1990, for the background to this Research Fellowship). His experience included many years growing up as a child in Aboriginal communities as well as eight years as an advisor to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Bilingual Program. During that year in Flinders University, where his mandate was to write from his own experience and to document his own theories and intuitions about Aboriginal education, he produced the first draft of what was to become his profoundly inspirational book *Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling: Education and Cultural Survival* (Harris, 1990).

During the intervening years (between 1982 and 1986), I had also broadened my perspective to highlight the coercive power relations that severely limited educational and social opportunities for minoritised students (e.g., Cummins, 1986). The basic argument I tried to make was that school failure among minoritised students will be reversed only when educators actively challenge historical and current patterns of racism and disempowerment.

Stephen's analysis of Aboriginal education in Australia recognised the central role of societal power relations (which is hard to ignore in any Indigenous education context), but there was a sticking point: from Stephen's perspective, the interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1981), which argued for teaching for two-way transfer across languages within bilingual programs, required modification. Here's what he said in his letter to me (see the Appendix for the full letter):

> Now as a result of my thinking over the last couple of years, and leave this year, I want to write that the interdependence hypothesis needs to be altered for minority groups with very different world views than that of the mainstream culture. Some of my friends have warned me that unless I am right, such a statement from me could prove to be very discouraging and confusing to teachers in bilingual schools because of the degree to which I am associated with Aboriginal bilingual education and with explaining and 'applying' your hypotheses.

He enclosed the Table of Contents and draft versions of two chapters from *Two Way Aboriginal Schooling* which he had been writing during his Research Fellowship at Flinders University. He acknowledged that he had no strong interpretation of 'why the Rock Point Navajo school [in Arizona] did so well, in the light of my new nervousness about the unmodified interdependence hypothesis, unless good teaching

in the Anglo domain and resolution of intergroup power relations in favour of the Navajos (Cummins, 1986) provide the two main explanations'.

The following excerpt from the letter spoke powerfully to Stephen's personal commitment to ensuring that education supported Indigenous students in acquiring and consolidating their own cultural knowledge and ways of being, while at the same time experiencing academic success as defined by the broader society. It also highlighted his perception, unusual at the time, that theoretical ideas are profoundly *consequential* for the lives of students and communities:

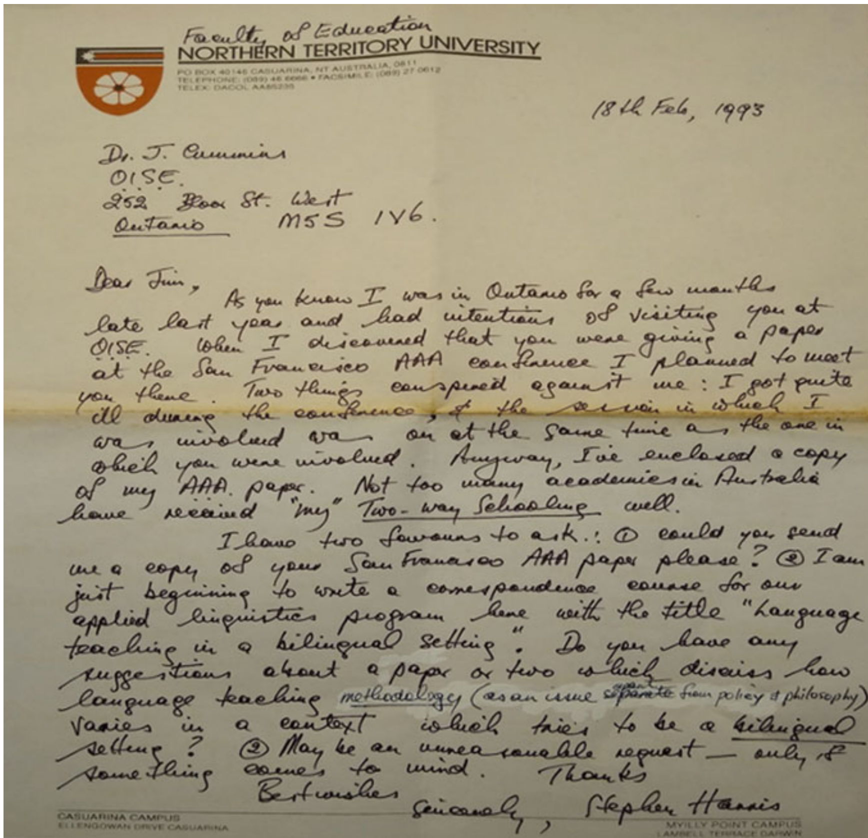
> I assure you I am not playing academic games or trying to score points academically. The stakes are far too important to the Aborigines for that.

These perspectives are reflected in the Preface to his published book where he wrote 'This book, then, is primarily theoretical. … It is selective, aiming merely to develop the theory of a schooling for simultaneous Aboriginal cultural maintenance and academic success' (1990, p. xiii).

Although I am only now making the connection to Stephen's work, I have also tried to highlight the central role that *consequential validity* plays in evaluating the legitimacy of any theoretical construct or framework (Cummins, 2021). In other words, in addition to the criteria of *empirical adequacy* and *logical coherence*, we should also evaluate theoretical propositions with respect to their 'real world' consequences or implications for educational practice.

Stephen's 'new nervousness' about what he called the 'unmodified interdependence hypothesis', derived from the fact that the worldviews of Aboriginal and dominant 'mainstream' culture were so divergent that, in many curricular spheres, transfer of concepts and 'knowledge' was just not possible. Bilingual education that did not recognise this domain separation was likely to undermine the Aboriginal worldview (e.g., by not seriously teaching Aboriginal conceptions of human origins) while simultaneously failing in its efforts to develop western modes of thinking and academic success (e.g., by trying to teach western scientific and mathematical concepts through Aboriginal languages).

My response (dated August 11, 1987) to Stephen's letter is also shown in the Appendix. Word processing and printing technology had finally arrived at that point, with the result that I had (fortunately!) retained a printed copy of the letter. Stephen quoted extensively from this letter in *Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling* (Chap. 5, Notes 2 and 3, pp. 110–111). Although I was aware, in a general way, of the vastly different worldviews of many Indigenous groups in comparison to western Eurocentric perceptions and assumptions, I had not made any connection between this knowledge and its relevance to the interdependence hypothesis. My reaction to Stephen's letter was that 'the case you make for culture domain separation is extremely convincing'. It seemed to me at the time (and still today) that it offered at least a partial explanation as to why previous bilingual and non-bilingual programs for Indigenous students had not lived up to expectations. It also seemed to provide a 'coherent direction for future program planning'. I suggested that a close reading of the interdependence hypothesis suggests that it could stand unmodified, based on the fact that Aboriginal language instruction may not have been very effective in developing Aboriginal



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18th Feb, 1993

Dr. J. Cummins
OISE.
252 Bloor St. West
Ontario M5S 1V6.

Dear Jim,

As you know I was in Ontario for a few months late last year and had intentions of visiting you at OISE. When I discovered that you were giving a paper at the San Francisco AAA conference I planned to meet you there. Two things conspired against me: I got quite ill during the conference, & the session in which I was involved was on at the same time as the one in which you were involved. Anyway, I've enclosed a copy of my AAA paper. Not too many academics in Australia have received "my" Two-way Schooling well.

I have two favours to ask.: ① could you send me a copy of your San Francisco AAA paper please? ② I am just beginning to write a correspondence course for our applied linguistics program here with the title "Language teaching in a bilingual setting". Do you have any suggestions about a paper or two which discuss how language teaching methodology (as an issue separate from policy & philosophy) varies in a context which tries to be a bilingual setting? ③ May be an unreasonable request — only if something comes to mind. Thanks

Best wishes
Sincerely, Stephen Harris

CASUARINA CAMPUS
MYILLY POINT CAMPUS

Fig. 9.2 1993 letter from Stephen Harris

literacy and other academic skills (for reasons related to societal power relations and the divergence of world views between dominant and Aboriginal communities). Thus, because 'relatively little may have been learned, so relatively little will transfer'. I concluded with the following argument:

> Thus, I think that the interdependence hypothesis can stand unmodified, but it needs to be interpreted and applied to policy and practice very carefully. So basically, I'm trying to have my cake and eat it too—agreeing with the rationale and implementation of two-way bilingual programs involving culture domain separation but also maintaining no inconsistency with a strictly interpreted and applied interdependence hypothesis.

Stephen wrote to me in early January 1990 to let me know that his book had recently been accepted for publication (it had been completed in 1987). He also asked my permission to include two quotations from my 1987 letter in his book. I was obviously very happy to agree to their inclusion.

My last letter from Stephen was dated 18 February 1993 (Fig. 9.2). He explained why it didn't work out for us to meet while he was in North America. I found very

poignant his comment that 'Not too many academics in Australia have received "my" *Two-way Schooling* well'.

As I prepared this paper, I read again Stephen's book *Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling*, and the lucidity and logic of his arguments jump off the pages. In a context where bilingual/two-way education for Aboriginal students has been largely shut down since 2008, with the loss of immeasurable human potential, my hope is that these ideas can again take root in Australian and international Indigenous contexts. I end this heartfelt tribute to Stephen Harris's educational legacy with a quotation from Beth Graham's (2020) book *Living and Learning in a Yolŋu World* that evokes the intellectual charisma that Stephen brought to discussions of Indigenous education, followed by a summary account that appeared in my recent book (Cummins, 2021) of Stephen's theoretical contributions and impact in a global context that still stubbornly refuses to listen to the voices and wisdom of Indigenous communities.

> Although the schools in the Kimberley were not following bilingual programs, news about some of the insights we were gaining and the approaches we were developing must have filtered across the NT border. Mostly people wanted us to share insights about literacy and numeracy and if, on occasion, Stephen Harris was present, teachers would hang on every word he said about learning styles. It opened up new ways of thinking about what was happening in classrooms (Graham, 2020: 232).

> The sociolinguistic and instructional context are also relevant to the question of whether schools should always attempt to teach for transfer and promote L1/L2 interdependence. Australian researcher Stephen Harris (1990) made a persuasive argument for caution in teaching for transfer in his seminal book *Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling: Education and Cultural Survival*. Harris suggested that the gap in world views between Aboriginal and western cultures is so great that bilingual education programs should clearly separate western and Aboriginal cultural domains, with English used exclusively for the former and Aboriginal languages for the latter. He suggested that using the Aboriginal language as a means of teaching the concepts of western schooling risks undermining the Aboriginal culture and contributing to language and cultural shift. Harris is not questioning the importance or legitimacy of bilingual education for Indigenous communities but rather the most effective ways of allocating instructional resources to ensure cultural and linguistic survival as well as strong academic development in conventional school subjects. These considerations are relevant to Indigenous communities around the world who should be encouraged and enabled to make instructional decisions informed by the local sociolinguistic and sociopolitical context. Unfortunately, as Australian educator Beth Graham points out in her moving and poignant memoir, Indigenous communities in Australia (and elsewhere) are still excluded from meaningful participation in schools and the broader society and this coercive process of exclusion diminishes members of the dominant group as much as it does the minoritised group: 'If we would only listen to their stories, songs, and wisdom, we may find a new way of belonging to this ancient land' (Graham, 2020, p. 267), (Cummins, 2021, p. 259).

Appendix 1: 1987 Letter from Stephen Harris and Reply from Jim Cummins

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NAILSWORTH
South Australia
Australia 5083

14th July, '87

Dr. James Cummins,
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor St West,
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 1V6

Dear Dr. Cummins,
I worked for eight years as an advisor to the Northern Territory Aboriginal bilingual program before taking up a twelve month Research Fellowship here in Adelaide (South Australia) at The Flinders University to work on the topic of two-way Aboriginal schooling.

Your writing on bilingual education has been an inspiration to us in the Northern Territory. Now as a result of my thinking over the last couple of years, and here this year, I want to write that the interdependence hypothesis needs to be altered for minority groups with very different world views than that of the mainstream culture. Some of my friends have warned me that unless I am right, such a statement from me could prove to be very discouraging and confusing to teachers in bilingual schools, because of the degree to which I am associated with Aboriginal bilingual education and with explaining and "applying" your hypotheses.

It would be extremely helpful to me, therefore, and to those I seek to serve, if you could react to pages 20–25 of the enclosed chapter 5 of the first draft of a book on Two-Way Schooling which will be the result of this year's work. I've enclosed a table of contents and Chapter 1 to give you some context of what I am trying to write about. I must admit that I have no strong interpretation of why the Rock Point Navajo school did so well, in the light of my new nervousness about the unmodified interdependence hypothesis, unless good

2.

teaching in the Anglo domain and resolution of intergroup power relations in favour of the Navajos (Cummins, 1986) provide the two main explanations.

I assure you I am not playing academic games or trying to score points academically - the stakes are far too important to the Aborigines for that.

One of my advisors this year is Dr (and Sister) Dierdre Jordan, who met you when she was visiting T. Skutnabb-Kangas (?) in Europe. Dierdre thinks you will not mind my writing to you in this way.

Finally, if you are willing to react to the enclosed pages, 20-25 - Chapter 5, it would be very helpful to me if you could get back to me by say 12th September, as I should be well into revisions by then.

With thanks and best wishes

Sincerely

Stephen Harris.

Dear Stephen:

Thank you for sending me the two chapters of your book on two-way bilingual schooling. The perspective in the book is one that I had not thought about in any extended way before but the case you make for culture domain separation is extremely convincing. It appears not only to provide at least a partial explanation for why previous bilingual and non-bilingual programs for Aborigine groups have not worked as well as was expected but also a coherent direction for future program planning.

I have recently been involved (briefly) with Indian groups in Arizona and also have become more involved with Inuit programs in Canada and intuitively the ideas you are developing appear to have profound implications for those groups in addition to Aborigine populations. I am enclosing a paper by Terri McCarthy on the Rough Rock program which you may find interesting. I think it illustrates how a good idea (community control) can get screwed up both by funding/administrative uncertainties imposed by the mainstream society and by the lack of clear culture domain separation. Only lip-service appears to have been paid to Navajo language and culture and always subsumed to mainstream criteria of what is really important in schools. The structural clarity that your scheme would confer in this type of situation would go quite a long way towards really empowering communities, rather than giving the appearance of empowerment but always with white men pushing the buttons in the background.

With respect to the interdependence principle, what you say follows logically from the discussion of how far removed Aborigine and mainstream cultures and functions of literacy are from each other. I agree fully with your view that teaching western academic skills of hypothetical problem-solving, context-reduced use of language etc. through Aborigine languages is probably not an appropriate strategy because of how different these modes of thought appear to be from preferred Aborigine thought processes and use of language. However, on close reading, I'm not sure that the interdependence hypothesis itself requires modification, even though the typical policy implcation of the hypothesis does not fit the Aborigine situation. The hypothesis as you have quoted it on p. 21 states that "to the extent that instruction through a minority language is effective in developing academic proficiency in the minority language, transfer of this proficiency ... etc.)". The important aspects in the present context are @UX{to the extent that}. What is clear from your description is that instruction through Aboriginal languages is not particularly effective in developing at least certain kinds of academic skills in those languages, for the reasons you discuss. Hence, this strategy (L1 instruction) is not likely to be very effective in developing these same skills in English; transfer of what has been learned will probably occur (as predicted by the hypothesis) but relatively

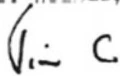
little may have been learned so relatively little will transfer.

Thus, I think that the interdependence hypothesis can stand unmodified, but it needs to be interpreted and applied to policy and practice very carefully. So basically, I'm trying to have my cake and eat it too - agreeing with the rationale and implementation of two-way bilingual programs involving culture domain separation but also maintaining no inconsistency with a strictly interpreted and applied interdependence hyopothesis. I'd be interested to get your reactions to this when you get time.

I'm also enclosing a paper by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas which may be relevant to your Chapter on power relations - certainly I have found Galtung's ideas useful. Deirdre may already have passed this on to you but if not you may find it interesting.

Say hello to Deirdre for me. There is a possibility I may be coming to the ATESOL Conference in January 1989. If it works out I would be really interested in getting together and talking more about some of these issues.

Best wishes,



Jim Cummins

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Chapter 10
"You Only Learn to Read Once": Stephen Harris's Insights and Professional Leadership in the NT Bilingual Program

Frances Murray

Abstract Stephen Harris's ability to share his knowledge and research with those involved in the Northern Territory's bilingual programs for remote Indigenous-language-speaking students ensured the highest quality of bilingual program delivery. His professional influence and social justice agenda positively impacted teachers' practice, as they worked with him in this field. In many discussions and meetings, he revealed important evidence-based truths about cross-cultural knowledges and ways of viewing the world. Stephen's prolific writing in this field has greatly influenced teachers' orientations to cross-cultural teaching in these contexts. It is with respect and thanks that we acknowledge his work and ongoing positive influence on the effectiveness of bilingual education and cross-cultural teaching in remote NT communities.

Keywords Bilingual · Children · Education · Language · Learning

"*You only learn to read once*", Stephen stated matter-of-factly, to quell an informal argument against bilingual education. The setting was a Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education Curriculum Office and the conversation was casual, but fraught with political overtones. Some people were seated at their desks. Others were standing near Stephen's desk. Young children entering school at five years of age with no English, and from oral cultural backgrounds, need the support of learning through their own language to achieve initial literacy (McMahon & Murray, 2000). They can only acquire literacy skills in a language they speak and understand. Stephen was explaining to the others the fact that when children know how to read in their first language (L1), this skill is easily transferred to the second one (L2).

"Bilingual education costs too much" said the naysayers, "and why are we holding up the learning of English literacy until Year 4"? "They need English to get on in life"! So went the negative, naïve comments about what 'outsiders' (within education) thought was Bilingual Education.

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Stephen didn't ever have to say much, because what he did say carried such influence and undeniable knowledge that no response was either adequate or required. Yet, in the process, he had not made one enemy!

Stephen was a 'down-to-earth' person with the insights of a gifted academic, the latter being who he was. When I mention the name 'Stephen Harris' in teacher Professional Development workshops, someone always recalls that he wrote 'Aboriginal Learning Styles' (Harris, 1984). Those who were around in those years—the 1970s and early 1980s—know what a revelation this piece of work was to teachers in classrooms. Teachers were trying to teach the only way they knew how to, and were bewildered by the children's unpredictable behavioural responses. Until Stephen's work in this area, it was not formally recognised that children from different cultural backgrounds would learn in different ways or respond to Western teaching strategies in ways unpredictable to the teachers.

Teachers, of course, recognised that the children spoke their own language and not English. However, many people around the world fitted this profile. Teachers' expectations of appropriate learning behaviours matched those of 'Western schooling'; i.e., attentive listening when the teacher was talking, responding to (de-contextualised) questions on demand, sitting/standing in one place whilst 'teaching' was happening, etc.

Stephen's research in this area opened teachers' eyes to students' classroom behaviours, which did not match the expectations of formal Western schooling at all. Now, however, after Stephen's publication came out, teachers had a better understanding about why students responded in these unpredictable and 'foreign' ways, to their teaching input. Stephen brought the insights of a different discipline, Anthropology, to those in the field of Education, with positive outcomes (Harris, 1984, 1988, 1990).

Teachers could see for the first time that they didn't have a 'behaviour management' problem; that the children were not being 'badly behaved'; that the children were not personally insulting the teacher, or being rude and inconsiderate. The cultural ways of formal western teaching and learning practices were unfamiliar to the children, and teachers needed to include *'how to learn in school'* as part of the curriculum, without denigrating the ways children learned *outside* of school. In Beth Graham's words, children needed to be taught 'school culture' as different to 'home culture' (Graham, 2020). This was a new idea: a bicultural form of learning through two cultural world views.

I am sure this influenced Stephen's stance on domain separation within the Bilingual Program in Indigenous schools in the NT. This approach to bilingual instruction in these contexts was very successful both *culturally and linguistically in the classroom context*, and I continue to advise Bilingual schools to use it. Where students' first language is fragile, changing under the heavy influence of English, towards creolisation, threatening potential language loss, it is more important than ever that children learn to discriminate between their own language and English, and become strong in both. When this happens, students will be able to switch between both languages and cultures, based on sociocultural need and context. I supported Stephen's concept of domain separation for the bilingual implementation of the curriculum; that is, a

physical form of domain separation where English was taught in one area of the classroom and L1 taught in another. This supported young students, who could use their own language in either space, but knew the teacher would be speaking the language identified with that space in the next lesson. This made the bilingual implementation more predictable for young children.

Stephen's work and advocacy in this bilingual, bicultural field impacted positively on thousands of students who were educated bilingually in the NT from the 1970s to 2009. The young children whom I co-taught with local language speakers, needed to understand that this foreign concept of literacy (marks on paper) can happen in both languages. It helped them to know that their own language was located in a particular area in the classroom and when they looked at another part of the classroom, the 'marks' on paper represented the new/additional/foreign language, English. This was a simple, but very effective classroom strategy brought about by Stephen's insights.

Stephen's work and professional support provided me with the courage to plan, develop and implement a teaching approach we called 'The Jirnani Approach' (Murray & Gastin, 1980). This was based on the fact that if Tiwi children were to be taught in Tiwi, through Tiwi, then the Tiwi staff, the assistant teachers, needed to have control over the whole learning experience, given that there are recognised *Aboriginal Learning Styles* that are different from those seen as successful school behaviours in Western classrooms by English-language speakers.

In the Jirnani Approach, Assistant Teacher were responsible for the total learning experience of a group of children: from planning what to teach in team-planning time, to implementing the pedagogy, and assessing the students' progress. This was done in a two-way mentor relationship between the class teacher, the only English speaker in the classroom, and the Tiwi Assistant Teacher, who spoke English, in addition to Tiwi. Stephen's work, wisdom and encouragement enabled us to move fluidly across our teaching roles, and relinquish 'responsibility' for instruction in and through Tiwi, to the assistant teachers as our partners, in the bilingual teaching process.

'Our (Bilingual Education) goal is to graduate competent bilingual/bicultural young adults', Stephen stated. In order to achieve this, Stephen introduced us to, and continued to advocate for, the *maintenance* model of bilingual instruction. In other words, the NT bilingual programs were never to be implemented as Transfer models, where the first language (L1) was used until children had enough English to learn through English, which then completely replaced L1 in the classroom.

The Northern Territory's Bilingual Education Policy in Stephen's time, based on his advice and leadership, was one of *maintenance* of learning in and through both languages (L1 and L2) until graduation. He supported the Staircase Model of bilingual instruction, inspired by his visit to Rockpoint School in New Mexico, USA, where the student profile was similar to Indigenous children in remote areas of Australia. This model maintained the role of L1 until the end of school, in different proportions, as students developed both their L1 and learnt their L2 to high cognitive levels (Murray, 1985).

This bilingual model of teaching which allowed for equity of access to learning (through L1), was not readily accepted politically, or easily maintained, with many critics pushing for an English-only approach. The exceptionally high teacher-turnover rate in remote Indigenous communities in the NT meant that these crucial messages about the human right to learn through one's own language and the educational advantages it bestowed, had to be visible and available at all times to all school staff. Stephen led a team of people who worked closely with schools to ensure that this was the case.

One of the greatest impacts of the establishment of bilingual-bicultural education in the NT was the establishment of a teacher-training pathway for assistant teachers in communities. The assistant teachers each had active teaching roles in the classrooms as they spoke the children's languages. They were therefore seen as teachers through the process of intercultural team-teaching. They saw themselves as teachers and for some years in the 1980s and 1990s, most bilingual schools in the NT had two or more fully qualified local teachers responsible for teaching one group of students in and through *two* languages: their own and the additional language, English. This momentum in the growth of trained local Indigenous staff has not continued since and this targeted teacher training is now in a state of inertia.

Maintaining the integrity of bilingual-bicultural education in the NT required constant vigilance over the years from 1974 until its demise in 2009, long after Stephen left the NT. Stephen's understated manner of sharing the research-based evidence and therefore how things needed to be, whilst remaining actively engaged in research 'on the ground', found no equal in establishing and enriching the bilingual-bicultural education experience of thousands of Indigenous language-speaking students and their teachers. His knowledge and wisdom in the field continue to guide many of us in the area, even after his passing, as his passion for what remains fair and just, regarding access to *Education for All*, cannot be surpassed. *Social Justice* for minority language speakers underpinned Stephen's cross-cultural insights and he passed this on to those of us who had the advantage of knowing him. Stephen's professional leadership determined determined the foundational strength of Bilingual Education in the NT to the long-lasting benefit of both the Program and those who worked within it. Stephen's ability to work across many contexts with people of all persuasions ensured the effectiveness of the Program. Even after his passing, Stephen's wisdom and knowledge continues to inspire, as advocacy for authentic bilingual instruction continues. Thank you Stephen.

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Frances Murray’s career has focused on bilingual education for Indigenous-language-speaking students, English-additional-language/dialect teaching and learning, and teacher education in these fields. Her work in this area began as an early childhood teacher in an Indigenous bilingual classroom, then as teacher-linguist at Murrupurtiyanuwu school, Wurrumiyanga, and subsequently, curriculum writer, teacher education lecturer at Batchelor College, EAL/D program developer and EAL/D manager at system and Territory levels. She is engaged in on-going education consultancy work with Indigenous bilingual schools in the Northern Territory and English medium-of-instruction schools in the NT and Queensland.

Chapter 11
Different Roles, Similar Goals: Devlin & Harris, 1979–2020

Brian Clive Devlin

Abstract Through a series of stories, and a few selected impressions, the author reflects on his professional association with Stephen Harris over four decades. During that time, not surprisingly, both their roles changed and so did the opportunity to collaborate on a number of shared writing, teaching, course preparation and postgraduate supervision tasks. There were also some lighter moments. The author discovered that, without any loss of respect or affection, he and his colleague could always hold each other accountable for the quality of their writing and the level of trust each expected from the other.

Keyword Stephen Harris · Anthropology · Teacher-linguist · Bilingual education · Applied linguistics · Northern Territory

An Initial Reflection

It is probably easier for me to characterise a person after one brief meeting than it is to find the right words to describe a man I worked with, and regarded as a friend, for more than four decades. A quick encounter lends itself easily to a ready generalisation, or a mischievous focus on some cartoonish detail. This allows a precise word or phrase to be conjured up quickly. Being associated with someone like Stephen Harris for such a long time is a different matter entirely, especially as our work roles and responsibilities changed over the years. There is no escaping the fact that one has engaged with a complex human being, who is just as puzzling as oneself at times. Portraying that in a nuanced, balanced and appropriate way is the challenge.

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Overview

My aim in this chapter is to share some stories about Stephen, focusing first on the 1978–85 period, then on 1986, when I took up his former position, as Principal Education Officer, Bilingual. I go on to recall some of our collaborations and friendly disagreements as university colleagues (1988–1997), and finally I reminisce about the time my wife and I visited Stephen, after he had retired and was living in Tamworth. That leads fairly naturally to a four-part arrangement of the content. There is little chance that I can hoodwink readers with some 'tall tales and true from the legendary past', as both Nancy, my wife for 50-odd years, and Stephen's wife, Joy, can spot a falsehood at 50 paces, so there is no choice but to tell the truth as I remember it in sharing this account.

I know the reader cares little for this, but as the writer of this chapter I have had to constantly struggle with what to include or leave out when it comes to sharing any details about myself. Full disclosure was too scary a prospect, and totally undesirable, but hiding behind a stage curtain was not appropriate either. I leave it to the reader to judge whether I have managed to steer a middle course in that regard. In any case, the one who deserves to be on stage, front and centre, is Stephen. I can only hope that I have managed to arrange the setting and lighting accordingly!

1978–85

In 1978 I was living on Karkar Island with Nancy and our two children, Jenny and Michael. Karkar was our much-loved equatorial island home for two years. There the coconut plantations run down to the sea. The island's volcano, Mt Uluman, ascends 1839 m (6033 ft) into the clouds; by late 1978 it was steaming ominously. Our son had been born in Madang seven months earlier, and it was the inconvenience of needing to fly there a month beforehand that first made me wonder whether we should continue to stay on in Papua New Guinea (PNG). At the time I was working as a secondary school teacher in an English-only school, where all the students knew Tok Pisin and at least one other local language. As it was a boarding school, attendance was never a problem. These young people were eager to learn. They had inherited a belief that education was of central importance in their lives. As one walked around that school, it was customary to see 40 youngsters bent over their work in each classroom, so it was easy to imagine that their fierce concentration, hunger for more print, more knowledge, and more English, would inevitably lead to a better understanding of the Western world. As enjoyable as it was to live and work alongside locals and expatriates in this loveIy setting, I sent off 18 job applications in June that year, once Nancy and I had agreed that it was the right time to look for opportunities elsewhere.

By November I was convinced that all of my applications must have ended up in dead-letter boxes around Australia, for I had heard nothing back from anyone. That is, until the radio telephone outside my office rang one Tuesday morning. Normally,

such a call would have been answered by the headmaster, or the school's deputy, but both were out of their offices. The conversation basically went like this:

– Hello. This is Joanna Japke from the Department of External Territories. Are you still interested in the linguist position? [I didn't realise this at the time, but she was actually referring to a *teacher-linguist* position.]
– I certainly am.
– Good, because I have booked a plane for you on Thursday morning to fly from Karkar to Madang to Port Moresby to Cairns to Darwin, and return two days later.
– That's great. I'll be on it.

It turns out that one of my applications had crossed the desk of Dr Stephen Harris, a man completely unknown to me at the time. I *had* sought a position as a linguist in the Department of Education but, quite correctly, Stephen had sensed that the role of teacher-linguist would be a better fit for me, as it would combine language-learning with educational and managerial responsibilities in a school.

Cos Russo, who was on my three-person interview panel in Darwin, believed that I should be posted to the small community of Numbulwar on the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria. I reluctantly agreed to this, although I was concerned about the availability of medical services there for Jenny, who was five, and Michael, who was not yet one. The other two members of that interview panel were a Commonwealth Teaching Service representative and a quiet, thoughtful man, Stephen Harris. I don't recall if Stephen and I had our first conversation at that time, after the meeting, but I don't think we did.

In December 1978 my wife and I left PNG. It was a wrench for Nancy and me to leave Karkar Island, but the new Australian appointment offered a welcome chance to combine linguistics, cross-cultural learning, research and teaching, while working in Arnhem Land.

We flew to Connecticut in the United States first to stay with my wife's parents. Over the next two months, using materials I had acquired from Yale University, I threw myself into the study of Wubuy, as this was the language I would need to learn in the community where Stephen Harris, Cos Russo and others had said I would be working. However, on landing at Darwin's old airport in January 1979, my family and I were met by an amiable fellow wearing long white socks and carrying a clipboard. I was told that I had been assigned to Yirrkala, which had actually been my preferred destination. So, as soon as I could, I hurried off to the Bilingual Education Section on the third floor of the T&G building in Smith Street and asked the Principal Linguist there, Dr Bruce Sommer, if he could give me everything he could on Gumatj, as this was the language I now needed to learn. Fortunately, he was most obliging, and I gratefully accepted a stack of papers from him on Gumatj, prepared by Joyce Ross, as well as some of Beulah Lowe's Gupapuyŋu language materials.

During the two weeks I had before leaving for Yirrkala, I now immersed myself in the study of two closely related language varieties, Gumatj and Gupapuyŋu, putting to one side the Wubuy materials I had been painstakingly studying. In a sense this was a familiar undertaking. During my five years in Papua New Guinea I had compiled comparative lists of vocabulary drawn from coastal Indigenous languages spoken

in the Madang region, and when I played chess in Madang with the pioneering missionary linguist, Father John Z'graggen, he had listened tolerantly as I told him about my interest in studying and learning some of these vernacular languages. In a real sense then, my adventure as a Gumatj language learner would turn out to be a continuation of my earlier immersive experiences in PNG. However, that was in the future.

In early 1979, before leaving for Yirrkala, I needed to stay in Darwin for the week-long orientation course that was to be held at Kormilda College for staff, such as myself, who would be going out to remote communities to work. One conversation I had at Kormilda with Jim Gallacher was as memorable as it was useful, for he shared with me his detailed knowledge of Yirrkala, its clans and its leaders. Also, I heard more about Stephen Harris, who was four years my senior, a man with a deep connection to the Territory, and esteemed for the wise counsel he could offer those working with Aboriginal children.

I did not expect to do much more than listen when I met Stephen again in Darwin. However, I was surprised by how comfortable I felt in his presence. We talked easily, as it turned out, and about many things, but what I remember most about these first conversations was that we had both enjoyed working in Papua New Guinea. We both liked cross-cultural work and wanted to see Indigenous people in positions of responsibility. An early point of agreement was that we both detested bullies and bullying behaviour of any sort. Stephen modestly claimed that he was not any good at learning languages, but I was not convinced, since it was obvious that he had a good grasp of Tok Pisin, which I had tried out on him.

Stephen asked about my growing-up years. I told him that although I had been born into a stable, loving family in Victoria, I had an insatiable desire to travel, to learn other languages and to be involved in work that would help make the world a better place. I told him that in the late 1960s I had visited Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Thailand, and whenever I had the opportunity to stay in villages, I would set out to learn the local vernacular language and use it as much as possible. Since arriving in PNG in early 1974 I had felt drawn to learn more about the many *ples tok*, or vernacular languages, spoken there, and had made progress in learning a few of them in my out-of-work hours. For example, I had picked up enough to understand one story told by an old man I spent time with in Bongu village. He told me that he had once discovered a magic stone (a *gitang*) while crossing a shallow river and, until it was lost during a Japanese bombing raid in the Second World War, he had used it to help yam plants grow well and attract fish to his canoe. As he told me these stories and mimicked the incantations he used with the fish and yams, as if still holding that river pebble in front of his mouth, he would be sitting cross-legged on a length of printed fabric, chewing betel nut, continuously dipping a green pepper (*daga*) into lime, which he kept in a bamboo holder.

Stephen had a comparable story to tell. When he was gathering companions to help him carry school supplies on his hikes to other villages, the subject of safety always came up. Village rivalries and paybacks, either in the form of physical threat or sorcery were very real and had to be taken into account when planning the route of the trip on foot. On one hike across a valley his companions dived to the ground and he

felt a forceful blast of air pass his shoulder, but there was no visible cause. Shaken, he helped everyone gather up the dropped articles and asked what had happened. They fearfully said that the village they were circling around had 'sent a warning'. After that he paid closer attention to their circuitous planned routes on village visits!

He also had another, funnier story. The translation team he and Joy were working with wanted to visit a village to choose a teacher trainee. It was a very remote area which had not been visited by a 'white man'. Stephen and Joy were warned that the customary greeting was an exuberant grab at the 'privates' and then a tight body hug and a lift into the air with musical ululating from the women to accompany these actions. Joy later on said, 'Wow, was it a sight to behold. If only I had had a video camera. Needless to say, I stayed in the vehicle'.

We also talked about our previous studies and some of our work roles. I told him that I had joined Australia's Department of External Territories in 1972. After a year's solid training in Canberra (which included Professor Tom Dutton's Tok Pisin Course and Dr Cal Zinkel's wonderful presentations on education in developing countries) I had travelled north with my wife and daughter, and 20 other education officers and their families, to serve in Papua New Guinea's secondary school system. The changes I had noticed on an earlier visit in 1968 were accelerating.

Stephen and I shared our impressions of the modernisation which had come to the villages, not only in the form of a cash economy, transistor radios, cassette players and, sometimes, new roads, but for some, it also brought freedom from fear—of the darkness, sorcery, punitive raids, and sickness—and the opportunity to become citizens of the modern world, no longer bound by the restrictions of village life. I told Stephen that as my appreciation of traditional rural lifestyles grew, so did my concern about the relentless modernisation that was so obviously contributing to the pollution of our planet. Stephen listened closely, and asked good follow-on questions. I told him that I regretted the passing of an ancient oral culture, at a time when many of the young people had their hearts and minds set on white-collar jobs in the towns, though the old people still valued village life and its customs. Stephen agreed that traditional values, cultures, languages and lifestyles in that country were being challenged by the unrelenting pace of modern life.

At this time Stephen was a valued senior advisor in head office, and I was about to take up a position in the field. It is clear to me now as I look back, and think about the respective roles we had then, that Stephen had willingly taken on the role of mentor to help guide the teacher-linguists who had accepted the challenge of working in bilingual programs at remote rural schools in the Northern Territory. From January 1979 until the end of 1981 he was clearly the mentor, the thought leader, the advisor and helper, and I was the keen, sometimes frustrated, learner.

In 1979 I began work at Yirrkala Community School as a teacher-linguist, a role that I would have for three years. It was an exciting, absorbing challenge. It was my responsibility to learn the Gumatj language, co-ordinate the provision of teaching materials in that language, extend the bilingual program into the upper primary school years, and continue on-site training for Aboriginal teaching assistants. I would relish these tasks, I thought, as I imagined myself joining a group of dedicated, supportive

professionals who had similar, or at least complementary, goals. This was not exactly the case.

After landing in the flat, red-earth country at Gove Airport with my family and then arriving in Yirrkala, I had felt the vague stirrings of what you might call stage fright mixed with culture shock. When I went for my first walk to look around, nobody came forward with a greeting, and no children ran out to stare as they often did in Papua New Guinea. Skinny, leathery camp dogs growled at my presence.

In time though, I found myself caring deeply for the Aboriginal people I worked with and was deeply appreciative of my developing relationship with them as an adopted member of the Yunupiŋu family, but it was still immensely frustrating if students or teachers did not turn up for scheduled sessions. Nor did it help that some non-Aboriginal colleagues plainly stated their opposition to the bilingual education program. One waged war by means of regular, disapproving notes; for example, if I met with small groups of Aboriginal staff without seeking her approval beforehand, I was 'going behind her back'.

During those early years at Yirrkala, I met with Stephen on quite a few occasions: at meetings, conferences, inservices, school visits, or when he and Joy would invite Nancy, me and our two young children to enjoy a meal at their house, or a picnic with them on Fort Hill wharf, which was not closed off then as it is today. These discussions were a tonic, for I felt I was in the company of two caring people, who not only completely understood my PNG-Arnhem Land comparisons, but could advise me when I outlined what I was trying to achieve as teacher-linguist and detailed some of the obstacles I saw myself facing. Stephen was as pleased as I was when the bilingual program at Yirrkala School was evaluated and accredited during my time there.

After Stephen's Ph.D. thesis had been edited by Joy, it was published in book form and retitled: *Culture and learning: Tradition and education in Northeast Arnhem Land* (Harris, 1980). It would not be too far off the mark to claim that it was this publication that significantly boosted Stephen's local reputation as an advisor and scholar, and it attracted some overseas interest as well. This book was appreciatively read, and shared, by many staff working in school-based bilingual education programs. By the end of his four years tenure as Senior Education Officer (Anthropology), Stephen Harris was a well-known and respected figure in remote Northern Territory schools and further afield as well.

What I and others particularly appreciated was that Stephen was a good listener, who would make a careful note of any requests that I and others working in bush locations might have. At that time principals were *administratively* responsible for the work of teacher-linguists in their school's bilingual program, but head office advisory staff (people like Stephen Harris and Cos Russo) were assigned *professional* responsibility for our work. This was a somewhat clunky arrangement, but it did mean that many of the more conceptual questions—such as, 'What are the best available tools to assess vernacular language proficiency?'—would be directed to these head office advisers rather than the school principal. It was as a result of such discussions that field staff were drawn into a better understanding of the principles and practices of effective bilingual-bicultural education.

That phrase, *bilingual-bicultural education*, began to be commonly used in the 1980s, thanks to Stephen's scholarly advocacy work. For example, in 1985 a parliamentary committee reported that

> bilingual programs incorporate history and culture associated with the mother tongue. Thus bilingual programs are, to varying extents, also bicultural programs. Dr Stephen Harris of the Northern Territory Department of Education, has defined bicultural education as: in its broadest sense…the teaching of two ways of life. A bicultural school is one where at all levels the Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal staff ratios, classroom subject content, languages of instruction, teaching styles, and sources of decision-making significantly represent both cultures.
>
> (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education, 1985)

From 1983, for several years, I was Principal of Shepherdson College on Elcho Island and during that time the bilingual program at that school was also accredited by the NT Department of Education. Thanks to its hard-working, capable staff, the students at Shepherdson were found to have done as well or better than students in English-only Aboriginal schools which did not have bilingual-biliteracy programs. By this time, Stephen had been promoted to Principal Education Officer, Bilingual. He spent a few days at Shepherdson College during the Dry Season, and ran workshops for staff as well as visiting teachers and students in the bilingual classes. On arriving at the school one time, he was a little miffed at first to discover that we were not as well primed for his visit as he had expected. I had to explain that on some days we could have up to 10 unannounced visitors taking advantage of the fine weather. Each visitor would expect to be given priority, as a matter of course. Stephen's visit had, unfortunately coincided with other planeloads of contractors and visitors, and so I was not able to set aside as much time for discussion as he wanted. Otherwise, he had a satisfactory visit and was pleased to see a good bilingual program in operation.

In 1985 staff from the South Australian Education Department and Flinders University's School of Education were at a joint planning meeting. During a coffee break, the question came up informally, 'whose writings have had the greatest impact in the field of Aboriginal education?' As two delegates recalled, 'there was surprising unanimity around the table—we all agreed that during the preceding five years the work of Stephen Harris had provoked the most debate, analysis and change' (Hughes and Teasdale in Harris, 1990, p. ix). This put in train a series of events: Professor Colin Power, who was visiting Darwin some time later, invited Stephen to come to Adelaide and join an ongoing research project; a grant was secured through the Commonwealth Projects of National Significance Program; and a 12-month, full-time position as Research Fellow in Education was offered. Before he accepted, Stephen contacted me to see if I would be willing to take over his role as Principal Education Officer (PEO) Bilingual, in 1986—on an acting basis for one year. (I was away overseas at the time, for in the second half of 1985 I had left Arnhem Land for New York City to defend my doctoral dissertation on intergenerational language shift). I told him it would be an honour to accept.

1986

When I took up the PEO role in 1986, I began to understand more about the Bilingual Section and Stephen's former role in it. It soon became apparent to me that, in addition to his formal credentials, he had brought to this role a quiet, diplomatic manner, the knowledge he had gained through his extensive experience of the Northern Territory, his doctoral research at Milingimbi into how Aboriginal children learn, his earlier public service positions, and the previous literacy work he had done in Papua New Guinea.

From the moment I first sat down, at what had been Stephen's desk, in January 1986, I could immediately see how organised he had been. Neatly arranged before me, clearly labelled, and with accompanying notes, were the manuscripts of books that were to be checked, then published. These included the 1986 *Bilingual handbook* and Beth Graham's *Team teaching*. When I called for any departmental file to assist with some Ministerial inquiry, prepare a report, or just to fill in the many gaps in my own knowledge, I would invariably come across some sensible, thoughtfully drafted memorandum that Stephen had written. My respect for him grew, as I realised how diplomatic and constructive he was as a communicator.

I gave careful thought to what I could contribute as Stephen's successor in that role. How to follow on from a man who has led the way in helping others to understand Aboriginal learning styles, and how the aims of bilingual-bicultural education programs might be achieved? As Dorothy Mehan has recalled,

> at the regular Bilingual Program Conferences in Darwin Dr Stephen Harris discussed his views about important differences between traditional learning styles and formal Western education. In traditional Aboriginal society children are used to learning in real life situations without a great deal of verbal instruction. Western schools set up a sequence of skills to be learnt in a formal setting with much more verbal teaching. Dr Harris explained that traditional learning styles were not necessarily suited to the classroom, and so some current classroom methods are more compatible than others with the learning styles familiar to Aboriginal children. These methods could therefore be very useful, especially in the early years of schooling. (Mehan, 2017, p. 68)

It soon became clear though what areas needed attention. One important early task in my new PEO Bilingual role was to continue Stephen's efforts to align the work of bilingual advisory staff with that of the linguists, so that all were focused on supporting students in schools. Accordingly, I arranged a two-day meeting, February 18th–19th, 1986 with the linguists Drs Ian Green, Nicki Piper, Bruce Sommer and Alan Walker, to see what could be done to co-ordinate our joint efforts. Education staff and linguists had collaborated well sometimes, but there was a need for a more cohesive plan, and better information management. I knew that this had been Stephen's view as well. An additional perspective that I shared with the linguists was that one of the symptoms of our compartmentalised thinking was that money was being spent on installing incompatible computer hardware and software. A better plan of action was needed. For example, to ensure that special characters, such as 'tailed n' (ŋ) could be printed on an Epsom FX-100 printer, the head office solution had been to modify the codes in the Intel 2764 EPROM that generated the printer

codes, whereas literature production centres at schools with bilingual programs were beginning to use Macintosh-laser printer configurations that had easily bypassed this problem. Some months later after that meeting, on October 24th Dr Alan Walker, wrote a follow-up letter, which noted that 'our meeting of bilingual advisory staff and linguists in February last was a significant step forward in Bilingual Education'.

Another key task as PEO Bilingual was to draft responses to external queries and criticism, for the Minister of Education, just as Stephen had done. In 1985 and 1986 several prominent people had queried the Northern Territory Government's continuing ability and willingness to fund bilingual education, a concern fueled by staff cuts in 1985; for example, three positions in the Bilingual Program had been lost: two field linguists and an adviser. Accordingly, many letters criticising these cuts and bemoaning the paltry level of funding available were received by the NT Minister for Education. For example, Mr. Yami Lester, Director, Institute for Aboriginal Development wrote a pointed letter on December 13th 1985 and Professor M.A.K. Halliday, President of the Australian Linguistic Society, sent an equally hard-hitting letter on May 13th 1986. Bob Wharton, President of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, voiced his discontent in a radio interview on March 4th, 1986. In reply the Minister for Education pointed out that 'this reduction formed part of an overall reduction of 50 head office positions in the Department of Education which arose out of severe financial constraints imposed by the current economic climate' (Letter from Tom Harris to Yami Lester, March 10th, 1986). This was true. At that time it was possible to assure concerned letter writers that the government had no plans to gut the bilingual program. Years later it was not possible to give such an assurance, much to my regret and Stephen's.

1988–1997

In early 1987, at the suggestion of Geoff Hodgson, a more senior departmental colleague, I met with Dr Jim Cameron, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Darwin Institute of Technology, to see if it was possible to develop a course that would help prepare graduates for specialist roles, such as teacher-linguist, in a remote school's bilingual program. Jim agreed that it was possible and he explained how we could build on preparatory work done by many others and offer what would become the first Graduate Diploma of Applied Linguistics offered by an Australian University.

A month or so later I was invited by Chris Walton, in that same Faculty of Education, to apply for a position there as Senior Lecturer. As I recall, I was given about an hour to put my application in by fax before close of business one Friday afternoon. Fortunately, the application was successful. My main task for the remainder of that year was to write unit information books and study guides, and to compile resource packs for several units in the Applied Linguistics course. Dr Paul Black, Chris Walton and Keith Downer also assisted with that task. Two years later, Dr Stephen Harris joined the staff as Senior Lecturer. Later, in 1992, he was promoted, becoming Reader in Education. He was well-qualified for these university roles as

he had a BA (Sydney), an MA and Ph.D. (New Mexico), and many years of cross-cultural experience, including eight years serving as a senior or principal advisor in the NT Bilingual Program.

Stephen helped to strengthen the Applied Linguistics program by contributing to course units such as *Language in society*, *Language, learning and culture, Language teaching in a bilingual setting*, *Course design in bilingual education*, *Sociocultural foundations of education* and *Aboriginal education priorities*. His focus was squarely on Aboriginal education. He was pleased to be at the university, he told me. It soon became obvious that our students were happy that he had joined us as well. He turned out to be a thoughtful, encouraging teacher and an excellent postgraduate supervisor.

Some scholars' offices are untidy and cluttered, a mess of books and papers. Stephen's office was spartan by comparison with most. His collection of books was surprisingly modest. On his shelves there were just a few volumes on anthropology, psychology and Aboriginal education, plus some sociology texts that Professor Deidre Jordan had given him when she retired. For the most part he used his book-shelves to store course unit folders, face down in rows. It was here that he kept all the relevant readings, study guides and unit introductions. His room was, come to think of it, the most organised and unpretentious scholar's office I had ever seen. Anyone knocking on his half-open door would be heartily invited in, but then Stephen would remain seated and wait, looking serious, his glasses perched halfway down his nose, until he found out the reason for the visit. At least once a week he would spend a day in the library, reading. This had long been his practice, and it was a routine he had begun, as far as I know, when he had first taken up that first head office position in Darwin.

From the outset, Stephen made it clear that he would not be accepting an administrative role at the university, and so he never expressed interest in co-ordinating the Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics or serving as Director of the Centre for Studies of Language in Education after Professor Frances Christie had left. He and I had an earnest conversation about this, for it was my view that administrative responsibilities such as course coordination or research centre management needed to be rotated, to avoid saddling just a few people with them for too long. However, Stephen could not be dissuaded. When I asked again in 1992, he insisted that the Reader in Education was solely an academic appointment, which meant that he should not be expected to take on administrative work. When I pointed out that he was actually really good at managing programs, as I had discovered in 1986, and on those grounds, he should not say no to this role, Stephen merely shrugged, and told me that his mind was made up. It was a slightly awkward situation, as the other Applied Linguistics staff had always been willing to take their turn as course coordinators. However, since I did not want to cause our otherwise excellent working relationship to turn sour, I conceded, although I would have preferred more of a give-and-take negotiation with a better outcome.

As the Applied Linguistics program matured, and student numbers grew, several of the other staff and I tried hard to obtain more support, as we were finding it challenging to balance consultancies, research projects, and lecturing commitments while all the while needing to spend long hours marking students' work. It was

customary to use our own consultancy income to buy in marking assistance, but this was a limited, somewhat expensive solution. Staff complaints about onerous workloads grew. One professor's response was to criticise us for not managing our time well, alleging that we were wearing ourselves out by spending too much time on administrative tasks such as preparing lengthy course accreditation documents. When a Faculty Committee was set up to investigate staff workloads, it only added to the demands on our time, as it led to more meetings and record keeping. At one fraught course meeting, when other staff and I were debating possible solutions, without getting anywhere, it became apparent that these proceedings were making Stephen uncomfortable. 'You're all poets!', he loudly declared. It was meant as a put down. Soon afterwards, he excused himself from the meeting.

Stephen was always happy to teach, to supervise postgraduate research students, to mark students' work carefully and to give additional seminars. These were generally arranged each month by the Centre for Studies of Language in Education, in conjunction with the School of Language and Cultural Studies. For example, on Friday August 1993, Stephen presented a paper titled 'Language immersion: friend or foe of indigenous minorities' at one well-attended seminar.

One of the course units that Stephen and I jointly prepared was *Language in Society*. Writing these unit materials for off-campus students was an enjoyable collaborative exercise from start to finish. As co-writers, we were comfortable encouraging and critiquing each other's work as we went along, and so the work proceeded smoothly. He, Dr Rob Amery and I would often share titles of new books and articles that we thought would be relevant. Stephen's preferred way of doing this was to photocopy a published article or chapter that had caught his eye and to staple a handwritten note to it. For example, when bringing Fishman (1994) to my attention, Stephen wrote:

> I think the paper discusses some important issues … 'identity continuity and ethnocultural continuity proper are two quite different things'. One important point he could have developed (relevant to Aboriginal English) is that the *ways* a language is used can be as important as the *language* used in this context. I think it is a paper worth using. It's recent & by Fishman. It's a pity his last section on Jewish experience couldn't have been more explanatory or written more simply. One sentence over 1/4r page long. But worth using if [there's] 'room'. Depends how good [the] competing ones are. Stephen.

Dr Peter Carroll accepted responsibility for teaching our *Language in Society* unit in the second half of 1996. He taught it for one semester then wrote a letter to say:

> I was impressed by the practical approach of the unit and found it helpful to do some further reading in this area of linguistics. An interesting feature was that many of the students are teachers working in Aboriginal communities throughout Australia. In answering assignments most students drew examples from their own situation so I found reading the assignments gave me insight into the education situation in several different communities. (Personal communication)

Another of Stephen's course units, written in conjunction with Dr Merridy Malin, was *Sociocultural foundations*. The first set of readings for this unit prompted students to see the world differently, drawing on Bucknall (1982), Christie (1985), Graham

(1982) and the second chapter from Harris (1990). A second theme, 'Aboriginal educational aspirations', was based on six readings (Brown, 1990; Lanhupuy, 1988; McClay, 1988; Poulson, 1988; Thies, 1987; Wunungmurra, 1988). There were seven other themes: bilingual education in the NT, communicating with Aborigines, going to school in urban settings, adapting teaching roles in Aboriginal classsrooms, two-way Aboriginal schooling, Aboriginal teacher training and Aboriginal leadership in Aboriginal education. Altogether, 47 readings were set for students in this course unit.

I remember Stephen's discomfort in the early 1990s after *Language, learning and culture,* a course unit he had worked on, was revised by another staff member to give it a new critical, post-structural edge and highlight 'the discursive construction of Aboriginality in educational discourse'. As part of this revision Stephen's own book, *Two-way schooling*, was sidelined simply as one of 'other sources' students could consult.

In early 1991 Stephen and I agreed to edit an issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* for the General Editor, Professor Joshua Fishman, and to assist with that task we invited Irriluma Guruluwini Enemburu (A. Isaac Brown) and Dr Paul Black to join us as co-editors. As Stephen wanted me to be the lead editor, it was my role to line up contributors and to keep Professor Fishman up to date on the progress of the volume. Fortunately, as I was on study leave in 1992, I was able to meet with Professor Fishman at the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University, in the Bronx and to have a useful discussion with him about the forthcoming issue. Although that meeting in person was possible, for the most part the journal issue had to be developed via fax, exchanges of floppy disks, and bundles of papers sent through the post, whether to Paul Black in Japan, Stephen Harris in Texas or Queen's University in Canada, and to Professor Fishman in either Palo Alto or the Bronx. Correspondence with our contributors was conducted in the same way as well. Not everyone had access to the internet then, but Paul and I did make initial use of the Linguists' List to elicit expressions of interest in contributing.

Stephen's perspectives as co-editor were much valued. It was his idea, for example, to sequence the articles so that the reader moved from general overviews to particular treatment of issues relating to language survival, justice and colonialism. Although, at the same time he was careful to add, 'I'm not strongly pushing this suggestion', it was one I adopted. Stephen then asked:

> Would it be possible to have a one-page introduction? It could just make 3 or 4 main points: (a) the inclusion of different writing styles is intentional because the style is part of their message; (b) We did not approach particular authors with particular topics but put out a general invite & they wrote on their interests; (c) changing attitude to Aboriginal people. I would have a go at such a page if you're too pressed—I wouldn't mind… Ring me at home if you want me to do this. Again I'm not strongly pushing this.

The role of co-editor, of course, necessarily involves giving frank feedback on pre-publication drafts. Stephen and I never pulled any punches if we saw weaknesses in each other's writing. Referring to the draft of my paper for the *IJSL* volume, the one we compiled for Joshua Fishman, Stephen wrote

> A couple of comments about your paper. (a) I now regret some of the bluntness of my comments about it, because I know you are more expert than I in what constitutes good ways to present such research findings. Sorry. However, what do we do now? I suppose your paper still needs to get down to 20 p…

None of this was a problem, because I agreed with him, and soon produced a more concise version. Also, in the cut-and-thrust of working together, I had sent Stephen various critical comments on his papers. As far as I can recall, neither of us ever minded receiving robust feedback from each other.

In the 1992–94 period Stephen, Dr. Merridy Malin and I jointly supervised doctoral research being undertaken by Jim Heslop on the education of Ngaanyatjarra Aboriginal parents and community members in the Northeastern Goldfields and Central Desert Region of Western Australia. When commencing as a doctoral candidate in 1992, Jim had told us that he planned to be at Warakuna School for five years. Later, during his candidature, Jim rang me to outline some difficulties he was facing in his community, once some changes he had initiated as principal were underway. One worrying new development was that one adviser was strongly opposed to Jim's attempts to involve the local people more in decision-making. Jim wondered if Stephen, Merridy or I knew whether others in similar circumstances had written about their experiences.

Stephen's written advice from afar was salutory, and I know it was appreciated. Stephen wrote:

> I feel for Jim in his situation. These reactionary advisers can make life tough….If he is not the thick-skinned type I don't know that he can weather it. It seems to me that he's got two choices.
>
> Keep going as is, but stop the process before it gets too explosive (which seems immoral, but all of us can only stand a certain amount of strain).
>
> Change directions & start to record carefully the white administrator reactions, & give that half the emphasis in the thesis. (This is only feasible if Jim plans to work outside the W.A Ministry of Education in the future.) Also, it depends on how he reads those even higher up in the system than this 'adviser'.
>
> Greg Wearne's thesis is the only thing I can think of—how [the Principal at Yirrkala School] was finally replaced. I think I have a copy I can lend him.

On February 21st 1994 Stephen wrote an official letter to the Dean, with a copy to me as Associate Dean, School of Language and Cultural Studies, to announce a 'radical change' that he wanted to make in the middle of 1995. He began by explaining that

> For some time now I have known that I needed to make a change in my employment circumstances. This is through no fault of the Faculty or of NTU in regard to me personally. In fact I think my work environment is as happy as it has ever been. I like the people with whom I work and the work I do, at least on the conscious level. But on another level I feel a deep staleness and lack of optimism in myself and even a lack of crucial credentials.

The first reason he gave for proposing this change was that, while 'in one sense I am held in high regard in Aboriginal education circles…in another sense (and in

my view a more important one) I am an anachronism, i.e. the White "expert"'. He wondered, in connection with his two-way schooling book (Harris, 1990), 'whether Whites should be writing such books, i.e. books which suggest educational solutions for Aborigines'.

Even so, in the mid 1990s, Stephen and I accepted an invitation to submit an encyclopedia article, which set out to provide an overview of bilingual programs using Aboriginal languages in Australia (Harris & Devlin, 1997). The aim of this exercise was to prepare a paper, roughly 3000 words long, which surveyed early developments, identified major contributions, referred to work in progress, and touched on any key problems and difficulties. This would be the last joint paper he and I would write together.

Stephen and I were in complete agreement that Aboriginal bilingual education was a litmus test of non-Aboriginal people's commitment, either to assimilation or cultural pluralism, so we had no doubt that it raised some profound questions, including 'What are schools for?' Accordingly, we began the encyclopedia article in that vein. It was our considered view that trying to co-ordinate the use of two languages for instructional purposes in a school's bilingual programs was not just an administrative and scholarly challenge. Invariably, there were political and the ideological dimensions to consider as well.

In that paper we identified six trends. (1) Aboriginalisation of bilingual schools; (2) new indigenous functions for literacy; (3) some heartening, innovative curriculum development in cross-cultural settings; (4) the growing importance of Aboriginal language revival, even in the absence of solid financial support; (5) a tendency to see remote community schools with bilingual programs as 'agents of language maintenance'; and (6) more non-Aboriginal people were learning an Aboriginal language (1997, pp. 9–11). In conclusion, we acknowledged that

> The main areas of disappointment have been limited academic attainment and the extent of Aboriginal classroom teaching and administrative leadership. However, despite ongoing financial vulnerability, bilingual education is likely to continue to contribute knowledge about the complexities of cross cultural schooling. In a truly plural society, people have the right to achieve educational success in languages of their own choosing as well as the national lingua franca. (Harris & Devlin, 1997, p. 12)

In the second half of 1995 Stephen took leave without pay. Early in the following year he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. At that time, I had just begun a three-year term as Dean of Education. When I received a sick leave form from Stephen, I signed it and sent it on, and the requested leave was duly granted.

Stephen resumed working for the university at a distance. By March 1997 it had become difficult for him to complete a bilingual education theory topic he had been assigned. In fact, it was causing him some loss of sleep, he said. In March 1997, he sent me a fax to explain that, while he was 'able to do routine things' under his 'current emotional condition', more creative work was beyond him at that time. He was due to go to the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney for radiation treatment. Stephen wrote, 'I agree that your wish to truly share the formative stages of a project with me is the better way to go, but I don't have the concentration now to do my bit'. Generously, he made a suggestion (which I did not take up): 'I can give you

permission to use any paragraph you like out of my past efforts at writing about this topic …. I wouldn't want acknowledgement, except as a footnote saying I had contributed some of the ideas'. I decided to let Stephen off the hook, pay him for the work he had done, and make other arrangements, for which he was grateful.

So, by the mid 1990s, Stephen was ready to excuse himself from any further, active role in the Northern Territory. In his own mind he was clear about the reasons why he was ready to depart from the field of Aboriginal education as a writer, mentor, supervisor and advocate. He wanted to spend time with his elderly mother. He missed the horses on the family farm in New South Wales. He felt like a has-been. He was also quite ill. These were all sound reasons for retiring.

Even so, as his colleague and friend, much as I understood all of that, I could not help feeling wistful. There had been some great times of sharing, of working hard together to achieve some common objective and of holding each other accountable. It was time to say goodbye to all of that, or so I thought.

On January 11th, 2005, when I returned to work after a break of several weeks, there was a letter from Stephen, in uncharacteristically scrawly handwriting, telling me that he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease the previous September.

2018: A Post Retirement Story

Twelve years later, Stephen was confined to a wheelchair at home in Tamworth for most of the daylight hours. His wife, Joy, was his primary carer. Parkinson's disease had taken its toll on Stephen's ability to walk, and it had robbed him of the power of intelligible speech. He used a set of letter blocks as his main communication tool when visitors, such as us, came down from the Northern Territory to see him.

The reason for our visit that year, which turned out to be the last time I would see him, was that Nancy and I wanted to give him a copy of the book we had compiled, with Dr Samantha Disbray, on the history of bilingual education in the Northern Territory (Devlin et al., 2017). Not only would the subject matter be of great interest to him, but I thought he would be heartened to read some of the kind, appreciative comments that had been written about him in that book.

Stephen studied the cover of our book first of all, his head bowed in concentration, then he began moving around a few of the alphabet tiles until he had spelled out the question he wanted to ask: 'How much?' Amused by the thought that we would expect him to pay for our gift, I just shook my head, and told him that there was a story about the book that I wanted to share with him and Joy.

It went like this. After Nancy and I had e-mailed the completed manuscript of the book to Springer in Singapore, we rang our daughter, Jenny, to share the good news.

> We've just finished the book and e-mailed it to the publisher.
>
> 'Yay!' Jenny exclaimed.
>
> 'What it is, Mummy?' our granddaughter Amy asked.
>
> Grandma and Grandad have just finished their book.

> ‘Oh, that’s such good news’, Amy said, ‘and I know what book it is’.
>
> You do? What book is it?
>
> ‘It’s called *Amy and the green frog*!’ she confidently ventured, recalling the half-finished digital book that she and I had both worked on previously in Darwin.

When he heard this story’s punchline, Stephen just threw his head back and laughed. It was a really happy, moment, but it was also a sharp reminder that, despite his severely diminished capacity to walk and talk, Stephen still possessed a keen mind and his old sense of humour.

Note

I appreciate the comments that Nancy Devlin, Eric Lede, Dr Wendy Beresford-Maning, Dr Bea Staley and Dr Joy Kinslow-Harris have made on earlier drafts of this chapter.

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Chapter 12
Milingimbi, 1970s

Michael Christie

Abstract Stephen and Joy Harris arrived at Milingimbi in 1975. This paper provides some of the political, cultural, intellectual and theological background to community life at Milingimbi in the 1970s. Bilingual education, which led eventually to both-ways education was in its infancy. It was also a time of the Uniting Church's strong commitment to social justice theology and cultural openness, and the Woodward Commission's enquiries into Aboriginal land tenure, which soon led to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. The work of Stephen and Joy Harris can be understood as informed by those contexts, as well as informing the development of a deeply cultural approach to cross-cultural education.

Keywords Milingimbi · Anthropology of education · Social justice · Land rights · Uniting Church

In 1975 Stephen and Joy Harris found themselves in the vibrant and welcoming Yolŋu Aboriginal community of Milingimbi. This paper details something of the historical, political and intellectual environment they worked within and to which they contributed during their time there and after, learning to understand and take seriously Yolŋu knowledge practices, contributing to significant changes in educational discourse and classroom practice, and eventually contributing, in subsequent years and diverse places, to the policies and practices of 'two-way schooling' and 'Aboriginalisation'.

Milingimbi, one of the Crocodile Islands in the Arafura Sea, comprises some of the ancestral estates of four Yolŋu groups: Walamaŋu, Batjimurruŋu, Gorryindi and Gamal̲aŋga, and the large well not far from the beach had also been a centre of activity for visiting Macassans who had engaged local Yolŋu collecting and processing trepang for international trade over at least 200 years. The Methodist Overseas Mission established Milingimbi mission in 1923 and, with a few exceptions, had a reputation for the endorsement and promotion of Yolŋu languages and culture. Yolŋu from their side encouraged Balanda (non-Yolŋu) attendance at all but

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the secret ceremonials. For some reason, Gupapuyŋu was chosen to be the official Yolŋu language of the mission. In 1950 a missionary linguist, Beulah Lowe, began work at Milingimbi and from that time on all missionaries were required to take ongoing language lessons.

By the time bilingual education was introduced to Milingimbi in 1973, some twenty years later, there was an established orthography, a growing literature, an increasing number of adults literate in the vernacular and language learning and 'adoption' into Yolŋu kinship networks was a commitment of most non-Yolŋu staff.

In 1964 the Commonwealth of Australia commissioned a report on the 'Curriculum and Teaching Methods used in Aboriginal Schools in the Northern Territory'. The resultant Watts Gallacher Report (Watts et al., 1964) had advocated for bilingual education, but declared it unfeasible within the resources available. However, a few years later, in 1971, Chris Kilham from Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) argued at a linguistic conference that bilingual education would in fact be feasible. As support, she tabled a paper by Stephen's wife, Joy Kinslow-Harris, then a missionary linguist at Oenpelli (now Gunbalanya). When the Whitlam government was elected in late 1972, bilingual education in the NT was announced as a policy within a few hours.

In the early 1970s, all Northern Territory (NT) Aboriginal schools were administered by the Aboriginal Education Branch of the NT Welfare Department, transferring in 1973 to the Commonwealth Teaching Service (CTS) of the Australian Department of Education and later, on 1 July 1978, when the Northern Territory received self-government, to the NT Department of Education.

In early 1974, the United Church in Northern Australia (which later joined the Uniting Church of Australia), undertook its 'Commission of Enquiry, Arnhem Land'. This document, written by Jim Downing and titled *Free to Decide*, is remarkable for its italicised foregrounding of Aboriginal voices and its unequivocal political (e.g., Nyerere, 1973) and theological vision of liberation and social justice. 'We want authority and responsibility as we want to be free' (UCNA, 1974, p. 85).

The Woodward Aboriginal Land Rights Royal Commission was already underway, and *Free to Decide* had a clear understanding of the Yolŋu focus on ancestral estates—or 'homelands'—and the Yolŋu metaphysics of land and identity which made it crucial to survival. 'If I have no land I have no name…. we have children who must learn about their spiritual life' (UCNA, 1974, p. 85). Liberation was the fundamental mission of the church.

Stephen and Joy arrived in Milingimbi in 1975 for Stephen to undertake field research for his Ph.D. and they stayed for two years. Bilingual education was a couple of years old, and running well, thanks to a long-term and accomplished team of Yolŋu teaching assistants, and the dedicated involvement of the missionary linguist. Stephen's first published paper after arriving took a similar line to the church and the Woodward commission in that he linked support for bilingual education to 'the principle of self-determination of ethnic minorities rather than their complete absorption or assimilation into the mainstream culture' (Harris, 1975, p. 4) (Fig. 12.1).

Fig. 12.1 Stephen Harris (on the left) working with Yolŋu at Milingimbi

An immediate result of the introduction of the bilingual program at Milingimbi was that Yolŋu teaching assistants were now essential to the conduct of the educational program. It was also clear that most of them aspired to become fully qualified teachers. Consequently, although initially an unofficial initiative by the Milingimbi School principal, the Milingimbi Onsite Teacher Education Program (MOTEP) was established. Some of the Yolŋu teaching assistants were the first in the NT to participate in onsite teacher education, which aimed to formally qualify them as fully trained teachers.

Central to a bilingual program is the need to have age-appropriate vernacular literature. To this end a Literature Production Centre was established at the school and worked on documenting histories and ancestral stories, as well as developing pedagogical readers. A large collection of ancestral art was being amassed and documented by the Milingimbi Educational and Cultural Association, and academic researchers in anthropology and environmental psychology were actively participating in community life. This was the milieu in which Stephen undertook his ethnographic work in what at the time was the burgeoning field of educational anthropology.

Two key aspects of Stephen's research which distinguish it from contemporary work in educational anthropology were first, that Stephen was concerned about the misfit between traditional Yolŋu teaching/learning styles and formal education practices. A central part of his research was to identify and elaborate those distinctive

styles. He visited very remote outstations like Malyaŋanak and helped with building and development of Bo<u>d</u>iya outstation on Milngimbi as part of his field research. Stephen was strongly of the belief that schools and pedagogy had to change and become Aboriginal learning contexts, rather than assimilating Aboriginal children to Balanda institutions and epistemics.

Second, Stephen made frequent claim that the arguments for a 'bicultural approach' to remote Aboriginal education were first and foremost ethical arguments—and the ethical justification was to do with justice, rather than with rights. In his 1978 *Traditional Aboriginal education strategies and their possible place in a modern bicultural school,* for example, written for the local theological college, his justifications for what was later to be called Aboriginalisation were first ethical, then educational and finally sociological. In that paper, he prosecutes a vision in which current expressions of Aboriginality—language, kinship, learning styles—are respected and assumed to be normal, where a continuity between home and school and old and young is fostered, where school is seen as a servant not a leader, and where an Aboriginal student can learn modern academic and survival skills without rejecting his or her heritage.

Bicultural schooling would focus upon 'the community … in such matters as the definition of the aims and objectives of the school' (Harris, 1978, p. 2) and the community would be its beneficiary, rather than the individual learner, whose identity was understood to be entirely constituted by the networks of Yolŋu lands and kinship. Stephen was making this argument during the time when the fundamental justification for the use of bilingual education in the NT was widely taken to be utilitarian—using the vernacular in early instruction and in literacy was instituted because it was the most expeditious route to English literacy, oracy and numeracy.

A focus on literacy, for example, as a social rather than a cognitive process, led to the supplementation at Milingimbi and elsewhere, of a very programmatic approach to vernacular literacy (from the international pedagogy for literacy in newly written languages, developed by missionary Sarah Gudschinsky) with a move to language-based pedagogy—'Language Experience', 'Instant Readers', 'Breakthrough to literacy', 'Concentrated Language Encounters' and many other rich cultural approaches. Changes in classroom practice reflected conversations and empirical work at Milingimbi during Stephen and Joy's time there, alongside the foregrounding of Yolŋu teachers, and spread to many other schools (see, for example, Graham, 2020).

Stephen's particular theorising of bicultural education also received international attention and support. An especially cogent example was that of Shimpo (1978), a visiting Canadian Professor of Sociology, who worked with Stephen and Joy over an 8-month period in 1978 while preparing his report *The social process of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory* for the Department of Education. By that time Stephen had begun working as Senior Educational Adviser Anthropology in the NT Department of Education. Dr. Shimpo had a similar background and vision to Stephen's. He was a co-religionist. He had grown up Japanese in Manchuria where the local Mongolians were widely seen as 'drunkards, opium inhalers, thieves, lazy, unemployed and prostitutes' (Shimpo, 1978, p. 175). Dr. Shimpo talked about his

parents' concern for the Mongolians in the way that Stephen often talked about his parents' concern for Aboriginal people on Groote and Roper River, where he had lived as a child, and Oenpelli. Shimpo's final remarks in his report endorsed two principles: (1) the mistake of progressivism which severed Aboriginal people from what was taken by colonisers to be a benighted past in order to enable their progress towards an enlightened future, and (2) the 'restoration of self-confidence and autonomy'.

Two-Way Schooling

The perspectives and commitments of Harris, Shimpo and Downing, together with the research and consultations of many others, led ultimately to the policies of two-way Aboriginal schooling (Harris, 1990) and Aboriginalisation. Significant work by Indigenous teacher education students was emerging at the same time (see, for example, the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Pedagogy Project, 1991; Marika-Mununggiritj et al., 1990). Both two-way education and Aboriginalisation were understood and implemented in quite different ways in different contexts.

Stephen's 1990 book *Two-way Aboriginal schooling* was not intended to be a 'recipe for successful schools' and its underlying principle of domain separation, which he had first proposed in his 1975 article, was never widely explored or adopted. In fact, by the time Stephen took up a position at Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University) where he continued his commitment to the principles he elaborated at Milingimbi in the 1970s, his theories and views were often rancorously contested (For an even-handed discussion see McConaghy and Nakata, 2000). Reserved and shy as a person, Stephen avoided the academic wrangling which ensued, yet he continued to advocate for what he believed as the ethical position.

The different approaches to the emerging theories of Aboriginalisation continued the theoretical differences Stephen had addressed in his anthropological work. Aboriginalisation meant, to some, Aboriginal staff taking up positions of power and responsibility within western schools whose structures and practices remained largely intact. To others it means Aboriginalising the pedagogy and curriculum as much as the staffing. This Aboriginal pedagogy had at its foundation maintaining the distinctive clan-language-land identities of each individual child. Looking back on 1970s Milingimbi from the point of view of contemporary Yolŋu educational philosophy, it seems strange that I, as the teacher-linguist at the time, could have largely ignored the languages—and the authority—of the Walamaŋu, Batjimurruŋu and Gamalaŋga owners of the island where we lived (For a notable exception see Miliŋinbilil, 1976).

In an important sense, Stephen helped to precipitate the articulation of distinctive Aboriginal philosophies of education. From the mid-1970s on, his influence was wide-reaching and his writing and public speaking gave many teachers working within predominantly Aboriginal schools a theoretical base from which to examine

and develop their own pedagogical practices. His commitment to the ethical framework of cross-cultural knowledge work can be seen in the subtitle of his final edited book on educational theory: *Indigenous education: historical, moral & practical tales.*

Acknowledgements I particularly acknowledge the work of David McClay, the visionary principal of Milingimbi during most of my time there, who first invited Stephen and Joy to Milingimbi, and who contributed his reflections to this paper.

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Michael Christie started work as a teacher at Milingimbi in Arnhem Land in 1972. He was appointed as the first teacher-linguist when the bilingual program started in 1975. He took up the position of teacher linguist at Yirrkala in 1986 before moving to Darwin to set up the Yolŋu Studies program at Charles Darwin University in 1994. He is currently Professor in the Northern Institute, heading up the Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance research group, and working on collaborative research and consultancies in a range of areas including health communication, 'both-ways' education, resource management, digital technologies, and contemporary governance.

Chapter 13
A Pioneer, Mentor, Colleague and Friend

Merridy Malin

Abstract This chapter provides a personal account of Stephen Harris as my mentor, colleague and friend over several years as I completed a Ph.D. and began a career as an academic and teacher educator in the late 1980s to mid-1990s. Stephen and I shared both a background in ethnography and sociolinguistics and a professional goal of improving the educational opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal students around Australia. Stephen smoothed my pathway into the Northern Territory University Faculty of Education, where we formed research, teaching and publication partnerships with a number of Aboriginal parents, teachers, scholars and students assisting in informing and directing our work.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Aboriginal education · Capacity building · Legacy · Research · Bilingual education

Stephen Harris was widely acknowledged for the contribution he made to the field of Aboriginal education. He pioneered the use of the ethnographic methodology in Aboriginal education and researched ways in which culture influenced learning styles and communication in Australia; he was a passionate supporter and facilitator of bilingual education in Aboriginal schools; and he was determined to do his bit to facilitate the journeys of Aboriginal people into careers in academia, research and publication. Through this chapter, I wish to highlight the many ways he helped me and many others professionally and personally and some of the ways that he contributed to the field of Aboriginal people's education in Australia.

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Mentor

I originally met Stephen when he was a visiting scholar at Flinders University in Adelaide, in the late 1980s. I had been influenced by his work during my teaching career in Aboriginal schools and also in my early university teaching and post-graduate studies. I admired his work immensely. On meeting him face-to-face, we had an immediate cultural connection through our previous experience working in Aboriginal schools and having both completed post-graduate studies in the USA. Stephen's wife, Joy Kinslow-Harris, was from Texas in USA and I remember feeling enormous comfort on visiting their home in Adelaide for the first time, feeling the friendliness and an ambience of familiarity in the decor, the cooking smells and Joy's craft work and then sharing their meal which was accompanied by delicious corn bread. I was obviously feeling quite nostalgic for aspects of US cultural life since returning to Australia after four years in the USA. At the time, I was in the analysis stage of my Ph.D. thesis and my supervisors were thousands of kilometres away in Minnesota. There was no world-wide-web in those days, and no readily accessible email for easy communication. I had accumulated oceans of ethnographic data in Adelaide and had encountered a log-jam in my increasingly differentiating categories. Stephen gave me invaluable guidance in simplifying my system of data analysis by suggesting I group several categories into one and then simply storing each in its own manila folder (chuckle), in addition to using the search function in the (what would now be considered primitive) Dbase2 computer program that I was utilising. This was before Nvivo (2018) revolutionised qualitative data analysis. Over the months, Stephen provided meticulous editorial advice as I made sense of the data in writing up the thesis.

Stephen found it easy to relate to my micro-ethnographic approach to classroom research. It was his findings from *Culture and learning* (Harris, 1984) combined with my own experiences living and teaching in remote Aboriginal communities that contributed to my understanding of sociolinguistics and the development of a model of childrearing practices and parent–child communication.

Colleague

In 1990, I accepted a lectureship in the Faculty of Education at the Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University) and began team-teaching with Stephen in two post-graduate Aboriginal Education subjects and also a compulsory under-graduate subject, 'Social Justice and Cultural Diversity'. Stephen's area of interest was in education in remote Aboriginal communities, whereas I had more recent experience in urban contexts.

No doubt, Stephen learned a few things from me through my familiarity with theories of socio-cultural contexts of education (Ogbu, 1987). But I definitely learned a great deal from him about effective pedagogy in Aboriginal schools (Knight et al.,

1994; Murray, 1995). We complemented one another in our experiences and research backgrounds and this provided more rounded perspectives for the post-graduate students that we co-supervised together. The students greatly admired Stephen, enjoying his dry humour and gentle teasing and were highly respectful of his wisdom, educational knowledge and experience. He was a wonderful university teacher, humble, approachable and knowledgeable. The Social Justice unit, however, gave us a substantial challenge. It was compulsory for all education undergraduates and, usually, about a fifth of students were not interested in the topics and, in fact, found them overly confronting, particularly around issues to do with racism, Aboriginal identity and gender identity. These topics remain confronting for many Australians to this day. I remember occasions where I was demoralised by students' dismissive attitudes and protestations, 'shooting the messengers' bringing messages that they did not want to hear. Stephen provided reassurance and a reality check to help me overcome my disappointment with this type of feedback (Malin, 1999). Over time though, we developed a deeper understanding of why disengaged students felt this way (Malin, 1999) and also strategies which were slightly more effective in reaching these students, particularly when Terry Ngarritjan-Kessaris joined the teaching team (Ngarritjan-Kessaris & Malin, 2001).

In my early years in Darwin, Stephen involved me in committee groups with teachers and Aboriginal parents, raising their awareness of the latest research in Aboriginal education and seeking feedback on their experiences in the schools. I learned so much on these occasions. Stephen had huge respect for teachers and Aboriginal teaching assistants. He introduced me to international and local educational researchers and to their written works (e.g. Christie, 1985; Gray, 1985; Lipka, 1994) where they shared their rich learnings from bilingual schools and the key characteristics of their pedagogy. He also gave crucial feedback on my early drafts of articles submitted for publication.

Academic and Teacher Educator

Stephen was no run-of-the-mill academic seeking prestige and fame. He was a collaborator rather than a competitor with fellow researchers and writers in Indigenous Education. He credited those from whom he had learned, for example, always expressing admiration for what linguist Beulah Lowe had taught him during his early research at Milingimbi. He very deliberately published in plain language journals that had strong teacher readership, even though these journals did not win him points on the promotion ladder. *The Aboriginal Child at School* was one of his favourites, as he knew it was widely read by teachers. I remember, when I first met Stephen, as a post-graduate student newly acquainted with the ideas of sociolinguistics, I was trying to explain to a colleague how it related to interpersonal communication in the classroom, using technical terminology from the relevant academic literature. Stephen witnessed this uncomfortable encounter, and quietly re-explained in plain

English what I had unsuccessfully tried to communicate but, without embarrassing either myself or my colleague.

Furthermore, in a quiet, behind-the-scenes manner, Stephen encouraged Indigenous students and young colleagues at our university to publish, and facilitated the process by audio-recording people's stories, as they related their life experiences to him. These accounts were transcribed and then edited for publication. He also encouraged young Indigenous colleagues and students to pursue post-graduate studies. Many of these candidates sought him as a supervisor for their masters and doctoral theses (see Ngarritjan-Kessaris in Chap. 3 and also the list in the appendix).

Stephen edited three books in collaboration with me (Harris & Malin, 1992, 1994, 1997). Their chapters included good quality student assignments from our post-graduate teacher education cohorts and also research reports from colleagues. Many of our students were respected and experienced teachers of Aboriginal children.

Personal and Ethical Values

Stephen and Joy lived lives that each harmonised with and amplified that of the other. Both shared a strong faith ethic, and a unity of purpose to promote bilingual education and the empowerment of Aboriginal people in schooling and further education. Joy was one of the first to recommend bilingual education in remote Australia, where local Indigenous teachers taught in their first languages in partnerships with qualified non-Aboriginal teachers (Kinslow-Harris, 1968). Harris (1975, p. 3) described this article by Joy as 'probably the best single statement made on the value of vernacular education for Australian Aboriginals, (and) was a profound call for a basic change in attitude towards the education of Aboriginals, … (outlining) sound starting procedures'.

In the 1990s in Darwin, it was apparent that a major goal of Stephen's was to support Aboriginal people wanting to have more say in the schooling of their children, in the governance of schools and in the contributions of schools towards the preservation of the local languages, history and cultures (Harris, 1990). At the same time, Stephen was striving to support teachers and student teachers to be the most effective that they could be in their teaching of their Aboriginal students in literacy and numeracy, which he saw as a key to self-determination and political power. Stephen was a deep thinker, always reflecting on issues, striving for explanations that made sense and which he considered were fair and balanced. He discussed the dilemmas he couldn't explain with family, friends, colleagues and students, fitting together pieces to make a coherent whole. At this time, his writings described various experiences from his life which illustrated racist acts by ordinary people, including himself on one occasion, as a young person, and people he loved. He saw people as basically good and well-meaning; however, in these instances, as being severely limited by their life experience, by their lack of relevant education, and by a lack of imagination. He acknowledged the wholesale dispossession of Aboriginal people

from their lands and the devastating consequences of that and he proposed a nationwide federally funded way that the general Australian population could 'pay the rent' for their occupation of Aboriginal land (Harris, 1994).

I was privileged to have known and worked with Stephen Harris. He was truly a good man. He was loyal in his friendships with people; he loved and valued his family; he made people he engaged with feel worthy. He worked quietly behind the scenes doing his good work, humbly and tirelessly. He had a very dry sense of humour which often caught me, with my literal mind, off guard. He was able to make people from all walks of life, feel at home and feel valued. And as I got to know him more I also came to realise his other life as a lover of Australia's bush country, as a gardener, a cattleman, horse breaker, horse lover and proud master of his and Joy's dog, Daly.

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Merridy Malin began her career as a primary school teacher including three years of teaching in Aboriginal schools. She lectured in the Aboriginal Studies and Teacher Education Centre at what is now the University of South Australia while finishing her PhD which focussed on teacher and Aboriginal student interactions in primary schools. She was a senior lecturer in the education faculty at Charles Darwin University; was a research team leader in the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health; and finally taught research methods to Aboriginal Health Workers, research assistants and community members at the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia. She is now channelling her energies into her grandchildren, playing the guitar and gardening.

Chapter 14
Code-Mixing as a Means of Sustaining an Aboriginal Language: The Case of Ngarrindjeri in the Lower Murray Region of South Australia

Mary-Anne Gale

Abstract In his book *Two-way Aboriginal Schooling* Stephen Harris writes about the threat of code-mixing and code switching to the very survival of Aboriginal languages in the remote Northern Territory. He argues that the interference of English in the mixed speech of traditional language speakers challenges the social and cultural functions of their languages. He therefore advocates for domain separation, following on from the writings of Joshua Fishman (*The rise and fall of the ethnic revival*. Mouton, Berlin, 1985) and Jim Cummins (Review of Educational Research 49:222–251, 1979). Harris proposes a preferred option of learning Aboriginal languages and English as two viable yet separate systems of communication, particularly in bilingual school settings. In this paper I share a contrasting perspective from the language revival context; in particular, the survival and subsequent revival of the Ngarrindjeri language in the south of South Australia (SA). I argue that code-mixing has actually helped sustain Aboriginal languages such as Ngarrindjeri throughout the assimilation era of the 1930s–1960s. The mixing of two very different languages has enabled the dominant language, English, to serve as a vehicle of communication, while the Ngarrindjeri words that 'pepper' English (numbering up to 450) have sustained that Aboriginal language and, more importantly, maintained a unique heritage and proud identity. In fact, the resultant relexified English has been more than a badge of identity; it has served a real functional purpose: to allow the transmission of information among Ngarrindjeri people while excluding outsiders from the conversation. However, now that Ngarrindjeri people are actively reviving their language, the women in particular strive to leave English behind, and once again speak their language in full sentences without the shackles of English.

Keywords Ngarrindjeri · Nunga English · Code-mixing · Language revival

> A long time ago my ancestors walked all over this land. Then the white man came speaking in a foreign language. My people were told by the white man: you must not speak, sing or teach your children your language. So we learned to hide our language and our secrets from the white man and now we must learn our language and teach our children. There is an

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> awakening of pride in my people as the first people of this land. So today our language must once more take its place beside the many languages of this country. (Rhonda Agius *FATSIL Newsletter* 2001)

Introduction

In contrast to the Kaurna language of the Adelaide Plains, Ngarrindjeri is an Aboriginal language that never went to sleep. As the Elder Rhonda Agius explains, 'We learned to hide our language and our secrets from the white man'. In this chapter I argue that it was the socio-cognitive process of 'translanguaging', or what I am calling 'code-mixing', that saved the Ngarrindjeri language from falling into a deep sleep. The Ngarrindjeri people, who are well known in South Australia for their pride, and strength in numbers, have collectively ensured that their language continues to survive, and even thrive, despite the various attempts by 'the white man' to assimilate its people over many decades since colonisation.

To use the Garcia and Wei (2014) definition of translanguaging, the Ngarrindjeri people used their language and English 'as an integrated system', often using the two languages simultaneously. Although the two languages have different grammars and sound systems, the Ngarrindjeri people continued to use them together within the domains of family and community life.

In this chapter I address the ideas introduced to the Aboriginal education debate by Harris, namely the concept of domain separation, as a response to the likelihood of code-mixing. Harris espoused domain separation for remote Aboriginal schools, following from the writings of Fishman (1985) and Cummins (1979), who suggest that minority languages are better protected by keeping their use separate, rather than 'mixing' them with the dominant language.[1] My discussion will focus on contemporary language revival in South Australia, rather than bilingual education in the remote Northern Territory (NT) in the 1980 and 1990s. I do not criticise Harris's deductions. As he himself says of his (1990) study:

> This study is confined to remote communities, because they are the places where the notion of 'two-way schooling', or interchangeably 'both-ways' schooling', is being talked about. But because there are significant continuities within all Aboriginal groups in Australia, it should help focus on what schooling potentially holds for all Aboriginal people in terms of culture destruction or culture maintenance. Having said this, it is recognised that there are always dangers in overgeneralising… (Harris, 1990, p. 2).

I hope to demonstrate in this chapter that revival was probably one of those many different situations that Harris did not include in his general argument.

My thesis is that the mixing of the two codes—the dominant English language and the suppressed Ngarrindjeri language, within the speech of Nungas[2] throughout the assimilation era from the 1930s to around 1960—is what saved the Ngarrindjeri language from falling into a deep sleep. This contrasts with the thesis of Harris's (1990) book with regards to code-mixing and the threat it poses to the ultimate survival of Aboriginal languages and cultures in the remote NT:

> The struggle against cultural absorption, the felt need of Aborigines to live in two social worlds, and the search for a design of bicultural school which allows the learning of a second culture without destroying or demeaning the first, are the interest of this book (Harris, 1990, p. 1).

In this chapter I will provide some historical context for the Ngarrindjeri language and its speakers, and offer some insight into their language and its use over time, starting from the early mission era to the present. Much of this era includes the unashamed use of code-mixing. The Ngarrindjeri people are a 'water people' whose homelands cover the lower Murray River, the lakes, sea and Coorong region of South Australia (SA). So I use the metaphor of *yakalun*, meaning 'the flowing (of waves) backwards and forwards' to describe the way the Ngarrindjeri language has 'ebbed and flowed' over the years. Since I have been actively involved as the 'support linguist', working continuously with the Ngarrindjeri community since 2003, I can share many positive examples to support my argument concerning language mixing, language change and the possibilities of language revival.

One of these positive stories refers to something that happened just days ago. We launched the Third Edition of the *Ngarrindjeri Dictionary*, in the presence of local councillors, politicians and many excited adults and children, on May 28th 2021 at the Port Elliot Kindergarten. It was a Reconciliation Week event, which began with the Master of Ceremonies (MC) telling everybody to *Tau yanun* ('stop talking') so the formalities could proceed. All Nungas know what *Tau yanun* means, so there was instant silence. The MC, Jade McHughes, then confidently proceeded to give a 'Welcome to Country' speech in full Ngarrindjeri with impeccable pronunciation and grammar. The MC is a respected Ngarrindjeri woman and future leader who has completed a Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. She is now fully qualified to teach her Ngarrindjeri language to adults within any Registered Training Organisation that teaches her language. She is also an Aboriginal Community Education Officer at the local Port Elliot Primary School, where she teaches children her language, and is the Chairperson of MIPAAC (Miwi-inyeri Pelepi-ambi Aboriginal Corporation) . MIPAAC is the organisation (largely run by women) that coordinates all the Ngarrindjeri language and cultural activities in the southern Fleurieu region of SA, with government support.[3]

The Ngarrindjeri dictionary we launched (Gale et al., 2020) is the third edition we have produced since revival activities began in 1985. It contains 4265 head words, and each word has information about the written and oral sources, the etymology, cultural and linguistic notes of interest, synonyms, sentence examples and any dialect variants. In the Foreword, 10 women tell their own personal journeys of re-learning their language and what it means to them. At the back there is a Finder List, from English-to-Ngarrindjeri, to help people search for words, followed by pages of 'Useful expressions', plus a detailed explanation about how to create new words for modern day purposes, along with some examples, such as *yu:l-amaldi* for 'surfer' (from *yu:li* 'wave' + *amaldi* 'person').[4]

Background

Long before any written resources were prepared, Ngarrindjeri was a thriving language, spoken from the tip of the Fleurieu Peninsula, north to Murray Bridge on the Murray River, and south along the Coorong towards Kingston in the south-east. It was spoken by up to 18 different clans, each with their own dialect. The Ramindjeri dialect of the Encounter Bay region was first recorded by the German missionary Meyer, who listed 1760 words and published a sketch grammar in 1843. By 1859 the negative effects of colonisation saw the need for the Raukkan mission to be established, by George Taplin, on the shores of Lake Alexandrina, under the auspices of the Aborigines Friends Association. In 1864 Taplin published the first portions of the Bible ever to appear in an Aboriginal language in a dedicated volume. Then in 1879 Taplin published an ethnography and an English-to-Narrinyeri wordlist. Taplin's wordlist and Meyer's work provide the key primary sources for subsequent revival activities and resource production. The invaluable sentence examples from Meyer not only give insight into the complex grammar of Ramindjeri, with its bound and free pronouns and anti-passive constructions, but also into the colonial circumstances of the time.

The last fluent speakers of Ngarrindjeri were recorded in the late 1930s to early 1940s, when they shared full texts of different genres with the anthropologists N.B. Tindale and later Ronald and Catherine Berndt. These same texts were the subject of research for an Australian Research Council (ARC) project grant 75 years later, which helped with our contemporary understanding of how Ngarrindjeri grammar functions at the discourse level (Gale et. al., 2021). By the 1960s, amid the assimilation era of government policy, documentary linguists were recording those who remembered any of the Ngarrindjeri language. By this stage people were only remembering short sentences and single words and phrases. Furthermore, the phonology had changed (through English influence) and the retroflex series of sounds—rt, rn, rl—had been lost.

In 1985 a fire started to burn in the *mi:wi* of Aunty Eileen McHughes (note: *mi:wi*, 'the small intestines' are the Ngarrindjeri seat of emotion). She decided she wanted to re-learn her language, and speak it once again like she remembered her Grandpa Michael Gollan speaking it in the 1960s. So she found herself a linguist, Steve Johnson, who was willing to help, at the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL), Batchelor in the NT. During the three trips that Eileen made to Batchelor, along with other family and community members, they recorded all the words they could collectively remember. Johnson could detect the English influence in the way they were pronouncing their words, so he got them to listen to recordings of 'traditional' speakers of Yolŋu Matha in Arnhem Land. He got the Ngarrindjeri 'language warriors' from SA to listen carefully to the way interdental, retroflex and nasal sounds were made by the Yolŋu, in contrast to those more familiar English sounds.[5] While at Batchelor, they were asked to contribute to the *SAL Newsletter* with a written article in Ngarrindjeri. The SA collective decided to write a play about a man stealing a car and a bag of money and the subsequent pursuit by a policeman.

Their topic of choice is significant. They all knew the necessary Ngarrindjeri words: *kainggaipari* 'policeman', *pethun* 'stealing', *ko:rni* 'man', *ngopun* 'running', *pu:thi* 'paper money', *punawi* 'bag' and *titjari* 'car'. It is surprising how much Nunga English can sound like a completely different language (compared to English) when relexified with almost every word from an Aboriginal language.

Nunga English

By the time Aunty Eileen made that trip up to Batchelor in the 1980s, the Ngarrindjeri community had developed their own code of communication, which they used to exclude others, and to communicate with their own inner circle of Nungas. Researchers and educators label it 'Nunga English' or 'Aboriginal English' (Malcolm, 2018; Eades, 2013). The underlying language (or substrate) is English, but it is sprinkled with words from the local Nunga languages: Narungga, Ngarrindjeri and Wirangu from the west coast. Often the sentences have more Ngarrindjeri words than English ones, but the basic grammar is that of English. For example, one hears expressions such as *Nakan that katjeri ko:rni ngopun over there!* meaning 'Look at that good-looking man walking over there'. If that same expression were to be said using the traditional grammar of Ngarrindjeri it would be: *Nak-inti-yan katjeri ko:rni, itjan alingyi ngopun!*

Nunga English uses all the 'rude' words from Ngarrindjeri and other Nunga languages, rather than their English equivalent; for example, words for wee (*kumbu* or *kandji*) and poo (*kuna*), and words for private body parts and genitalia, such as bottom, vagina, penis and breasts. These are the words that are remembered the most and have been used continuously, even during the assimilation era. These are the types of words that Rhonda Agius referred to as the 'secret' language in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Such Ngarrindjeri words and expressions are used in everyday Nunga speech as a secret code that just Nungas understand. They serve to exclude English-only speakers, and sometimes to save embarrassment, especially when talking about bodily states and functions. Such words include:

kumari & *mundhana* & *rlunuk* 'pregnant'

tji:bili & *tjokeli* 'vagina'

tjung & *mrani* 'penis'

Some older Nungas have remembered expressions for embarrassing situations, such as

Nrugi-nam-itj ko:pi 'your nose is snotty (so wipe your nose)'

Tau yanun 'stop talking'

Tau plapun 'no touching'

Tremun ya taraki! 'spread your legs'

Nangkathawi down ya mundi! 'put your hanky down your chest'

Ngopun kandji 'Going (for) a piss (a wee)'

Ngopun yaramun pulgi ‘Going to the toilet’ (literally: going to the pissing place)

The meanings of some Ngarrindjeri words have also changed over time. Their scope has sometimes been reduced to fulfil the need for specific narrow meanings. Again their use excludes English-only speakers. Such words include *muthun* ‘drinking grog (only), not water)’ and *plapun* ‘feeling/touching someone in a sexual way’ (not just patting, touching). Many Aboriginal languages have developed terms and expressions to survive contact with the law, particularly with the police. All Nungas know the following terms and expressions:

Pethun ‘stealing’
Pu:thi ‘paper money’
Kainggaip or *kainggaipari* ‘policemen’
Wurangi kringkri ko:rni ‘mad white man’

It is all these words and expressions that are peppered within the English speech of Nungas to create what could be called a ‘mixed language’ in the sociolinguistic practice of ‘code-mixing’. It is because Nungas have continued to use these words in their everyday speech that Ngarrindjeri has never gone to sleep, as the neighbouring Kaurna language did. It is not just the ‘rude’ and secret words that are used by Nungas. They have also remembered the Ngarrindjeri words for many fish, birds, mammals and plants. This is because their parents and grandparents continued to live and hunt on country alongside the Raukkan mission or in fringe camps. Aunty Eileen says that her language was stronger because she grew up at Three Mile fringe camp out of Tailem Bend, and didn’t have a mission superintendent forbidding her family from speaking their language. Nungas have told me they didn’t realise they were speaking a different language when they were kids at Raukkan until they went to the local high school and found that other kids in the school yard couldn’t understand what they were saying. Their so-called mixed language was, for them, a single language system; for example, they only knew the word for ‘drop-tail lizard’ as *kendi*, and didn’t know it was a Ngarrindjeri word. They thought that everybody called that little lizard *kendi*, even English speakers.

Language Revival

In the mid 1980s, with SA Education Department support, a scholar at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, Brian Kirke, gathered a team of Ngarrindjeri people to produce a ‘Ngarrindjeri Yanun’ Language Kit for use in SA schools. Kirke had previously worked with Pitjantjatjara (still spoken as a first language in the northwest of the state), so he did some research on the traditional grammar of Ngarrindjeri. A limited number of kits were made available to schools in 1986 (Kirke et al., 1986), which included sets of sight word cards, stimulus pictures, a comic booklet with amusing scenarios using the phrases composed with traditional grammar, and a cassette recording of the comic dialogues. He also included a copy of Taplin’s (1879)

English-to-Narrinyeri wordlist and Meyer's (1843) Raminyeri wordlist, but excluded Meyer's grammar. Schools simply did not use (or know how to use) the kits, and the Ngarrindjeri community failed to embrace the unfamiliar (grammatically sophisticated) language in the comics and recordings. It was nothing like the (much simpler) Nunga English which they were using, and had learned to embrace with pride.

Meanwhile, Aunty Eileen McHughes had made several trips to SAL at Batchelor in the NT with her team of language warriors. Eileen later admitted that not much happened on their return to SA with regards to language revival activities, however she did assist with the new Ngarrindjeri language program being offered at Murray Bridge High School from 1994. It was one of the first language revival programs offered in schools in the state. But the program floundered because it lacked good quality resources and there were few qualified or available community people to teach it.

Then in 2003 I was asked to write a Ngarrindjeri language curriculum for a cluster of schools in Murray Bridge, including the High School. That was when I first began working officially with the Ngarrindjeri community as their support linguist.[6] I immediately teamed up with the Ngarrindjeri *mi:mini* Dorothy French (who was working at a Murray Bridge school) and began recording all the words and expressions that the Elders could remember. They numbered at least 450 words. Not surprisingly, the remembered words were representative of the domain of private family and community banter, as exemplified earlier in Nunga English, as well as the domain of cultural information, such as the names of birds, fish, animals and artefacts. What was surprising (to me) was the number of keywords that no one remembered anymore, ones that are required to talk about oneself and one's family. *Not one pronoun* was remembered, nor any possessive pronouns, and a surprising number of kin terms had been lost, such as the words for 'son' and 'daughter'. The kin terms that were remembered sparked much debate. Some said the kin term *pakanu* meant 'grandparent', while others said it just meant 'grandfather'. Similarly, some said *ngopa* and *ngatju* both meant 'uncle' and 'aunty'; others said that they referred to just 'uncle' and 'aunty', respectively.

From my research using archival sources, I can see that the Ngarrindjeri language once had complex kinship morphology and its kin terms had their own noun class and associated morphology. This complexity has been lost to its speakers, and replaced with a simple system, with inflected terms becoming frozen and given broader meanings. For example, *ki:lawi* meaning 'brother' is a well-known word today, but the old source (Meyer, 1843, p. 60) lists four forms:

Gellari 'elder brother'
Gell-anowe 'my brother'
Gell-auw-alle 'his brother'
Gell-auwe 'thy brother'

Because of the insecurities in the community, following the saga of the Hindmarsh Island bridge in the 1990s, teachers in the schools in Murray Bridge lacked the confidence to introduce any 'unknown' Ngarrindjeri words in the new language

curriculum. This was very limiting when writing lessons about themes such as 'Me and my family'. I was told I had to put an asterisk (*) alongside the words that were 'known by the Elders', as they were the words to be taught in the classroom. I (stubbornly) included a few pronouns in the curriculum, and just hoped someone brave enough would teach them.

In 2007 Auntie Eileen McHughes (the same 'language warrior' who took groups of Ngarrindjeri to Batchelor) did become brave and declared, 'I want to be able to speak in full Ngarrindjeri, just like that Kaurna mob are doing in their Welcome to Country speeches in Adelaide'. This was requested in a language class for adults that we were running regularly (at a Murray Bridge school) in response to community demand. There is nothing like jealousy (or FOMO—Fear Of Missing Out) to get people going in a direction once never thought possible. There has always been rivalry between the different language groups in SA, especially on the football field at the annual Nunga sports carnival. So the Ngarrindjeri were starting to feel inferior in their language abilities compared to the seemingly fluent speeches in full Kaurna that their rivals were now giving at public functions in Adelaide from the late 1990s. This request of Aunty Eileen's paved the way for the development of contemporary language resources that included words that were *not remembered* by the Elders, and a grammar that had long been lost. Aunty Eileen wanted to speak more than 'pidgin Ngarrindjeri', as some people call it. She wanted to speak full Ngarrindjeri once more. This was the impetus needed to apply for Commonwealth funding to produce new language resources, including an Alphabet Book, a Picture Dictionary, a Learners' Guide and a comprehensive Dictionary (Gale and French, 2009a, b, c).

In 2007, the *Ngarrindjeri Learners Guide* was launched at Raukkan, giving the community the opportunity to start re-learning the traditional grammar, and start constructing phrases and sentences for new and creative purposes beyond the secret code of Nunga English. The *Learners Guide* included the many sentence examples recorded by Meyer, plus a lay person's explanation of traditional Ngarrindjeri grammar, with a chapter devoted to each different part of speech, including kinship morphology (see Gale and French, 2007, 2010). Then in 2009, at the 150th anniversary of the founding of Raukkan, we celebrated the launch of the First Edition of the *Ngarrindjeri Dictionary*, plus an *Alphabet Book* and *Picture Dictionary* along with CDs containing recordings of Elders with all their remembered words. Many of those Elders recorded for the CDs were those who visited Batchelor twenty-five years earlier.

After the success of our first series of language classes for adults, the development of further certificate courses has seen 31 Ngarrindjeri students graduate with their Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language. A core unit in this course is 'grammar'. Although challenging for adult students who have no experience with other languages, Ngarrindjeri women are now using the grammar of Ngarrindjeri to construct phrases and sentences for songs, speeches, conversations, and to write children's books without resorting to English.

The activities that have really assisted people, in learning and creating Ngarrindjeri as a full language, are writing songs, translating hymns, translating phrases and full texts on request, creating their own texts and stories, writing and giving speeches,

and performing plays and skits. The continuous production of well-considered and constructed texts has helped in the learning of Ngarrindjeri as a full language, but what has been hard for Ngarrindjeri language learners is to speak 'full' Ngarrindjeri spontaneously in everyday situations, in the home and the community, without resorting to English or Nunga English.

Discussion

So the question is: Has the intermediate phase of speaking Nunga English interspersed with Ngarrindjeri words, impeded or assisted the move to speaking Ngarrindjeri as a whole language with authentic grammar and some degree of fluency? Has the continued use of Ngarrindjeri over the years as a secret language, used within a limited domain, enabled people to move towards speaking full Ngarrindjeri for new and creative purposes? My answer is both yes and no.

If we compare the Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna situations, we can ask whether there are more Kaurna people speaking 'full' Kaurna sentences than Ngarrindjeri people speaking 'full' Ngarrindjeri. The Ngarrindjeri revival efforts began in 1985, and have ebbed and flowed over the years, depending on who is involved, how many are actively participating, and what professional and monetary support has been given. The Kaurna revival movement began slowly in 1990, with several Kaurna songs included at the insistence of Auntie Josie Agius at a Ngarrindjeri, Narungga and Kaurna songwriting workshop (Amery, 2016), though the main focus of this workshop was Ngarrindjeri and Narungga. When Jack Kanya Buckskin came on the scene in 2006, Kaurna language revival accelerated. Buckskin made a concerted effort to learn his language, teach it and use it privately with friends, his dogs, and his children, who have now emerged as semi-native speakers of Kaurna. Being the language of the city of Adelaide, Kaurna now has a relatively strong profile as an emblematic language which is used in the public domain. As a regional language, there are less opportunities for Ngarrindjeri to serve these emblematic functions. However, Ngarrindjeri has the numbers, with several thousand people proudly identifying with the Ngarrindjeri nation. It also has the advantage of a shared homeland, called Raukkan (once a 'mission') to which people return on a regular basis for funerals and community events and celebrations.

Both revival movements now have similar funding and have developed comparable resources over the years (although Kaurna has much more accessible digital resources on the web). My perception is that both languages are at a similar place with regards to speaking in full sentences in the domains of public performance. The songs sung and speeches given in public (for both languages) are planned and well considered, as their creators have taken the time to construct them using 'full' sentences and the 'correct' grammar. A number of speakers from both groups have learnt their speeches and songs off-by-heart and therefore sound quite fluent when speaking in public. It is like learning a 'formula', hence the 'formulaic method' that is espoused by Amery (2016) for the learning of Kaurna, whereby people learn 'chunks

of language'. However, when using either language in other more private settings there is much less fluency. This is for both the Kaurna language and Ngarrindjeri, but at least the Ngarrindjeri are speaking Nunga English when they are in the home, along with its many Ngarrindjeri words. This is not the case for Kaurna.

There are many Ngarrindjeri men today who have never spoken Ngarrindjeri in full sentences. They are 'stuck' in Nunga English, and probably always will be. The only ones who have developed their language to speak in 'full' chunks of Ngarrindjeri language, using the 'correct' grammar, are those who have attended formal language classes to learn how the grammar works and how to use the available resources. Learning about noun suffixes and the need for an ergative suffix, for example, to mark the Agent in a sentence, rather than using word order (as in Nunga English) is a crucial lesson that is learnt in formal classes. I have observed in learners a gradual transition stage, whereby those who attend classes switch from using English as the substrate language to using Ngarrindjeri grammar as the substrate. The fluency that speakers, singers and performers reach depends on how much effort and practice they put into improving their language. It is the women who have put that effort in for the Ngarrindjeri language. The Kaurna have a more balanced mix of men and women actively involved in reviving the language, and attending formal classes,[7] but they don't have speakers stuck in that English-substrate phase of a mixed language. My mantra has consistently been, throughout my many years of working in the field of language revival: training, training, training. Regular language classes not only give students an opportunity to learn how to improve their language fluency, but also provide a safe place for them to practise using their language in new, creative and purposeful ways.

Personal Reflection

It is hard work to learn a second language as an adult. It is particularly hard when you can't immerse yourself and hear it spoken fluently around you. In the language revival situation I see the frustration of Elders as they struggle to move beyond their Nunga English, and grapple with learning which suffixes to put on which words. It is humiliating for them when the younger ones catch on, and they don't. I share their frustration. I have felt my own sense of failure in my attempts to learn many different languages over the years.

Starting with Latin as a teenager in high school, it was difficult to learn purely from books with the 'grammar translation method' that was offered. But I did learn the paradigms off by heart, and I learnt the important point that the world can be viewed from another perspective besides that of English. I revisit this experience and the value of the teaching method used in a paper that has been well received by revivalists (see Gale, 2012).

Next I started learning Yolŋu Matha (YM) when teaching in a bilingual school in northeast Arnhem Land (on the same island community of Milingimbi where Stephen Harris did his Ph.D. fieldwork). I put a lot of effort into learning YM, and

some of it must have stuck in my young brain, because returning for a visit many years later I did manage to speak (badly) in YM for short periods of time without resorting to English. What helped was my youth. I had a total of nearly four years exposed to the YM language, and undertook linguistic studies in between my two stints in Arnhem Land. Regrettably, I never became fluent.

After my first attempt at YM, I started learning Warlpiri while working in another bilingual school in the centre of Australia, at Willowra. Again I put in a lot of effort, but nearly all of it has been lost from my brain now. I simply didn't spend enough time in that community, and didn't practise using it after I left (use it or lose it!). But I have retained a number of Warlpiri words and a very small repertoire of authentic phrases that I can spout off when required, with that nasal pronunciation typical of Warlpiri, and which make me sound as if I am fluent, but I am not.

My next failed attempt was Pitjantjatjara. It was at this time that Stephen Harris was writing his book *Two-way Aboriginal Schooling* in Adelaide, and I was working as a teacher trainer at the University of South Australia, in the A<u>n</u>angu Teacher Education Program (A<u>n</u>TEP). Stephen was promoting 'domain separation' (of person, place and topic), so I followed his advice and only spoke (or modelled) 'pure' English in the presence of my A<u>n</u>angu students, as they were really struggling to learn English.[8] This was good for my students, but terrible for my own language learning (and my students were disappointed in my lack of effort in learning their language). Years later, I put effort into learning their language by attending an intensive Pitjantjatjara Summer School.[9] But by then my brain was just too old, and not much seemed to stick. I do have a fair understanding of the grammar though, and again I have retained a small set of phrases that roll off my tongue when required. Such (failed) experiences have given me empathy for the Ngarrindjeri Elders who really struggle to learn to speak their own language later in life beyond their Nunga English.

As mentioned already, my attempts to learn Ngarrindjeri began in 2003. I still remember every word we recorded with Elders, and who told us each word and its variants. It is repetition and continuously assisting with the teaching of Ngarrindjeri today that has helped me remember my Ngarrindjeri. Once again though, I am not fluent. Nobody is fluent in Ngarrindjeri. What I have learnt (as have many other people working in language revival) is that if you want to learn a language, it helps if you start teaching it. You only have to be one step ahead of your students! Of course, you must have good quality resources to help get you by. We have actually produced many of our language resources as we are learning and teaching the Ngarrindjeri language together in formal classes.

In 2011, under the auspices of the Mobile Language Team of the University of Adelaide, I invited Professor Barry Blake to join me in starting a revival program through a series of language workshops for Boandik adults in Mount Gambier, SA. Both Blake and I had our challenges in learning to speak Boandik. Blake had already researched and documented the language, and amazed us all with his ability to compose some useful conversations for different scenarios. I really enjoyed those workshops, but memorising Boandik phrases (a very different language from Ngarrindjeri) was yet another challenge for my aging brain. However, my growing

experience with other Aboriginal languages helped me with pronunciation and understanding the grammar.

Finally I am now trying to learn the Kaurna language. I help run weekly classes in Adelaide with Rob Amery who has been working in the language for 30 years. But my brain is now old and tired, and my success is minimal. I do understand how the grammar works though. I have learnt that once you learn a second language, attempts to learn another can build on the successes from the last. To speak any language you need lots of memorised vocabulary, and most of that has to be learnt from scratch. As Kaurna is a very different language from Ngarrindjeri, it has very few cognates. There is no escaping the hard work and memorisation that learning any new language requires.

Conclusion

Returning to the original topic of this chapter, the issue is whether code-mixing assists or hinders language learning. Can language-mixing lead to eventual language fluency? My own experience, and my observations of others, tells me that it is not until the shackles of English are thrown off that gaining fluency becomes a possibility. Leanne Hinton lists one of the rules of her 'Master Apprentice' method of learning an Indigenous language as 'leaving English behind' (see Hinton, 2002, pp. 9–10). I use the analogy with my students of 'taking off your pair of English glasses and replacing them with your Ngarrindjeri (or Kaurna, or Boandik or Pitjantjatjara) ones'. Different glasses help you start to see (and talk about) the world differently.

My observations tell me that code-mixing with English causes language learning to plateau, and to never move on from that code-mixing phase. I have witnessed that with many Ngarrindjeri men. That does not mean, however, that code-mixing doesn't have a place or stage in language learning. It can serve the important sociolinguistic role of reaffirming group identity, and also providing a secret code as a means of communicating with the inner group. Code-mixing also provides a means of memorising and using words from the old language, as well as assisting in pronunciation practice, especially when the sound system of the two languages being mixed is very different. But learning these words (which are often of cultural significance) through code-mixing should only be a stepping stone towards using them in bigger chunks of language, and in more complex sentences that embrace the grammar of the target language, rather than that of English.

The metaphor of *yakalun*, meaning 'flowing backwards and forwards', introduced at the beginning of this chapter, reflects the ebbs and flows of the Ngarrindjeri language and its usage over the last 200 years. At some stage the shackles of English just have to be dropped if the ultimate goal is to become fluent, and for the language to flow freely and move forward again. This is a goal that I hear repeated over and over again by many Aboriginal people, whether they be Ngarrindjeri, Kaurna, Boandik, Narungga or some other proud language warriors.

Endnotes

1. Cummins himself later revisits this issue and the idea of ‘solitude’ for the two languages (see Cummins, 2008).
2. ’Nunga’ is a term used for Aboriginal people of southern South Australia, usually of Ngarrindjeri, Kaurna and Narungga descent.
3. Most money comes from the Commonwealth Government through the Indigenous Languages and the Arts (ILA) program. State government support is minimal.
4. Ngarrindjeri is very rich in traditional suffixes that enable one to construct new words and terms.
5. Fortunately in the modern era of language revitalisation, the phonemic spelling of the language has been retained and we have been able to bring back the retroflex sounds in contemporary speech.
6. I had already got to know the community in the 1990s during the notorious ‘Hindmarsh Island bridge’ saga, whereby Ngarrindjeri women were accused of ‘fabricating’ so-called ‘secret women’s business’. I subsequently co-wrote the autobiography of a respected Kaurna-Ngarrindjeri Elder Veronica Brodie called *My Side of the Bridge*, a book that continues to sell well today (see Brodie, 2002).
7. To date 26 people have graduated with the Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language, for the Kaurna language. Not all are Kaurna, but they are Nunga. The shortage of Kaurna teachers in Adelaide encourages others to learn Kaurna, and possibly teach it with permission from the Kaurna community.
8. Pitjantjatjara is their first language, and the only strong Aboriginal language in SA.
9. I returned for the next five Summer Schools to assist with their running, and to offer training to the Pitjantjatjara tutors with the Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal language. Six of them graduated, and arguably became better language teachers. They are fluent first language speakers of Pitjantjatjara, but struggled to answer those tricky grammar questions that their non-Aboriginal students inevitably ask. Learning how to talk about their language and answer such questions was empowering.

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Chapter 15
Opening Minds and Underpinning Cross-Cultural Practices

Glenys Waters

Abstract This chapter explores the enduring positive impact of Stephen Harris's doctoral thesis on the author over four decades of cross-cultural life and work. The author briefly summarises key aspects of the thesis and gives some examples of how these informed the way she lived and learned in an indigenous community that was closely related to the one described in Harris's thesis. When the author moved to live and work in other cultural contexts, she took these lessons with her and applied them in her cross-cultural literacy and education consulting and training work. The author discusses how Harris's 'rules' of interpersonal communication and his 'Five major traditional Aboriginal informal learning strategies' were useful underpinnings throughout her professional work and life. She discusses how these notions helped her to understand other informal learning contexts and shape training and mentoring programs at different levels, in non-western and western contexts alike. Thus this slice of Stephen's work not only opened the author's mind and underpinned her professional practice but has potentially had similar effects on those she has trained.

Keyword Stephen Harris · Informal learning strategies · Development contexts · Training · Mentoring · Vernacular literacy

My Connection with Stephen

In 1976 I left behind suburban life in Melbourne, and primary school teaching. I journeyed with my young family to Darwin, then later Ramingining in northeast Arnhem Land, to live with the Djinang people. I wanted to learn what I could of the Djinang language and culture in order to communicate with my new neighbours and friends. Once I had achieved an acceptable level of proficiency, I planned to work out how best to teach some key people to read and write in Djinang, when an acceptable writing system was developed by my linguist husband. His focus was to learn

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Djinang, develop an alphabet for it, document the language, and commence Scripture translation work. We worked as members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).

The Djinang family group we most often related to, once we settled at Ramingining, had only recently settled permanently nearby. Before this, they had followed the seasonal cycles, moving camp when food sources became more available elsewhere. We first met them at Wulkabimirri, one of their previous seasonal camps, close to Ramingining. The family needed to be closer to medical care for one of the older brothers, and perhaps they desired access to western education for their children as well. So our time at Ramingining was one of learning and change for both us and them.

While in the north, I also came to know of Dr Stephen Harris, when I found a copy of his doctoral thesis in the SIL library in Darwin. If memory serves me right, I only met Stephen a few times in person, probably in the late 1970s at an Education Department workshop in Darwin, and in the early 1980s when he was a guest speaker at an SIL Anthropology workshop at Berrimah. However, it was really through my reading of *Milingimbi Aboriginal Learning Contexts* that I got to know Stephen, rather than those occasional personal encounters.

I devoured his thesis, as I was fascinated by it on various levels. The main reason for its attraction was that it showed me how effective an ethnographic approach to researching and discussing an educational question could be in a non-western cultural context. Also, his thesis was a good example of how participant observation is done. This was something I had heard about in my field training, but now I was seeing actual, real-life examples of it. At times, I felt like I was sitting on Stephen's shoulder—observing local actions, listening to local perspectives, and building my understanding through analysis and reflection on his well-documented observations. However, this was not just an academic exercise for me. The Milingimbi (Yurrwi) context explored by Stephen Harris was extremely similar to the one where I lived at that time, as Ramingining was just a short distance to the south on the mainland. I could see that most of Stephen's ideas applied there and, I suspected, to other Yolŋu language communities as well.

The main purpose of Stephen's doctoral thesis was to inform 'teachers of Australian Aboriginal children about how learning is achieved in a fairly traditionally oriented Aboriginal society'. Stephen felt there was more to bicultural education than just vernacular literacy and that it was important for educators to 'capitalise on culturally conditioned strengths and expectations about the learning process' (Harris, 1977, p. viii). He divided his discussion into three parts—each corresponding to an ethnographic, sociolinguistic and psychological focus. His ethnographic focus was on 'culturally conditioned learning contexts'. Observing people through this lens led Harris to describe 'five major traditional Aboriginal informal learning strategies' and how they differed from particular teaching strategies used in western classrooms. He referred to these five strategies as learning by observation and imitation; personal trial and error; real-life performance by the learner; context-specific learning and learning through person-orientation, and provided numerous examples of each one (Harris, 1977, pp. 247–312).

Harris's sociolinguistic focus centred on understanding those sociolinguistic aspects of communication in Milingimbi contexts that affect interpersonal speech, in order to encourage more effective verbal communications between Yolŋu (Indigenous) and Balanda (non-Indigenous) people. He first explained that talk is used mainly for social purposes, rather than to teach, and that the social rules of verbal interaction can be radically different from those in Balanda culture. Constraints on how and when to greet people are complex. The use of eye contact, people's names, small talk and silence all contrast sharply with typical Balanda behaviours and expectations. Also, significant mindset changes are needed in order for Balanda to understand the social dynamics of groups and how to navigate entry into relational circles in appropriate low-key ways. Awareness of avoidance relationships, who it is *not* appropriate for an individual to relate to, will also help Balanda to avoid contravening important but often unspoken communication rules or taboos (Harris, 1997, pp. 333–358).

Harris then discussed some key frustrations for Balanda, such as understanding and negotiating the gaps between 'deciding' and 'doing' when talking with Yolŋu about plans or future actions. Yolŋu speech acts and speech events are shaped by very different behavioural and moral expectations, different attitudes to the passing of time and the high importance placed on individual preference at the time of action, rather than at the time of making initial commitment to that action. Because of these and other differences, it is very easy for Balanda to adopt quite incorrect interpretations of Yolŋu actions (Harris 1997, pp. 375–387). Balanda also need to understand that although people have the right to speak, make speeches and be heard in Yolŋu society, at the same time listeners have the right to not listen, ignore the speaker or even get up and leave at any point (Harris, 1977, p. 400). Key communication frustrations for the Yolŋu include the importance of avoiding verbal confrontation, strong talk, or anything that could cause argument or animosity. Subtlety, obtuseness or talking around a point is often used in the hope that the message or request is conveyed in a way less likely to produce conflict or an angry reaction. Also, there is no such thing as impersonal debate in Yolŋu society, or talking pointedly, repeatedly and strongly at someone to change the way something is done. Yolŋu perceptions of such behaviours are that people are being rude, disrespectful or 'about to have an all out brawl' (Harris, 1977, pp. 406–423).

Harris's psychological focus was not as strong as the two previous foci. In this section he briefly considered whether the ways of thinking described in the body of the thesis were shaped solely by the learner's socio-cultural and physical environmental experiences. This led him to compare his results of visual memory, classification and verbal logic tests achieved by Yolŋu children growing up in Milingimbi, with Balanda children growing up in Darwin. He concluded that Milingimbi schooling had had only a small effect on the development of functional learning systems that are more allied with Balanda thinking and school ways of learning. He also concluded that even though 'town aborigines' tend to be more Balanda-like in their mental processing, they are still 'quite different' from white students who had grown up in the country but attended urban schools (Harris, 1977, pp. 449–516).

Stephen's findings, and the advice based on them, were ground-breaking for Balanda living and working at Milingimbi or in similar contexts in Arnhem Land. Up until that time, there had been 'no detailed study of traditional Aboriginal learning methods', no consideration or understanding of their verbal communication rules, and most white Australian teachers were unaware of the significant differences between traditional Aboriginal functional learning systems and those of children in white urban schools (Harris, 1977, p. viii).

There were other authors who influenced me in the course of my cross-cultural literacy and training career over the years, but Stephen's work is one that I kept referencing. He didn't just provide me with an extremely important, underpinning thread as I lived and worked in Arnhem Land. I also drew on his work while living and working in Papua New Guinea (PNG) (1989–2003), when I managed a literacy training project in the Solomon Islands (2008–2014), conducted reviews of a literacy project in China (2009) and in Bougainville (2014) and, finally, as I revamped training programs for other cross-cultural workers in Melbourne, Australia (2004–2015). Without this thread of support, my literacy and educational career might have unravelled somewhat, and would probably have been far less effective, and more stressful than it was. Therefore, I owe Stephen a huge debt of gratitude.

I know that Stephen explored many more issues and ideas over his lifetime other than those represented in his thesis (Harris, 1977), but my engagement with him was through this work, and so I have limited my discussion to this narrow slice of a much larger history and life.

Learning to Live and Learn in an Arnhem Land Community

As mentioned already, my first reading of Stephen's thesis was driven by a need to understand the cultural context I was living in at Ramingining. I was not just facing a huge language barrier, I was also surrounded by people who did things from a very different cultural base and acted according to very different beliefs and values.

In my attempts to learn one of the vernacular languages I would visit households at various camps and try out my set of basic greetings on whomever would listen. I would scribble down their responses, analyse them and try and learn more language from these responses. I would come back the next day and try out a few new sentences I had put together in an effort to expand my conversation practice. I would work out what I thought I would say if the event was past, present or future, and practise using the different pronoun sets I was learning. It was all quite a dismal failure, as little that I was doing or talking about was real, grounded or relevant. I quickly learned that a hypothetical scenario was not a useful place for practising language (Harris, 1977, pp. 431–436). It just led to puzzled looks on faces. I learned that my world of past, present and future was quite different to their world of multiple categories of tense and aspect. And I eventually realised that I shouldn't walk around the community greeting every Tom, Dick, Harry or Suzy as that was highly inappropriate (not a

cultural practice), and especially not appropriate with Dick and Harry, due to cultural avoidance rules (Harris, 1997, pp. 351–374)!

So we took our Djinang friends hunting, since we had a vehicle and they did not. We went to various locations and practised language prior, during and after each trip. We practised as we arranged what we would do and where we would go. We chatted as much as our limited language would allow during the trip, as we enjoyed each other's company, and as we enjoyed the spoils of the hunt from the hot coals of the fire, before returning home. Then we would chat about what happened on those trips after the fact. There were the usual misunderstandings concerning the timing and certainty of arrangements (Harris, 1977, pp. 376–387), but gradually we came to be very comfortable with the different time-person orientations of the Yolŋu culture and learned a bit more language each time. Learning by observing and being with people in real, everyday activities became our focus as well as learning through trial and error over time and listening to their stories.

There were many invaluable anthropological insights that I, as a Balanda, gained from Stephen's thesis, and I began to see examples of what he had documented in the community where I now lived. His descriptive examples of what was said and what was actually done, and his thoughtful and insightful discussion of those observations showed me how he came to his conclusions, and led me to arrive at similar conclusions myself. His thesis provided a wonderful example of Naturalistic Inquiry, although at that time I had no idea that such a discipline existed. He contributed to my understanding that people who have different world views, based on different beliefs and values, will act and react very differently from the way westerners do; and that miscommunications in the social spaces we share are much more 'our' responsibility than 'theirs'.

Stephen also provided a resource against which I could check my intuitions about my own cultural observations. My limited proficiency in the local language at that time, and the fact that none of my language mentors or friends could speak English, meant it was hard for me to do insider checks about what I was experiencing and observing. But Stephen's work often provided that check for me, and was also great end-of-the-day reading as it was so accessible and practical.

Since I was a learner more than a teacher in this period of my life, I was more interested in the anthropological and sociolinguistic aspects of Stephen's work, rather than his 'learning theory' aspects. However, as a trained primary school teacher, I thought his work on informal learning styles was useful and sensible. In retrospect, I would say that it added to my own personal learning theory, which at the time I would have found difficult to articulate succinctly. Having said that Stephen did give me terms to talk about the different learning strategies I was observing and would also notice in other contexts.

Applying Understandings of Informal Learning Styles in Other Cultural Contexts

In 1989, after ten years at Ramingining, and a furlough in Melbourne, we moved overseas to work as SIL Consultants in Papua New Guinea, assisting new teams of expatriates as they worked to establish themselves in Bible translation and literacy work among some of the 850 language communities in that country.

I joined the team of expatriate literacy consultants within the group. I was quickly viewed as a new person, someone who they believed hadn't earned her stripes in this particular field of service, so had nothing to contribute. I needed to learn to embrace their proven ways and tone down the ideas I espoused as they were considered to be far too radical for this context. My ideas and enthusiasms were met with brick wall comments such as 'that's not the way we do it here'. Part of the reason for this reaction was that I would not fully embrace a particular syllable approach they espoused as *the* way to teach reading. I preferred methods more in line with a holistic literacy philosophy, which they all professed 'wouldn't work in PNG'. I also brought ideas about local learning styles and how these could be usefully applied to the teaching of reading and writing in 'oral' contexts. I often quoted Stephen Harris, used ideas or excerpts from his thesis, and made workshop participants discuss his informal learning styles to see if these, or something similar, applied to the context where they worked.

I was also considered a bit strange, because I thought that it would be helpful for local teachers to describe how learning happens in their own culture—either in personal or group learning situations. It was my hope that those local teachers would be able to reflect on, and discuss, the patterns of these events, leading them to better understand how to help their students, whether adults or children, to learn to read and write in their own language.

So I worked quietly on the side with field teams who asked me for help. Then, from 1991, I worked and lived in a village context part-time (with my husband) on Karkar Island in the Madang Province. Because of what I did there, I earned the right to speak from experience about what 'works in this context'. And for nine years I observed my neighbours' children learning—by observation, imitation, trial and error, in real-life activities and contexts, through effective and appropriate person-orientation (and in peer group associations).

At the same time though I continued to train others at the regional level. I applied Stephen's informal learning styles in multiple contexts. I planned training programs for literacy trainers and teachers. I made sure there was time in the program for learning by trial and error to achieve approximations of the real thing, by experiencing and then doing, through real-life experiences and performance, and through significant person-orientations. Wherever possible, I strove to embed the teaching and learning in real situations. I justified my approach to those on the team by asking pertinent questions: 'How can the teachers teach shared book reading, if they have never had a good book shared with them in a similar atmosphere? How can the teachers teach children to write good stories, if they have never written a good story

themselves or experienced all aspects of the writing process including conferencing and editing? How can the teachers give children meaningful experiences from which to learn and study their environment, if they have never participated in such an experience themselves?' It was my firm conviction that we had to give participants these experiences in our training.

So, gradually, the organisation's workshop methodologies changed from verbal classroom instruction with a focus on rote learning and immediate outputs, to workshops which provided opportunities for observation, active participation, learning by doing, learning through approximations and learning over time. When appropriate, we included opportunities for participants to engage with basic-level theoretical understandings that explained or described how people learned to read and write, always anchored in actual experience. Trainers also came to appreciate that participants would acquire understandings and hone their skills over time—both within a workshop and over a series of workshops.

Towards the end of this period, as I reflected on my practices, I noticed that I had followed a similar approach to structuring training workshops at multiple levels. I had arranged training for prep-school teachers on Karkar (these were either Grade 6 or Grade 10 leavers with minimal informal training), for provincial level trainers with more formal education (some had teachers' college training), and for a group of National Department of Education (NDOE) Officers. At each of these levels, I had found that Stephen's learning principles held true, and so served as useful, quite robust guides.

There were several benefits from structuring the training around these core concepts. The Karkar Island teachers, who were working in village schools, went on to hold another curriculum development workshop that mirrored the one I had conducted. They felt very confident that, in another location and in a locally sustainable way, they could do all the things that I had done with them. In this way they were able to develop more materials for their prep classes by themselves. In some of the higher level workshops, trained teachers became enthusiastic about writing and developed some incredible books for 'shared reading' times. Several of these books became part of the NDOE early years literacy curriculum and were translated into many PNG languages. Some of the higher level trainers were comfortable embedding learning in real-life activities and worked together to develop new teaching sessions for future provincial workshops, which we delivered collaboratively. I also drew upon their ideas and examples in later training workshops in the Solomon Islands.

Stephen's ideas had emerged from his observations of social situations in the culture where he conducted his research. I found that, not only did his ideas stand the test of time in indigenous contexts in the Top End, they also continued to inform my practice in totally different settings in Papua New Guinea. More to the point, they didn't just inform my practice: they were appropriated into my core theoretical frameworks, the ones that shaped how I trained others, and they contributed to the success of those training programs. In hindsight, I would say Stephen's ideas were also in tune with a socio-cultural view of learning which began to inform my work and that of other cross-cultural educators towards the end of the 1990s (Harris et al., 2003).

Researching in and with Communities

In 1991 I was asked by SIL to consider undertaking further education studies at a Masters level or higher. I began that journey in 1992 by enrolling in Bachelor of Education studies, which led to being accepted into a Masters-by-research program. Although it was then 15 years since I had encountered Stephen's thesis, the way he had done his doctoral research influenced my decision to undertake a unit of study on Naturalistic Inquiry in order to understand this particular approach to research more fully. I'm sure that the knowledge and expertise associated with this research paradigm had expanded greatly since Stephen's research days, but its underpinning philosophies would have sat well with him and, as I discovered, they did with me.

Stephen's thesis was the first one I had seen, in my very limited experience, that took an ethnographic and qualitative approach to examining a question of educational interest to the researcher and his approach had resonated greatly with me. During my time in PNG I had mostly read educational research that began with a decontextualised point of view, or a preferred approach that the researcher held, and from that point on, the research focus and effort was expended on proving or shoring up the researcher's position. This may have been an incorrect, uninformed perception on my part, but it did prejudice me against academic writers who wanted to prove a point, or push a pet theory. Often, I felt that their ideas were impractical and not based on intuitions stemming from actual experience or reality. Some seemed to be focused on purely academic or personal agendas.

But Stephen's thesis had shown me a way of doing research where findings could emerge from the observations collected, and discussions of those observations, not from any preconceived ideas that the researcher wanted to promote. Also noteworthy was that the resulting thesis was readable, interesting and accessible to those who were not 'academics' themselves, or not fully conversant with the Milingimbi context. My dad enjoyed reading it, just as much as I did.

Thus, my interests and cross-cultural roles and experiences to this point, had already inclined me to research training issues within 'development' contexts, using insider perspectives. I wanted to do research that would draw heavily on local trainer, community leader and workshop participant perspectives, their stories and lived realities. I was convinced that, too often, expatriates determined what the problem was, what the solution was, and how things should be 'fixed'. I had seen the expatriate decide what training would be offered, and how it would be offered, without even discussing the pertinent questions with those who worked or trained in that context and would inhabit that context well after the expatriate had left. I had probably even erred in this way myself. I had become uncomfortable with this colonialist approach and I thought it was time to change the conversation. It was important to hear what insiders felt, worried about, needed, and what implementation solutions they had in mind.

At university, as a postgraduate student, I learned more about research approaches and quickly embraced the post-positivist paradigm. I returned to PNG, ready to research vernacular literacy training options from insider perspectives. However, on arrival, I was asked to change my research focus and, instead, to examine education programs at the provincial level in Papua New Guinea, as that was a pressing need within the country at the time. It was disappointing to have to drop my research question, but there were some advantages to this change. For example, I was able to expand this new question into a collaborative research project and so was privileged to work with Rambai Keruwa throughout the collection and analysis phase, affording me many insider-checking conversations with a cultural leader who was well connected nationally in the non-formal education sphere. Also, we soon became good friends and worked very much as professional peers. Another benefit was that all the extensive survey travel costs of our research were funded by SIL PNG.

We worked mostly, but not entirely, within a post-positivist framework and presented our conclusions to the SIL Branch and to the National Department of Education. I was later emboldened by this experience to accept invitations to do two evaluative reviews of literacy projects—one in a province in China for an NGO and another for AusAID (now DFAT) in PNG's Bougainville province. My exposure to Stephen's work encouraged me to favour research that drew on ethnographic and post-positivist methodologies. The great strength in these methods is that because the findings emerge from the data collected and described, they are far richer, more relevant at the time, and informative for years to come. A research focus like Stephen's, which allows insider perspectives, and ways of being and doing to be understood, came to occupy a central place in my thinking and has been invaluable in my practice.

Mentoring Melanesian Trainers

As mentioned, I was not able to follow my initial research passion in a formal way; that is, to hear and understand PNG literacy consultants' ideas about the best way to train community level preschool level teachers, and to figure out what content should be included in that training. I did, however, conduct a few initial group discussions on that topic with a group of Melanesian literacy consultants. Their comments, stories and metaphors gave much food for thought.

The interview response, 'We felt like cockatoos', comes to mind. It explained feelings of just being expected to parrot the methods that non-formal-education teachers were shown by expatriate trainers, without understanding why they did what they did. The same respondent also asked to be allowed to experiment with ideas that he thought would work well, to be allowed to fail and learn from his own mistakes, in effect to learn by doing. These consultants also questioned what the title 'Literacy Consultant' meant, feeling that it had been bestowed upon them as a tokenistic gesture (which it had not been). In their view, their knowledge and experience did not match those of expatriate consultants. These focus group discussions confirmed for me the

value of opening up spaces to listen to insiders' perspectives, for it showed that they were able to make decisions about what was needed in their training programs.

One of these consultants was Rambai. Once the survey research had been completed, he asked me to mentor him through a Graduate Certificate level education course at James Cook University to give his Consultant work a more solid foundation. There were several others he could have asked—men who, culturally, may have been more appropriate—but I believe it was the social and relational aspects that are important in learning (Harris, 1977, p. 537) that guided his choice, and I received his request as a great honour. Permission from the University was granted and we both relished our times of side-by-side learning. Rambai embarked on a program of learning to do academic reading and writing by trial and error, and by repeated approximations of the real thing, with support from a friend. I embarked on a program of learning how to mentor effectively at an academic level in a Melanesian cultural setting, but I learned much more. I learned about his life, his culture and the rich learning environment of his highlands family, peer group, men's house and village. We both enjoyed discussing and applying the academic readings to his descriptions of his own experiences: in his village, his school, his teacher training college, the primary classrooms he taught in and the Tok Ples preschool teachers he trained in the non-formal education system.

Our discussions about McNaughton's patterns of emergent literacy, in one of his key texts (McNaughton, 1995), were particularly interesting, as they led us to write a paper together about Kaugel patterns of learning and development. McNaughton was another writer-researcher who took his cues from what actually happens in social contexts, but for him these were homes and preschools in New Zealand. Discussion of McNaughton's ideas clarified for Rambai the distinction between formal and informal learning styles. That distinction was something a previous mentor had tried to unpack for Rambai years earlier, but until that moment, it had remained a puzzle. It was a light bulb moment for him. When we discussed learning by doing, and what that really means, and how family members and others scaffolded learning, Rambai wrote some amazing examples of how that happened for him in his family, in the men's house and within his peer group.

On reflection it is interesting to compare Rambai's stories with those that Stephen recorded. Both the similarities, and a few differences, are striking. Milingimbi and Kaugel people make strong use of observation in their informal learning strategies and these are often ambient observations over time. The observation below comes from Milingimbi.

> Dji____'s father Ngu_____ has been a productive bark painter for many years. Dji____ is a man of between twenty-five and thirty years of age. During the last couple of years, bark painting has become a lucrative source of cash for 'qualified' yolngu who prefer an independent source of cash rather than getting it from balanda-type work. So Dji____ decided to start bark painting. He had been observing his father do bark paintings (and probably body paintings at various ceremonies, with many of the same designs being used) since he was a young boy, but he claimed never to have done bark painting himself. …His first two or three bark paintings were not quite up to professional (saleable) standard, but from then on his paintings were of a good to excellent standard. He had inherited the rights to paint his father's designs as well as having observed them being painted for many years. His father's

> designs were recognisable in his paintings but his own unique style was also present. (Harris, 1977, pp. 248–249)

Watching fathers was a common thread. The next description is a summary of Rambai's story about observing his father making bows and arrows.

> Late in the evening I often watched my father making a new bow and arrows. He would have his tools beside him: his bush knife, some sharp animal bones and some sharp-edged stones. He also had special *kotenga* leaves (their rough surfaces are like sandpaper) for smoothing his job. As I got older, he explained that the wood from the *kia* or *laime mendi* trees, that grew on the mountainsides, is chosen for making the bow. One day Father wanted to make himself a new bow and some arrows. He needed to go to the bush to cut down a *kia* tree. We left early in the morning, walked beside a small creek for about two hours, then climbed along the mountain slope until Father found the right tree. He cut off a small branch, pulled off some leaves and told me to examine each one of them while he pulled off leaves from other trees. Then we compared them all. He then carefully examined all the trees and felled one that was the right size. He took the length of wood needed home, made a big fire and placed the wood over the flames, long enough to enable him to remove the bark. He let it cool and placed it in a damp place for several days.
>
> Then, to make the bow, first he cut off the ends of the wood and measured out the length he wanted. He then whittled the sides, smoothed them gradually and cut and shaped the ends. On the second day he smoothed the outer and inner parts of the bow. He tested the middle section to see if it was strong enough. He continued smoothing it using the coarse leaves, then let it dry in the ceiling above the heat of the fire. On the fourth day we returned to the bush and after walking for an hour Father found a young bamboo that was good for splitting to make the bow string. He cut a piece, split it into a number of pieces, then dried them in the sun. Back at home Father got out his newly made bow, tied knots at each end of the split piece of bamboo and carefully measured the length of the bow. He bent the bow down using his right knee and attached the bamboo string to each end. He cut off the unwanted ends of bamboo string from each end. The bow was finished. Then he collected the other pieces of the *kia* wood left over from making the bow and made some arrows. At this point he allowed me to try making some arrows and I made them the same way he had done. The final job was to make designs on the arrows and have the bow painted with orange clay and charcoal. (Keruwa, 2001, pp. 26–27)

Obviously, members of both cultures develop very strong observations skills, especially when watching significant relatives in action, and in this way they learn what to attend to with few or no verbal instructions to guide them. At a certain time the learner is encouraged to begin to perform parts of the skill, and in this way attains mastery fairly quickly.

Another commonality between the two cultures is the importance of the peer group, usually comprising relatives, which provides relaxed opportunities for learners to become proficient at practising skills through approximations of the real thing. At Milingimbi this would include such skills as ceremonial dance performance or hunting.

> T____, the eleven year old boy, with W____ aged twenty, and B____ aged eighteen, walked one-half mile to the billabong and to a special fishing spot near its overflow into the Blythe River. Here on the bank there was a nylon fishing line lying tangled in the grass with a large blue 'wobbler' lure that is highly effective in catching barramundi fish. B____ immediately started to untangle the line and then started to throw it out and pull it back continuously. T____ started swinging his right arm around in time with B____, and made whistling noises

> with his mouth to simulate the noise of the line shooting out over the water. W____sat and watched both B____ and T____. After a while T____ went over and started shaking a pandanus palm, in the fronds of which a second lure was caught. W____ started to help him and got a stick with which to poke the lure down. W____ gave up and sat down after a while, but T____ got the stick and persisted for quite a long time, but couldn't get the lure down. All the time he wanted to be able to do what B____ was doing. He stood looking at B____ and started making suggestions where he thought it would be a good place to aim the line. Just then B____ got a bite and he hauled in a fish, during which time T____ was very excited, talking and pointing and doing a few hops and jumps. (Harris, 1977, p. 253)

Rambai described several opportunities where his peer group also learned proficiency in a skill through approximations of the real thing. These included speech-making (necessary for participation at the men's house) and making bows and arrows for hunting.

> The day after my Father finished his bow, I decided to get some of the other boys in the village to go out with me into the bush and collect the same type of tree to make a bow and arrows. We started out early in the morning, following the same track that Father had led me on. When we finally arrived in the bush, some of the boys chose different trees to the type Father had cut down for making his bow and arrows. I had to explain to them about the correct type of trees they needed to find. It took us fewer days than Father to make our bows and arrows. Some of the bows and arrows the boys made were almost as good as Father's but most of them were not very good. The first ones we made were not strong or good and each time we went out shooting they easily broke. We went to the bush several more times to cut down trees so we could make more bows and arrows. We did it many times until we were good at it. (Keruwa, 2001, pp. 27–28)

I later used Rambai's written examples in study units when training other trainers in various contexts. I asked participants to reflect on three aspects of the learning event. What is happening socially? What patterns are involved in the learning event? And how much is the learner in control of their learning? Overall, Rambai identified 8–10 different types of informal traditional learning patterns.

Rambai also began to see how these ways of learning could be encouraged in the 'formal' settings of preschool and elementary level primary school classes. He also saw them in action as we talked, while his preschool-aged granddaughter sat with us at the table learning to write by writing and drawing on the scrap paper I provided.

We considered what the readings and new concepts had to say to daily practices in the typical PNG preschool and elementary classrooms or to non-formal teacher training programs. I think both of us had wandered into both ways learning, understanding each other's ways of knowing and doing, and putting those understandings to work in the contexts where we were both mentoring and training others. Whatever we were doing, we always made sure to anchor it in real-life stories, situations and experiences.

I was privileged to present our co-authored paper on Melanesian learning styles to an education conference in Port Moresby when Rambai was unable to attend (Waters & Keruwa, 2001). Our paper prompted this interesting comment: 'We knew we had our own styles of learning and Rambai has done our work for us, in identifying, naming and describing them. We should be taking these ways of

learning into our classrooms'. I think Stephen would have enjoyed the discussions at that conference.

Training Others for Intercultural Work

In 2003, I returned to live permanently in Australia and was asked to take on the role of Principal of the SIL training institute in Melbourne. One of my tasks was to oversee the accredited training offered to new recruits. The graduates worked cross-culturally around the globe in vernacular language development and Bible translation programs; some worked in remote villages, others in rural or urban settings. I was keen to change the underpinning models of the training I had inherited, so that our models of intercultural training focused on the collaborative training and mentoring of local people at community or regional levels. I also wanted to make the training more effective. Once again, Stephen's thesis informed my work as I sought to improve how the subjects were taught and make student assignments more relevant.

Learning by doing in real-life situations became a focus. Engagement in real-life communities was immediately threaded into the Introduction to Ethnography unit. Students were now expected to join an actual cultural sub-group and through observations, recording insider stories and reflection and analysis of these, to write a report on some fresh understandings of aspects of the particular sub-culture. Insider checking of their understandings was expected. Thus, the unit changed from a book-learning one to a person-centered learn-by-doing approach.

Other 'real' assessment tasks were introduced into the units on Introduction to Literacy, and Literacy Materials Development. A Literacy Tutoring Case Study unit was added to the course options. For several years, students taking one or more of these units, engaged in teaching and learning with new arrivals (either Dinka or Karen refugee groups). They were required to run a writers' workshop with the language community, develop some basic reading materials for them, and teach someone to read and write. Those doing Field Methods did some basic language learning, and undertook phonological and grammatical analysis of these languages as well. One year a group of students travelled to Vanuatu to practise their Language Survey skills as part of their Sociolinguistics unit and thus contributed to the documentation of languages in that region.

All students were required to engage with the abridged version of Stephen's chapter on five major traditional Aboriginal informal learning strategies. This was an old reference for courses accredited in the 2000s, but it was one I had by then come to regard as a classic. This reading informed a key assessment task for the unit on Partnering and Mentoring in Intercultural Contexts. Students began with discussions that compared the learning styles identified by Stephen's paper, and those in Rambai's paper on Kaugel learning contexts. They also drew upon comparisons of readings they had done on current educational theories. Students then divided into teams and chose either an Indigenous Australian context or a Melanesian context for their group assignment. They were required to design a training program to meet an expressed

language development training need in one of these community contexts. They were to provide an overview of the program, detail one training session, and teach part of that sample session to the rest of the group and the assessors. They were expected to take into account the local learning styles outlined in the reference papers and any information they had gleaned about their chosen context. They were also required to reflect on their training session, any issues that arose during the assessment task, and how they might handle things differently next time. The outcomes of this assessed task were far richer and better grounded than previous assignments for this unit of study; and several of the group presentations were outstanding. Staff hoped the graduates would do as well in their future real-life training and mentoring situations as they did in this trial and error setting.

These are just some examples of how the other staff and I tried to anchor student learning in real-life situations and to give them opportunities for learning by doing and through successive approximations of the real thing, in a supported environment. The student assessment tasks were sometimes ‘messy’, because they didn’t necessarily have tried and tested solutions and they addressed issues that were at the centre of a complex web of interlocking factors. In some instances there were uncertainties and challenging logistics—which, as we pointed out to students, is true of real-life situations and is why they had to learn how to work with the challenges rather than be stressed out by them. Staff regularly informed me that students’ practical work assignments were of a far higher quality than in previous years. The students themselves commented that sometimes it was scary for them and they were unsure, especially when interacting as ethnographers with different communities or as facilitators in literacy workshops, but they felt they learned so much more than they would have if their work had been just focused on book-learning.

Concluding Remarks

I have engaged with only a small slice of Stephen’s academic work in my lifetime. I have not ignored Stephen’s view that there are times when it helps to make use of pragmatic, less time-consuming ways of learning for the sake of efficiency and in order to appropriate outside knowledge or ways that can be put to work in the local culture. Stephen, and others, did a lot of great work on both ways learning and how this can multiply the resources that communities can draw on to deal with the realities of their changing worlds. I did not dip into those resources as much, and so have chosen to limit my reflections to his thesis.

What I did learn from Stephen Harris has been an ever-present and strong thread underpinning my professional work as I sought to encourage effective literacy training and promote effective literacy practices in a variety of cultural contexts. At some points the pedagogical principles that emerged from Stephen’s thesis have been followed to the letter; elsewhere, his ideas and principles have merged and interacted with other theoretical understandings I have gleaned from other scholars.

At no point though have I found the concepts he enunciated to be superfluous or out of date. To summarise briefly:

- His anthropological approach to understanding the world of the other opened my mind and gave me a way to process what I was observing and experiencing in other cultural communities.
- His ethnographic (post-positivist) approach to research and data gathering encouraged me to believe that I could do similar work, which turned out to be entirely worthwhile and with very practical, useful outcomes.
- His many examples, drawn from real life at Milingimbi, showed the importance of a thorough understanding of local ways of learning and doing, and the benefits of working with those as much as is practicable in intercultural learning, teaching and training situations.

Interestingly, my latest intercultural engagement has been back in Arnhem Land, beginning at Milingimbi no less, walking the streets of the same community where Stephen walked, watching the Balanda and Yolŋu going fishing, the Yolŋu practising for football matches and the Balanda and Yolŋu doing their best to communicate with each other. I can't help but feel that Stephen's doctoral thesis about *Milingimbi learning contexts* still holds extremely valuable lessons for Balanda and Yolŋu today. But I also confirm that these lessons are not just for the Milingimbi context. They do apply far more broadly.

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Glenys Waters worked in language development with the Summer Institute of Linguistics for 41 years (1976–2017). During that time she served in literacy work and as a trainer of trainers. She began by living and working with the Djinang people in the indigenous community of Ramingining (1976–1986). It was here that she engaged with Stephen Harris's work on Milingimbi Learning Contexts. She and her husband then moved to PNG where she assisted the Takia people with the development of elementary vernacular literacy and education materials. She also served as a literacy adviser to other SIL teams, and assisted with vernacular literacy

training programs requested by the government at the regional and provincial levels. She returned to Australia in 2003 and served in the role of Principal at the SIL Australia training college where she assisted staff to upgrade the training content and accreditation and later taught in the areas of Ethnography, Literacy Development and Anthropology. She also implemented an Adult Literacy project in the Solomon Islands which focused on the design of adult literacy materials and programs and the training of local trainers. She conducted reviews of literacy programs in an indigenous community in China (2009) and in Bougainville, PNG (2014). In retirement she has reconnected with indigenous translation work at Milingimbi and in the broader Yolŋu context.

Chapter 16
Still Ahead of His Time

Wendy Baarda

Abstract I feel I knew Stephen very well, although I had only a few brief encounters with him at Northern Territory University, when he was my supervisor for my essays for the Master of Education degree. I knew him mainly from his writings, the papers that were sent out to the bilingual schools in the 1970 and 1980s and from his extensive comments on my essays. I found his papers on Aboriginal Learning styles, Indigenous education and literacy in Indigenous languages, most enlightening and helpful. Everything he wrote about rang true with what I saw in Yuendumu. I thoroughly agreed with all his recommendations and aspirations for Indigenous education. I deeply feel his disappointment that much of what he advised has been ignored but also celebrate his contribution to bilingual education in those schools where it has lasted a significant time, where children still speak their first languages and value their culture.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Warlpiri · Bilingual education · Northern Territory

When I was first asked to write a chapter for this book about Stephen Harris, I wondered how I could possibly fit this into my impossibly busy life? But then I realised this is really important. It is such an opportunity to revive interest in those insights into Aboriginal learning styles and to recover some of those ideas which guided us at the beginning of bilingual education in the Northern Territory (NT). Sadly, all this has since been pushed aside and forgotten in the misguided push to improve English outcomes by doing more English and trying out every new time-consuming English program that comes into fashion.

We were all so optimistic back then, when we started the bilingual program at Yuendumu. Aboriginal teachers took every class. We had very few resources, but children read whatever there was, whether it was their own stories, teachers' hand-made books, class books or syllable charts. I feel we have gone backwards since that time. We have won each of the battles so far, in that we still have bilingual education in the Warlpiri schools, but on each occasion, we have lost ground. Much less time is given to Warlpiri in the classrooms. Much less time is spent in-servicing white staff

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in how to work in a bilingual school, there is less opportunity for appropriate teacher education, and less time for planning, and there is increasing pressure on teachers to devote most of their class time to English and Maths.

Most of the things that Stephen advocated have not been implemented or continued. We no longer have Warlpiri teachers taking classes. We do not have suitable teacher training to prepare Aboriginal teachers in remote schools to teach in their language. There is no specialised course for non-Aboriginal teachers intending to work in Aboriginal schools. Aboriginal staff have not gained control of their schools, and they have very little decision-making power. They do have their own Warlpiri curriculum which ensures a degree of domain separation. The English domain gets the much bigger slice of the pie. There is little attention paid to possible or probable threat and damage to Warlpiri culture, worldview, consciousness, and identity resulting from requiring children to behave and learn in non-Aboriginal ways. This was one of Stephen's main concerns.

I first knew Stephen from his papers. I was a disciple long before I met him. Back in the early years of bilingual programs, someone in the NT Education Department used to send out to schools, papers on bilingual education and related topics. These had been written by James Cummins, Stephen Harris, Michael Christie, Steve Johnson, Raymattja Marika, Sarah Gudschinsky, and others.

Cummins's papers were seen as the rationale for bilingual education back then. They were not so easy to read, but we were made familiar with his two main hypotheses, which are, stated simply:

1. Children need to reach a threshold of competence in their first language to enable development in the second one and to avoid language deficiency.
2. Proficiency in the first language will be transferred to the second one. As children learn better in a well-understood language than in a poorly understood one, so school learning should be taught in the child's first language to allow more efficient learning of and through the second.

Stephen was not so happy with this. He [Stephen Harris] pointed out that the aim here is academic gain rather than first language maintenance. 'He suggested that using the Aboriginal language as a means of teaching the concepts of western schooling risks undermining the Aboriginal culture and contributing to language and cultural shift' (Cummins, 2021; see Chap. 9, this volume). Also, the transfer idea does not take into account the vast difference between Aboriginal and Western understanding.

Stephen's papers were the most readable and seemed to explain Aboriginal students' behaviour as I was experiencing it. I also shared his concerns that schools could be contributing to language and culture loss. Before coming to Yuendumu I was already concerned about language maintenance, knowing that so many Aboriginal languages were already gone. I was surprised and happy to find myself in a community where the Warlpiri language is very alive and well, spoken by all local people and children.

Back then in 1973, the local language was generally ignored, trivialised, dismissed, seen as a handicap, a disadvantage to overcome, by nearly all the white

people in the school and community. It did occur to me that my job and the jobs of all the white people in Yuendumu were mostly about getting Warlpiri people and children to work and behave like white people. We were always on their backs to get them to be punctual, orderly, and do the job or the learning exactly as we do it. We were told back then that we should be training the Aboriginal workers to take over our jobs, preparing them to replace us. It was very assimilation oriented, but in some ways, better than the present orientation, with Warlpiri people now being treated as helpless clients, while increasing numbers of well-paid white people make all the decisions, do nearly all the work of running the community and run courses to bring people up to whitefella standards or prepare them for non-existent jobs. Most of the work is done by contractors.

I liked and agreed with Steve Johnson's paper (1987) on language maintenance. He advocated family education, no schooling until early childhood is over (age eight to 10, or maybe later in some societies), then a number of optional courses, community based, run and controlled, and later specialist courses for interested teenagers and adults in skills as required for community functions as decided by local people. This would be great for language maintenance but anyone can see it was never going to happen. Stephen was much more about, making what we have, work better.

I found myself in complete agreement with Stephen's papers and found his book, *Culture and learning: tradition and education in North-east Arnhemland*, most interesting and enlightening. Even though he was writing about Top End communities, everything rang true with what I saw in Yuendumu community and school. I was upset when I was told the book had been criticised by some Sydney-based Aboriginal group who said that we were not to use it or even have it in the school. Apparently, they said it was biased and denigrated Aboriginal culture. I thought it very unfair as Stephen respected and valued Aboriginal culture and all his recommendations were concerned with not endangering the Aboriginal culture and identity. Perhaps they were upset because he observed and described some situations where Aboriginal learning styles were a 'barrier to learning', as when dealing with introduced technology such as cars and outboard motors. If he had been describing non-Aboriginals dealing with traditional pursuits, there would also be many examples of non-productive behaviour. As Stephen said, verbal explanation and analysis will not teach you to spear a fish. It would not teach you to find and dig honey ants either. It takes years of careful observation, practice and persistence.

The first class I had in Yuendumu in 1973 was Domestic Science for the post-primary girls: cooking, cleaning, sewing and baby care, with a small academic component which the girls did not much like. They were lively, funny, chatty, high spirited, in spite of the difficult time many were having at home back then with enforced, promised marriages. They were masters of existentialism. If all was fine in the immediate present, they were joyful. The girls at first seemed uncooperative, lazy, tricky or confrontational. I thought they were trying me out, to see what they could get away with. They often did not answer me, never did what I asked immediately, and quite often simply refused to do the work. As a new teacher, I told one girl to pick up the pins on the desk. I probably asked her a few times. Finally, she flashed me a very angry look, just swished her arm across the desk and sent the whole tin and

all the pins flying across the room. Before I could say, ‘Now you’ve spilt them all, so you will have to pick them up’, a few other girls were down on the floor, picking them up. They were smiling, stifling giggles, as they looked across at the girl who had spilt them all. They found it very funny. They were, I suppose teaching me not to be bossy, not to pick out one student, and to recognise their personal right to do or not to do what someone else says. As Stephen would have put it, they were asserting ‘their right to personal independence’. His short paper *Aboriginal learning styles some practical applications* (Harris, 1979) was most enlightening. It is so good, I have just photocopied it for our current staff.

It took me a while to realise some of the girls actually could not do the literacy work. Only four of the 16 girls could read anything beyond early readers. They knew sight words but had no word decoding skills. They could not write without copying. They had been in school for seven or more years and apparently had not even learnt to read. Even the girls who could read independently had poor comprehension.

Back then attendance was very good. Students who had not been to school were rounded up by the post Primary boys every Monday morning and given a hiding by the vice-principal. The only reason I could see, back then, for such poor literacy, was the language barrier. So I was very eager, as were our Warlpiri teaching assistants, to start the bilingual program the following year. Pam Harris, one of the senior teachers at the time, introduced us to Sarah Gudschinsky’s *Manual of literacy for preliterate peoples*, which began with two main ideas: ‘No-one can learn to read in a language they don’t understand’ and ‘You only need to learn to read once’.

Her statements made sense and further convinced us of the need for bilingual education. We took on her way of teaching literacy using syllables and still follow this method. Ken Hale, an American linguist fluent in Warlpiri, came to Yuendumu to help us get a bilingual program started. He was amazed and overjoyed that attitudes here had advanced enough to allow this to happen.

I eventually met Stephen at Darwin University in 2001, when I was doing a Master of Education course. My motivation for doing this was to have time and help with making an interactive computer program for teaching basic Warlpiri phonics, as this has never been taught well in Yuendumu school. We are still struggling with it. Our Warlpiri teachers have always been focused on passing on Warlpiri knowledge and language. As Stephen pointed out, the whole nature of phonics is very foreign to them. It does not support Aboriginal learning styles or social conventions. Aboriginal children are not encouraged to work things out for themselves. They are supposed to learn through being shown by a more senior person. Also, the breaking up of a task into small sections is not the Aboriginal way. They prefer to read a whole book repeatedly until children can ‘read’ it all through, with some help. Children are expected to learn by watching the teacher, and through copying, and repetitious practice. There is a great reluctance to get a child to do anything entirely without help. I could discuss every one of Stephen’s observed Aboriginal styles and show similar examples of Warlpiri approaches to learning. Stephen suggested that suitable methods of introducing literacy would include lap reading, using sentence books which are very predictable, sight words, reading favourite stories many times, group reading, experience stories written by the teacher as told by the child or by the

class, and one-on-one recount story writing. He also made it clear that these methods should supplement, not replace other literacy teaching such as phonic decoding and encoding which could be introduced later.

In order to work on the computer program as a major project, I also had to write some essays on other topics. Stephen was my supervisor for three of these other units of work. I only spoke to him a few times. I remember his face and his agreeable manner. We shared a lot of similar experiences and opinions in relation to the attitudes of principals, school staff, department officials and heads of the department at the top. It is always a relief to find someone else who thinks as I do, to affirm that I am not just delusional.

Most of our interaction was just about the essay topics, neo- and post-colonialism in Aboriginal schools, Indigenous education priorities, and the need to educate non-indigenous staff. During this time Stephen moved to Tamworth, NSW. I did not know this. I had thought he was still at the university in Darwin. They must have sent him my essays to mark.

I think I know Stephen best from his comments on my essays. Nearly every page has a tick, exclamation mark or underlining or short or extensive comments and occasional disagreement. It is been good for me to go back and look at these.

We despaired over the failure at all levels of the government to respond to the repeated recommendations of Aboriginal school councils, inquiries into Aboriginal education and advisory groups, to be allowed to choose the school principal. Principals have been known to sabotage bilingual and language programs. Stephen wrote on my essay, 'Given community support for the program, this is The big issue in bilingual education'.

Sometimes Stephen remarked on some differences between Top End and Yuendumu as I described it. One thing we agreed on was the huge extent of cultural differences and the great mistake the school system makes in ignoring this. In one of his comments he wrote, 'One of the reasons I lost heart in Aboriginal education was the growing fashion (theorised by post-modernist and post-structuralist writers) to downplay cultural differences'.

This sort of academic attitude suits and justifies the top level push for assimilation. It ignores the aspirations, the repeated pleas of Aboriginal people, to be allowed to retain their separate cultural identity. It was Stephen's view that ignoring these aspirations would not make them go away nor will doing so allow for creative curriculum or administrative solutions in Aboriginal schools. He repeatedly pointed out that Aborigines do not want Western schooling to cause them to lose their identity.

In one of my essays, where the topic was the question, 'How far is Indigenous education a matter of educating non-indigenous people?' I wrote, 'Imagine if the allies had not won World War 2, and we had been invaded by Japan. How keen would we be, to send our children to Japanese schools to learn Japanese curriculum content in Japanese? Would our children be likely to do as well as the Japanese children?' Stephen wrote, 'Yes this is a very reasonable comparison'. I'm glad he wrote this, because when I suggested this to Yuendumu school staff, I got a very negative reaction. They said the situation here is completely different. These kids need to learn English. It is the only way for them to get on, get a job, and become

independent. Of course, it is a white man's world now. A Japanese man's world is unthinkable. But nice to know I am not alone thinking the unthinkable.

Stephen's advocacy for domain separation stemmed from his concern that Western education could undermine Aboriginal world view, values and unique identity. He talked about maintaining two forms of consciousness. This could be done by teaching particularly western concepts and subject areas such as maths and western science in English and allowing Aboriginal content to be taught in the local language by local language speakers. Literacy could be used in both languages as a tool for teaching subject matter. He suggested that schools should set up meetings of school staff, particularly Indigenous staff to decide which topics and areas of subjects should be taught in each language.

Stephen also suggested that the English component could be treated as a giant role play. He was particularly concerned about secondary and tertiary level education, noting that there were some academic skills that should not be fostered in the Aboriginal domain. The papers we received in schools often had comments handwritten by someone in the Education department. Next to that statement in Stephen's paper, *Surviving by Culture Domain Separation*, someone wrote, 'Why not?' Had this person not understood the previous 23 pages? In the very first sentence Stephen had written, 'Because of fundamental differences in world view,… there is potential for semantic confusion. If Aboriginal languages are used to directly teach English concepts…Aboriginal teachers and those who advise them need to be careful not to force Aboriginal languages into performing functions that are not consistent with the Aboriginal world view'. But the writer of the comment evidently believed that anything can be taught in any language. That is his or her reality. Many teachers and even teacher-linguists think that any information can be translated and taught in Warlpiri. They ask us to translate, for example, an explanation of photosynthesis.

Another comparison I tried on Yuendumu staff was to imagine we had been invaded by a race of computerised brain robots who were teaching our children to communicate and think in their way, giving their meanings to our words. For example, in computer programming language 'true' simply means that the condition is present. It does not carry any of the other understandings of 'true' in our culture, the notion of 'right,' 'honest,' 'authentic,' dinky di,' as opposed to 'wrong,' 'lies,' 'fake,' 'untrustworthy,' 'gammin.' I was reminded that this was hypothetical. Yes, it is, but it is also an analogy. Almost every Warlpiri word has an area of meaning that is a different from the closest equivalent English word. When we use Warlpiri words for English concepts, we expect children to discard some of their area of meaning and sometimes take on a different extra meaning.

For example, *jurnta kanyi* means 'to take away,' but it generally has a negative aspect, as in taking something off someone or that something bad is done to someone. But when you say *jurnta kanyi karna*, 'I'm taking,' as in subtracting 3 from 10, it has no negative inference. No poor 10! Or mean teacher! I just use this as an example of the change in word meaning. In fact, subtraction is taught quite well in Warlpiri by Warlpiri teachers, probably because they have already incorporated an understanding of western numbers and simple operations into their reality. Or perhaps, as Stephen suggested, they have two realities. It does become difficult to teach some areas of

maths; for example, fractions, decimals, interest, percentages and any higher maths. Anything which demands a lot of specific verbal instruction and fine distinctions in meanings of words is better taught in English.

When changes are accepted, and given currency by adults to fill some purpose for them, this is no threat to cultural maintenance. When other people's children have too many changes pushed onto them before they have fully developed understandings of their own culture, this can lead to 'semantic confusion'. It can also lead to language breakdown and an increasing generation gap where children and adults do not always understand each other.

Another thing Stephen suggested was that more effort and time be spent on educating Aboriginal adults before educating children. This has been recommended by many leading education advisors, Beth Graham and others, but it is not the way our school system works. Children are legally required to attend school or approved home schooling, from the age of 5. The education departments just have to put teachers into schools. Teacher training is done by universities or teachers' colleges and so is generally not a primary concern of the Department. We are not allowed to release children early to use the time for Warlpiri teacher education.

A few days ago, our linguist, Gretel MacDonald, asked a group of Warlpiri assistant teachers what was most important in our Warlpiri program, what did they want their children to learn. One group said that *jukurrpa* ('dreaming places and tracks, law, stories, owners etc.') and country were the most important. The other group said that children should learn everything in the Warlpiri curriculum cycle and learn from the Warlpiri books. They did not mention learning to read or write, but to learn from books, obviously someone has to be able to read them. One boy who could read very well, took home a dreaming story told by his deceased great grandfather and transcribed for the book. He read it to his great grandmother. She was overjoyed to hear her brother's story in his words. She kept saying *junga, junga* ('true, true').

Stephen suggested there are three false assumptions about literacy. The first is that literacy fulfils similar uses and functions for all groups of people. He mentioned the Cherokee who do not expect all members of the community to become literate, but families have access to someone who can read. He mentioned other examples of communities like this. In Yuendumu the children who pick up literacy are encouraged to go to school more and to go on to boarding schools. Families are less willing to force the less interested ones to persist with schooling. The community does not need everyone to become very literate, though a very basic literacy helps individuals with government forms, texting and video games.

The second false assumption is that literacy should always entail autonomous control of the whole process of gaining meaning from print. There is a difference between mediated and unmediated literacy. Mediated literacy involves a social process, with extensive verbal explanation. In unmediated literacy, the process is personal and individual. Anglo educators assume that literacy is synonymous with unmediated literacy. The aim of school literacy instruction is for children to read and write independently. The Education Department curriculum, NAPLAN tests and evaluations only value unmediated literacy.

Stephen suggests that mediated literacy has many advantages for Aboriginal communities. It can safeguard transmission of information without fossilising that content. It can help support an oral culture and still gain the prestige associated with written language. Stephen recommended Lap Reading, where a teacher or older student sits closely with one or two students and reads to them just as a parent reads to a child at home, talking about the story and relating it to things the child knows. Children can choose their favourite story, hear it many times and start joining in when they are ready. It supports Aboriginal learning styles, as it is a social activity, encouraging repetition, learning from an older person, with no breaking up the learning into separate skills, no testing or questioning, except to elicit the child's own experiences. Bible reading is often mediated literacy. We have bible study groups and sermons to delve into the meaning and relate the message to our lives today.

In Yuendumu hardly any Warlpiri homes have books or people who read with children. Mainstream children have had years of Lap Reading at home. They have favourite stories that they know well and often do pretend reading, telling the story in their own words as they turn the pages. There is a saying: 'Nobody does any real work in something they haven't first played at'. I believe this is an essential part of early literacy learning. Perhaps oral story telling in a family group, where children can interact, contributes to preparation for this kind of negotiation of meaning.

The third false assumption Stephen discusses is that all types of literacy change the way people think. Stephen described several situations where literacy in different languages has different uses. In Liberia they have three different types of literacy for three different languages: English for school, Arabic for Muslim ritual use and Vai for private home use. Such a situation is not unusual where the functions of literacies in the same cultural group relate to different reality sets. Stephen suggests this may allow two or more forms of consciousness or world view to co-exist without encroaching on each other. He says, 'If literacy in Aboriginal languages is to contribute to long term maintenance of Aboriginal culture, it will have to fill different functions and uses than English literacy, functions which enrich their lives' (Harris, 1989a).

Stephen mentioned Hermannsburg, where there is no bilingual program, but thanks to Lutheran missionaries there are many adults literate in Arrente. Arrente literacy is mainly used for Christian religious activities. In Warlpiri communities, outside school, Warlpiri literacy is mainly used for church. Only a few adults read well enough to read the Warlpiri bible, but this is sufficient for services, bible study and translating or writing songs. Unfortunately, the Baptist church does not have a prayer book where everyone reads the same thing every Sunday.

The world view of the church is, I think, not so opposed to Warlpiri world view. The stories, messages and miracles, the non-changing law, the emphasis on faith rather than proof, all make sense from a Warlpiri world view.

Stephen says that most Aborigines value their language being written down, though some have expressed concern that the written version could cause them to lose control of the information. In Yuendumu we have had occasions when we have been asked to change *jukurrpa* stories, usually to include places that would include the person asking as a traditional owner and entitle them to royalties. We made a decision not to change stories of deceased people. Others are welcome to record their

stories themselves. Mediated reading would ensure that a child or reader would hear their family's version of the story.

There are often different stories for the same *jukurrpa* or landform. This has never caused problems. It fits with one of Stephen's learning styles, duality of thinking, holding two mutually exclusive explanations at the same time. It could mean that Warlpiri and Western science explanations of phenomena could be held at the same time, as long as the Western one does not upset some Warlpiri sensibility; for example, by questioning, denying or trivialising the traditional knowledge or taking over knowledge, ownership or prestige from a family.

At the beginning of bilingual education, everyone thought that teaching in the local language would be the answer to improving outcomes in literacy and maths. The Education Department was interested only in English out comes. They expected children to reach the same levels as mainstream children by the same ages. When it did not happen they turned against bilingual education and only five of the original 21 bilingual schools still have bilingual programs. Yuendumu did not do any better than the others but we were saved several times by a strong school council and strong Warlpiri staff, especially Jeannie Egan, Barbara Martin, Tess Ross and others before them.

Nothing saved us from the Four Hours English policy. We have never got back to the level of Warlpiri time in class and teacher empowerment that was there before. New Anglo teachers who have come since have never seen Warlpiri teachers in control of a class and assume they are not capable. We have only one trained Warlpiri teacher left, and she is the vice-principal. Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) has just started again after more than 20 years, but it is just a mainstream course, not a specialised course for teaching in a bilingual program. There is no recognition of local language proficiency or knowledge of culture or knowledge of children's families, home and country. It is this knowledge which makes Warlpiri teachers so useful in teaching in their schools.

Stephen envisaged a school with many trained Aboriginal teachers, Aboriginal principals and teacher-linguists. We did have a plan for Aboriginalisation back in 1990s with dates by which local teachers would take over senior positions. One of our most competent Warlpiri teachers became the teacher-linguist. She spent nearly all her time going from class to class taking Warlpiri lessons. Some white staff complained about this, saying she was supposed to be supporting the Assistant Teachers (ATs) to take the class. She felt she was teaching them. What they needed to do was observe carefully, to pick up her language for class management, her way of interacting with children, her style of repetitive questioning, so that all children would eventually be able to answer, understand her way of explaining how letters go together to make a new sound, her way of getting children to read and write. After a while she did get the ATs to supervise some activities, but teachers complained that they would only do it while she was in the room.

At the end of the year the principal appointed a non-Aboriginal teacher-linguist. He said there were a lot of other things in the teacher-linguist duty statement, curriculum development, assessment, organisation of the printery, ordering supplies and so on. White people can do these things with ease. To me it just seems silly not to let

Warlpiri do what they are good at, the face-to-face teaching of their children, and mentoring of younger Warlpiri ATs and let the white people do what they are good at, administration jobs.

It might have taken a long time for the Warlpiri teacher-linguist to educate the ATs and get them teaching the class. A White teacher-linguist or teacher can usually get ATs to take the class for Warlpiri before they feel ready and even when they are not sure how to do the planned activities or what the goal is. It often is, as Stephen described it, just a role-play of teaching.

Referring to the evaluation of five bilingual schools—Yirrkala, Bathurst, Elcho, Milingimbi, and Barunga—Stephen noted that 'The results of these various approaches to evaluation revealed some academic gains, though fewer than expected, and demonstrated continuing endorsement of the program by most Aboriginal parents' (Harris & Devlin, 1997, pp. 4–5). They all showed significant gains in English skills compared to English-only control groups by secondary level (Devlin, 1995). However, results were not as good as expected and not on a par with mainstream schools.

Stephen suggested that Aboriginal teachers would not or could not use their Aboriginal language in un-Aboriginal ways. I have seen Warlpiri teachers very upset with supervisors that demanded they speak in English with the Warlpiri children. They also do not follow lesson plans which they do not feel comfortable teaching. As Stephen suggests, the Western world view threatens Aboriginal reality. As he pointed out: we don't see with our eyes as such, but rather with our brains. From the time we are babies we build up our reality through the constant feedback from everyone around us. We learn to see what is rewarded by response from others and we don't see or hear what is not.

In Stephen's view a language encapsulates the world view of a society. The lack of similarity between cultures with different ontological bases will be reflected in their languages. Their different explanations of reality will be encoded in contrasting ways.

To try and convey this different reality I will try to paraphrase a written preparation for a talk that Erica Ross gave in Canberra to explain her culture. She said:

> My name is Erica Ross Napurrurla. My dreaming is budgerigar. It's a little green and yellow bird that flies in big flocks all close together and they all turn at the same time. When white people say budgerigar they just think of the bird. For us it is also our country belonging to our skin name groups and our family. It is also a women's ceremony with songs and a story and body paintings. As an owner I can dance in this ceremony and I can paint the design on anything, coolamons, the ground or canvas. You'll know it among paintings because it has many budgerigar tracks. Budgerigar is also a dreaming track with special places along the way. There is a budgerigah dreaming place just north and a bit east of Yuendumu, where the dreamtime budgerigars broke out of their eggs. They left round waterholes which fill up after rain. At the top of the hill the two white rocks are baby budgerigars and the white rock at the back is their mother. Budgerigar is also meat we can eat. Every bird has owners and dreamings, and also every lizard, snake, animal, bush tucker trees and plants and water, fire, stars and everything. Sometimes we call out to children by the name of the place they belong to or their dreaming.

There is a lot left out here because she had to explain meanings for words that English does not have. I hope this helps to give an idea of Warlpiri world view and their reality.

Societies are resistant to change. Aboriginal society has not embraced mainstream culture, even though the environment around them has changed. And why we are so unwilling to accept and act on global warming? I suggest it is because it threatens our world view, our consciousness, and our reality.

Another reason traditional Aboriginal students do not advance so quickly in school learning is that they do not see the end goal and do not apply themselves purposively. Stephen quoted Michael Christie's studies where he found no words in the local language for purpose or plan, and when local students were asked 'What helps you do well in school?', he found their answer was being quiet and behaving well. White students said learning to read and write and understand maths well was the key to success in school. Michael called the white students' orientation 'purposive' and the Aboriginal children's orientation 'meaningful.' For the Aboriginal students, school was a social gathering and just being present in school was sufficient to move on, just as being present at ceremonies is sufficient.

After reading about this, I noticed Warlpiri children's lack of purposefulness beyond pleasing the teacher. Their focus is largely on other students or at times on the Warlpiri ATs when they are teaching and when they join in their Warlpiri chatter, which is almost never about the task at hand. Sometimes they do help each other, rarely with explanation, but by showing them what to write or by doing it for them.

Warlpiri also has no words for purpose or plan. A plan is not useful for hunting. Hunting is necessarily opportunistic and, as Stephen says, the key to success is persistence. The longer you keep trying the more likely you are to be successful. Although for school and work white people's behaviour is 'purposive', we also engage in 'meaningful' behaviour when we just spend time with family or friends, sharing experiences and opinions. It is important for the cohesion of our friendship groups. It is possibly even more important in Aboriginal society where everything must be decided and done by consensus. White people also have occasions when just being there is enough, such as attending funerals. We switch to purposive mode for work and study. Warlpiri switch to purposive for organising ceremonies or travel.

A new study by the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, together with the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Sydney, has uncovered that, while working from home in pyjamas during the COVID-19 pandemic did not lower productivity, it was linked to poorer mental health. According to the study, 41 per cent of respondents said they experienced increased productivity while working from home, while more than a third of respondents reported that working from home resulted in poorer mental health. Too much purposefulness and not enough meaningful activity (Chapman & Thamrin, 2020)!

Our Western teaching style of breaking a task up into small more manageable sections also distracts students from seeing the end goal. As Stephen says, Aboriginal students tend to see each activity as complete in itself and do not apply that learning to other literacy or maths tasks. They may have learnt to recognise words on flash cards, but do not read them as they occur in text. They know the letters, but do not

use them to predict words in text. One extreme example of this is that I have seen a girl who had learnt to do letter dictations on her board. She could write the letters as dictated but she could not read them back, even immediately after writing the letter. That had not been part of the task.

One other obstacle to Aboriginal students' school learning is that there is little context for language learning. A classroom is a very barren environment for Warlpiri language development. One Warlpiri adult speaking to children in a classroom does not provide a model of adult conversation. The solution is to have a lot more local excursions with more adults. There is also no context for English language development. Only the most linguistically gifted can gain a real understanding of English in the little window of opportunity that school provides. Just hearing a White teacher speaking English every day in a classroom does not result in children knowing English. The white teachers hear Warlpiri all day every day in the classroom. How many pick up Warlpiri? Only the few who put in the effort and spend time with Warlpiri friends outside school. For Warlpiri students there is no need for interaction in English in the community unless they have very close English-speaking friends who stay in the community for a number of years.

Stephen wrote on one of my essays:

> I think pro-aboriginal whites have got into an impossible position. If they tell aboriginal people some hard facts about the means to power in this white society (eg. You will never learn to speak really good English until you go away to a city, like Melbourne, to:
>
> (1.) learn it in context and
>
> (2.) learn how English society works and what the language is used for),
>
> they will call you racist and you become redundant in the cause (for aboriginal empowerment).

I also believe that Warlpiri students need to go away to become sophisticated in English. They do not all need to become sophisticated in English. Community and families do need a few who are. Some people say the students lose their culture by going away. I see the opposite. The ones who go away get very homesick and cannot wait to get home. They value their home community and lifestyle. They are the most keen to join in cultural activities. The ones who stay here get bored and cannot wait to get out and join the fun, drinking crowd in town.

It is possible to learn a lot of English by reading, but it is still not enough. A 6-year-old boy, who was a good reader, could decode anything and retell a story, read a story to me in English, 'Akimba and the Magic Cow'. It was about a man who acquired a magic cow, which, after the magic words 'ku ku ku' had been said, produced gold coins. Before he went away, he left the cow with his neighbour. The neighbour swapped the magic cow for another cow. When the man returned and said 'ku ku ku', no magic coins appeared. I asked the boy, 'Why did no gold coins come from the cow?' He said, 'I don't know'. I asked, 'Was it the same cow?' He said 'No'. So I asked again, 'So why did no gold coins come?' Again he said, 'I don't know'. Apparently, it did not occur to him that, 'Because it was a different cow',

could be the answer to that question. Just being able to read does not mean that a reader can use that literacy in conventional western ways.

As Stephen pointed out, the English habit of asking questions, particularly questioning to test if a person knows something, is very foreign to remote Aboriginal students. It is an essential strategy in Western teaching. Children have to learn to answer questions. It takes a lot of contact with English speakers to know how to answer English questions.

There is so much more in Stephen's papers that I would like to comment on, but I know this chapter is already too long. I will just finish with the last message I got from Stephen on the end of an essay. He wrote:

> I see you thought I was still at NTU. In 1995 three things happened. I realised my 91 year old mother really needed me. I was diagnosed with an illness. I became a has been in Aboriginal education, no new ideas, no invites to conferences, lost patience with aboriginal lost opportunities to control their own situation. I said, 'Go before you get bitter'. Joy and I live in the country music capital, Tamworth. I work as a farm labourer for my two brothers with cattle. I have six brood mares and work in the church. Life is full but different. The Aboriginal situation still upsets me quite a lot.

Even though he seemed happy enough it made me sad. I just hope this book will revive interest in his work and lead to some more appropriate strategies in Aboriginal education. How can we address the problem of poor outcomes in Aboriginal schools when the education department, politicians, and many teachers continue to treat Aboriginal children as slow White learners?

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Wendy Baarda started work as a post primary teacher in Yuendumu school in 1973. The bilingual program started in June 1974. She was given a position with the title, Coordinator of the Bilingual Program for two years. Since then she has been employed as teacher-linguist, senior teacher early childhood, outstation teacher, mentor, and teacher-linguist again until retiring as an Education Department teacher in 2005. She continued to work voluntarily in the printery and also supporting singing of Warlpiri songs in classes. She then was given a shared position of literacy worker. Wendy is now employed by the school as Language Resource Officer.

Part C

Chapter 17 A Brief History of Linguistics in the Northern Territory

Paul Black and Brian Clive Devlin

Abstract In 1985 a paper by Stephen Harris and Beth Graham pointed out a number of ways in which linguistic research could contribute to bilingual education, with which they were concerned in a Northern Territory (NT) context. The present paper attempts to provide a brief history of linguistic (and other language) research in the NT to examine the extent to which linguists (and others) have indeed been making such contributions. It begins by considering the various work on NT languages before the 1960s, the increased focus on NT languages during the 1960s, the impact of the coming of bilingual education in the 1970s, the heyday and then decline of bilingual education in the 1980s, the impact of the new Northern Territory University in the 1990s, and subsequent developments.

Keywords History · Linguistics · Northern Territory · Education · Indigenous · Languages

In 1985, when Stephen Harris was the Principal Education Officer (PEO) for bilingual education in the Northern Territory (NT), he and his colleague Beth Graham published some guidelines on how linguistic research could contribute to Aboriginal bilingual education (Harris and Graham, 1985). Their numerous, interesting suggestions, which were grouped under nine headings, can be summarised as follows.

(1) Foundational linguistic work, including phonological and grammatical analysis, is not just important in its own right. It also provides a basis for developing orthographies, word lists, dictionaries, and reading materials in Aboriginal languages.

(2) Assistance with the school's bilingual reading program is needed; for example, a linguist who has analysed a local vernacular language can help ensure quality control before instructional materials are printed, to improve their accuracy and readability. Linguistic advice may be needed on emergent styles of writing (p. 120), ways to broaden the range of written genres to avoid too many recounts

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and narratives (p. 120), and distinguishing adult and child language varieties (p. 121). Linguists can also assist with efforts to improve the literacy skills of untrained Aboriginal teachers.

(3) Enriching first language (L1) learning, for example, by extending a child's repertoire to encompass 'summarising, clarifying, hypothesising, predicting, questioning, evaluating, or inferring' (p. 123).
(4) Making the teaching of English more effective (p. 123) through contrastive analysis (pp. 124–5).
(5) Improving math teaching by sharing semantic understanding of different terms in L1 and L2 (pp. 125–6).
(6) Assisting with environmental science activities (pp. 126–7).
(7) Helping to clarify Aboriginal rules of language use (p. 127).
(8) Assisting with interpretations of traditional Aboriginal knowledge (pp. 127–128).
(9) Understanding language change (p. 128).

Their suggestions relate to a far different sort of linguistics than that practised by the many linguists who have been primarily concerned with the development of grammatical and other linguistic theories. To some extent Harris and Graham were calling for expertise in applying linguistics by linguists prepared to deal with relatively 'exotic' Aboriginal languages, while typical applied linguists tend to specialise in particular, well-known languages, such as English. Since a comparable need is felt by indigenous language workers around the world, there are in fact many linguists who have been applying their linguistic abilities to such practical concerns. In the present paper we keep this issue—the practical application of linguistics in a specific, bilingual-bicultural and educational context—at the forefront as we present a brief history of linguistics as practised in the NT.

Koerner (2006, p. 2813) notes that the motivation for even 'detached' histories of linguistics, not written to promote any particular position, can be fairly personal. This is true of the present paper. Both authors have been involved with linguistics and Australian Indigenous languages since the 1970s, largely in the NT, and thus we have to some extent been able to draw on our own knowledge and experiences in writing this paper. After initially having specialised in comparative linguistics, before the 1980s Black was occasionally experiencing periods of disquiet about linguistics in general, wondering what might be done to make it more useful in practice, which closely relates to the possibilities raised by Harris and Graham (1985). Devlin, meanwhile, has long been concerned with the practicalities of bilingual education.

As we wrote this, we also became especially conscious of how history is made up of people with aspirations and personalities and idiosyncratic and sometimes problematic circumstances, especially in the younger years of their careers. There are stories that could be told about most of the linguists and other language workers we mention. As one example, such German missionaries as Kempe trekked back and forth across South Australia (SA) in 1876 in attempts to gain supplies of food and water and maintain their herd of cattle on their way to the Northern Territory

to establish the Hermannsburg Mission at Ntaria (Scherer, 1963). As another, the young American linguist Ken Hale had to sell his car and borrow money to buy tickets for him and his wife and baby to come to Australia in 1959 to take up a postgraduate fellowship to study Australian languages (Hale, 2001). Regrettably, to try to do justice to the personal lives of the people involved would expand this account tremendously and yet also unfairly in that we could write much more about some people than about others. We accordingly apologise for our often impersonal presentation, which in any case we hope will provide a useful overview of linguistic developments in the Northern Territory.

The present paper is organised chronologically, beginning with earlier studies of NT languages (Section "Early Work by Missionaries and Others"), the growing linguistic attention to these languages in the 1960s (2), the beginnings of bilingual education in the 1970s (3), the heyday of bilingual education in the early 1980s (4), and its decline in the last half of that decade (5), developments relating to the Northern Territory University in the 1990s (6), and what has been happening more recently (7). We then end with a general conclusion (8).

Early Work by Missionaries and Others

Since some fundamental principles of modern linguistics were established only in the first decade of the twentieth century (e.g., François and Ponsonnet, 2013, p. 185), it is not surprising that there seems to have been no such linguistic work in the NT before about 1930. Information on Indigenous languages in the area was gathered by amateurs, missionaries, or academics in other fields. One example of relatively good amateur work is Parkhouse's (1894–95) account of Larakiya, which may seem surprisingly careful and authoritative for someone who was 'formerly Accountant and Paymaster S. A. Railways, Port Darwin' (p. 1). He not only provided many sample sentences but also attended to details of grammar and pronunciation, even to the point of attempting to describe intonation contours of the nearby Wulna language (p. 2). An example of work by an academic in another field is the anthropologist Spencer's (1914, pp. 464–76) work on Tiwi.

The earliest missionary description of a Northern Territory language was Kempe's (1891) grammar of the central Australian language known as Aranda or Arrernte, which he leaves entirely unnamed in his account. At Hermannsburg Mission (now known as Ntaria), the missionaries actually developed an orthography for the language, perhaps for use in classes that began in 1879 (Kenny, 2017: p. 268), and this was modified only slightly when better known work on the language (and the nearby Luritja) was begun by Carl Strehlow (e.g., 1907–1920), who had some background in German philology (Moore, 2016). This was a somewhat complicated phonetic orthography (Green, 2001, p. 34), but it nonetheless continues to be the one preferred by some speakers of the western variety, who also prefer 'Aranda' as the spelling of their language name (Kenny, 2017, p. 266). Carl Strehlow's work would later be continued by his son Theodore (or Ted; e.g., Strehlow, 1942–1944).

The earliest professional linguistic work in the Top End seems to have been by Gerhardt Laves, who gathered data on a range of languages across Australia from 1929 to 1931, reaching the Darwin area in 1931 to collect data on such languages as 'Hermit Hill' (Matngela) and 'Ngengumeri' (Ngan'gimerri); see Nash (2003). He was a University of Chicago postgraduate student working under the auspices of the Australian National Research Council, and under the supervision of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown of the University of Sydney (Papers of Gerhardt Laves n.d., p. 4). He published little from his work, which was largely forgotten until Michael Walsh (2001) of the (then) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies was able to track him and his data down from the State Library of NSW.

While most early work on the languages could be characterised as 'foundational', the establishment of Ernabella Mission (later known as Pukatja) across the border in South Australia in 1937 deserves mention because it had an enlightened policy of teaching in the local Pitjantjatjara language, and it thus created a practical orthography for this language which was the precursor to those used in later bilingual programs in both SA and the NT. We have not been able to determine just who designed this orthography. Initial studies of the language were undertaken by J. R. B. Love, who had obtained a MA in linguistics at Adelaide University based on his work on the Worora language of Western Australia (Trudinger, 2007, p. 28). At the same time, the first class in the language was taught in February 1940 by Trudinger, who soon published a brief description of the language (Trudinger, 1943).

Better known linguistic work was that undertaken by the Australian linguist (and Anglican clergyman) Arthur Capell. After completing a doctorate on Papuan languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London (Newton, 2007), Capell spent 1938–39 working on languages in the Kimberley, Darwin, Katherine, Timber Creek, Auvergne Station, and Goulburn Island in Arnhem Land (Aboriginal dialects 1939), ultimately gathering data on forty languages in or near the Northern Territory (see Capell and O'Grady n.d.). In his 19 months of fieldwork, Capell travelled by aeroplane, camel, mission lugger, motor truck, mule, steamer, and train, recording survey data on an adapted typewriter, fitted with phonetic symbols as well as Roman characters. Subsequently, he returned periodically to the NT to work on its languages: his study of the Laragia (or Larakiya) language of the Darwin area (Capell, 1984) is said to have been based on the fieldwork he did at various periods, if mainly in 1949 and 1952 (p. 55). His department also began sending out research students, among whom Mary Moody completed a MA thesis on the Anindilyakwa language of Groote Eylandt in 1954 (Moody, 1954).

The 1950s also saw further linguistic work in the NT by people affiliated with religious organisations. At least one, Lynette Living, had some linguistic training before coming: a three-month course for prospective missionaries taught by Kenneth Pike, who had been brought in from America by the Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (Wycliffe Bible Translators, 2021). This inspired her to complete an Honours MA in Anthropology and Linguistics. With her husband, Bill Oates, she spent 1952 studying the Gunwinggu (now Kunwinjku) language in Oenpelli, later publishing her work as Oates (1964).

Beulah Lowe, who became a missionary linguist, began working in 1951 as the first trained school teacher at Milingimbi (Wearing, 2007). Her linguistic interests quickly developed, and she contributed some useful work as a result, but it was not until 1958 that the Methodist Church allowed her to do full-time research on the Yolŋu variety, Gupapuyŋu, for a year (Wearing, 2007). From January to March 1959 she also undertook the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) linguistic training program at Belgrave Heights, Victoria. She developed the Yolŋu Matha orthography that continues to be used today, and she also developed resources to help Methodist Overseas Missions staff to learn Yolŋu Matha, such as her Grammar Lessons in Gupapuyngu (Lowe, 1960; see ARDS Inc., 2004).

Judith Stokes, on the other hand, apparently had no more background in linguistics than an honours degree in French when she went to Groote Eylandt as a missionary teacher of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) in May 1952 (Koch and Waddy, 2003). In order to communicate with the local people, she often went into the camp to learn Anindilyakwa, even though CMS missionaries were discouraged from doing so. Nonetheless, in 1965 the CMS considered going against the Welfare policy of teaching only in English (Rademaker, 2012). Developing a practical orthography for the language, Stokes worked with Aboriginal teaching assistants and prepared a series of small books so that children could learn to read in Anindilyakwa before learning to read in English. In 1967 she was released from teaching duties to work full-time in linguistics and Bible translation, after which she gathered Anindilyakwa texts in a wide variety of genres. Assisted by Gula Lalara, she also developed a series of 32 graded primers to teach adults to read in Anindiyakwa after attending a workshop led by Sarah Gudschinsky in the early 1970s, and later she published a paper on Anindilyakwa concepts of space and time, highlighting differences between Aboriginal and Western thinking (Koch and Waddy, 1983; Stokes, 1982).

Earl Hughes may have had no better background in linguistics than Stokes when he began Bible translation work on the Nunggubuyu (also known as Wubuy) language at the Rose River Mission (now Numbulwar) in 1952. Ten years later, although he supported assimilation, he preached in Wubuy, much to the annoyance of monolingual missionaries (Rademaker, 2012). While he was not the first—Len Harris, the father of John Harris (see Chap. 4), had translated the Gospels of Mark and James into the language, with the assistance of Bidigainj, Grace Yimambu, and Umbariri by 1945—Hughes continued working on the language for 17 years, eventually publishing a dictionary of the language (Hughes, 1971) as well as other descriptive work with the help of SIL linguists.

Increased Linguistic Attention to NT Languages in the Late 1950s and 1960s

While much work on Australian languages had been undertaken by missionaries who spent years working with their speakers, by the late 1950s interest in the languages was growing among academic linguists. In 1959 the American linguist Ken Hale

came to Australia on a postdoctoral fellowship from the US National Science Foundation to gather a wealth of data on Australian languages, beginning in the Alice Springs area with Arandic varieties, Luritja, and Warlpiri (Simpson et al., 2001). While crossing the continent in 1960, he gathered data on a number of languages further north in the NT. For part of his work outside the NT he was accompanied by Geoffrey O'Grady, who is considered one of the pioneers of Australian linguistics (Tryon and Walsh, 1997), and Hale's data played a significant role in the preliminary classification of Australian languages published by O'Grady et al. (1966). Whereas his work may not have amounted to being 'foundational' for any one language, it provided various insights into Australian languages that were valuable to later researchers, such as the realisation that most Arandic orthographies only needed to distinguish two vowels (e.g., Green, 2001, p. 34).

In 1961 the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a worldwide organisation devoted to Bible translation and the promotion of literacy in indigenous languages, established an Australian Aborigines Branch in Barnawartha, Victoria. During the following year it sent David and Kathleen Glasgow to the NT to study the Burarra language in Maningrida (Department of Arts and Museums, n.d.).

A particularly significant development in Australia was the establishment of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) in Canberra in 1964. While this was concerned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies of all sorts—and it was renamed the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in 1989—it began sending out researchers to study Australian Indigenous languages. For NT languages this included Bernhard Schebeck, who spent from June 1965 to October 1966 investigating Yolŋu Matha varieties in Arnhem Land (Schebeck, 1968) before completing his doctorate in Paris and returning to Arnhem Land in 1973. In 1966 AIAS funded Margaret Sharpe to begin research on the Alawa language in the Roper River Mission (now Ngukurr) area (Sharpe, personal communication). There she also undertook some work on the local creole language, now known as Kriol, working with Mary Harris of the Church Missionary Society to prepare a mimeographed 'Roper River Pidgin English Primer' (Sandefur, 1986, p. 195). In the same year AIAS funded Neil Chadwick to study languages in the Barkly Tablelands area, to ultimately complete an MA thesis on the Djingili (also known as Jingulu) language at the University of New England in 1968. In 1997 AIAS also funded Björn Jernudd to study 'Aboriginal speech variation' in Bagot, Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) and Bamyili (Barunga) (Sandefur, 1986, p. 196).

In 1966–67 Charles Osborne was a research scholar at the University of Queensland when he undertook nine months of fieldwork on the Tiwi language of Bathurst and Melville Islands. He then went on to complete his doctorate at the University of London before returning for another twelve months of fieldwork on Tiwi in 1971–72, publishing his description of the language as Osborne (1974).

In 1967 Peter Carroll became the resident linguist for the Church Mission Society at Oenpelli after undertaking linguistic studies at Monash University and SIL (Carroll, 1976, p. 7). Through his work with the local Kunwinjku language, he ultimately completed his MA at Australian National University in 1976 and his Ph.D. at the University of Queensland in 1994.

The Australian Linguistic Society was also founded in 1967, its first president being Stephen Wurm of the Research School for Pacific Studies of Australian National University. During the same year the Research School sent one of its research fellows, Darrell Tryon, to the NT to undertake research on languages in the Daly River area (Pawley, 2013). From this work he produced a short grammar of Maranungku as well as a survey of the 'Daly Family' languages (Tryon, 1968, 1974). Subsequently Tryon was also on the Government advisory committee that helped establish bilingual education in the NT, and he was also involved in setting up the School of Australian Linguistics; see section "The 1970s and the Beginnings of Bilingual Education" below.

In 1965 Joy Kinslow went to Oenpelli (now Gunbalanya) as a member of the Wycliffe Bible translators and to start research towards a doctorate at Australian National University. There she met Stephen Harris, and they were married in October of the following year. In an appendix that has a lot to say about the history of linguistics in the Top End, Sandefur (1986, pp. 195–208) notes how important a paper by Kinslow-Harris (1968) was to the development of bilingual education. She subsequently completed her research on Gunwingguan languages for her Ph.D. (Kinslow-Harris, 1969).

Also in the late 1960s Colin Yallop undertook research on the Alyawarra language for his doctorate at Macquarie University, which he completed in 1970.

The 1970s and the Beginnings of Bilingual Education

During the 1970s a number of factors came together to produce local NT institutional support for the practical sorts of linguistics identified in the paper by Harris and Graham (1985). For one thing, the Australian Aborigines Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL-AAB) had moved to Darwin in 1968, starting out at what later became Kormilda College before moving into a sizable compound in the same suburb, Berrimah. We have not been able to find much information on the early days of SIL-AAB in Darwin, but in 1973 the linguist David Glasgow became the Director (Sandefur, 1986, p. 197), and he was apparently followed by George Huttar, who was also the first editor of two series of Work Papers of SIL-AAB.

The more practically orientated B series of work papers started in 1976 and the more theoretically orientated A series in the following year. These contain papers by some of the early SIL-AAB linguists in the NT, such as John Sandefur (working on Ngalkbun with David Jentian in 1973 and later on Kriol), Noreen Pym, and Bonnie Larrimore (who worked on Iwaidja in 1973–75 and 1977), Marie Godfrey (who was working on Tiwi with the Catholic Sister Teresa Ward), and Chester Street (working on Murrinh-Patha in Wadeye). By the mid-1970s SIL-AAB staff were undertaking linguistic work in over fifteen Indigenous Australian languages (AuSIL n.d.a), though not all of these were in the NT. These linguists were generally involved in not only attesting and describing Indigenous languages but also developing orthographies and

promoting literacy in them through both the development of literacy materials and running literacy programs. Usually they also worked on Bible translation.

Another significant organisation was the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD), which was established by Uniting Church in Alice Springs in 1969, with the Reverend Jim Downing as its first Director. While it had a general aim 'to assist community development for Aboriginal people and provide cross-cultural education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society (IAD, 2020), this often involved Aboriginal languages, on which it contributed many publications, often with a practical bent, over the years. The most notable contributions during the 1970s were short courses and basic course materials for Eastern and Western Aranda, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara, and Warlpiri.

The most momentous linguistic development in the NT in the 1970s surely stemmed from the then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's December 1972 announcement of bilingual education for Indigenous Australians in the NT as a federal government initiative. Somehow this was implemented very quickly by the NT Department of Education, apparently because of the groundwork already laid by missionary linguists: Programs began in five schools in 1973 and six more in 1974 (Furby, 1978). Toby Metcalfe was appointed as Senior Education Officer, and the first three linguists appointed were Mary Laughren (to work on Warlpiri), Velma Leeding (to work on Anindilyakwa on Groote Eylandt), and Graham McKay (to work on Ndjébbana in Maningrida) (Harris & Devlin, 1999, pp. 31, 34). Naturally, the program also came to involve many other specialists. Bilingual education programs were also run by three Catholic schools in the NT. In the Top End, a program for Tiwi began in Nguiu, on Bathurst Island, in 1974, where Sister Teresa Ward played a particularly important role with support from the resident SIL linguist Marie Godfrey, and one for Murrinhpatha began at Wadeye in 1976 (Harris & Devlin, 1999, pp. 32–33) with significant input from SIL linguist Chester Street.

It was in 1975–76 that Stephen Harris undertook his seminal doctoral research on Aboriginal learning styles in Milingimbi (Harris, 1977). He became a senior advisor and then Principal Education Officer to the NT bilingual program. By 1977 the linguist Bruce Sommer had been appointed Senior Education Advisor Linguistics (Williams, 1977).

Meanwhile, considerable increases in Darwin's population in the second half of the 1960s led to the establishment of Darwin Community College (DCC) as a 'post-school, multi-level, multipurpose educational institution' in 1973 (Giese, 1990, p. 3). As a result of a 1973 proposal by R. M. W. Dixon, David Glasgow, Sarah Gudschinsky, and S. A. Wurm to establish a college to provide linguistic training for Aborigines in connection with bilingual education (McKay, 1991, p. 38), its five original schools included a School of Australian Linguistics (SAL). In 1974 the NT Department of Education had invited two overseas linguists to visit their bilingual programs, Geoff O'Grady from the University of Victoria, British Columbia in Canada and Dr Ken Hale from MIT in the US. In the report of their visit, recommendations concerning bilingual education in the Northern Territory, they also mention attending the inaugural meeting of the SAL Advisory Board (O'Grady and Hale 1974, p. 1).

With Toby Metcalfe as SAL's initial Head of School and Barry Alpher as one of the first lecturers, SAL used SIL facilities in Berrimah to teach its first program in late 1974. After Cyclone Tracy destroyed much of Darwin on Christmas Day of that year, SAL was relocated to Batchelor, ninety kilometres south of Darwin, using facilities of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Centre (ATEC), which would soon become Batchelor College. In 1975 Neil Chadwick (personal communication) came to Batchelor as a DCC lecturer in education, and near the beginning of the following year he transferred to SAL. By 1977 SAL had its own campus in Batchelor, and David Zorc had joined the lecturing staff; Kevin Ford was brought in as Head of School at the end of that year.

In 1979 Patrick McConvell and Gavan Breen joined the program. McConvell had previously studied the Gurindji language in the NT on an AIAS research fellowship. Breen had been undertaking research on Australian languages for years, especially in Queensland, and in the 1970s he had undertaken research on an Arandic variety (e.g., Breen, 1977). Following Ken Hale's lead (see earlier), he would soon develop a practical orthography for such Arandic varieties as Eastern Arrernte that took the language to have two main vowels, with two others in marginal positions (Breen, 2001). By 1979 SAL had also developed a regular program of certificate level courses, including a series of three to provide speakers of Australian languages with a full year of education in first language literacy and literacy work, and in 1980 SAL began a NAATI accredited certificate program in translation and interpreting as well.

With the coming of SIL-AAB to Darwin and the beginnings of bilingual education and SAL there were now a number of resident linguists in the Darwin area. Naturally they found occasion to meet, and Neil Chadwick (personal communication) recalls linguistic meetings at SIL in the mid-1970s. By 1976 it seems that meetings were being held under the name 'the Linguistic Circle of Rum Jungle,' which was coined by Barry Alpher (personal communication); he was a linguist at SAL in Batchelor, which was close to a former uranium mine at Rum Jungle. In about 1979 the name was changed to the 'Top End Linguistic Circle' (TELC).

The linguists associated with SIL, IAD, the NT Department of Education, and SAL tended to deal with the various practical issues identified in the paper by Harris and Graham (1985), and it is thus interesting that their paper did not mention either SIL or SAL by name. At the same time, universities outside the NT and the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) continued to send linguists to the NT for less practical (or more 'foundational') purposes. As one example, Michael Walsh came from Australian National University to begin his fieldwork on Murrinhpatha in 1972, and Harold Koch undertook fieldwork on Kaytetye from 1974. From 1973 AIAS brought in a number of research fellows from overseas, sending Jeffrey Heath to undertake his remarkably productive work on languages in southern Arnhem Land, Patrick McConvell to begin his work on Gurindji in 1974, and Francesca Merlan to work on such NT languages as Mangarrayi and Ngalakan from 1976 to 1979.

The late 1970s was also when the Australian linguists David Nash and Jane Simpson came to the NT to begin a long-term study of the Warlpiri language as they pursued doctorates under Ken Hale at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Heyday of Bilingual Education, to the Mid 1980s

Bilingual education and related developments in the Northern Territory remained relatively strong in what Harris and Devlin (1999, pp. 34–36) described as a consolidation stage, running from about 1978 to 1986. It was during this period that both of the current authors became involved in Northern Territory programs. In 1979 Brian Devlin came to Yirrkala to serve as a teacher-linguist, and then after a year's break to work on a doctorate at Columbia University he returned to serve as the Principal of Shepherdson College on Elcho Island (Devlin and Gapany, 2017), after which he completed his doctoral thesis on language maintenance (Devlin, 1986).

As for the bilingual program more generally, by 1980 there were programs operating in 13 government schools and two mission schools. In a further seven schools programs were in various stages of preparation (NTDE, 1980, p.14). In addition to head office staff, the bilingual program in the NT was supported by 13 teacher-linguists, five field linguists, eight literature production supervisors, 16 literacy workers, and some part-time field workers (Devlin, 2021). In the same year the NT Department of Education gave Melanie Wilkinson a ten-month appointment on Elcho Island to 'compile dictionary materials in Djambarrpuyŋu and to explore areas of linguistic research with implications for Aboriginal education' (Wilkinson, 1991, p. 35). This began her long association with both Yolŋu Matha varieties and later the NT Department of Education.

As for Paul Black, in 1981 he spent a semester lecturing at the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) and then returned the following year to take up a permanent position. These were interesting times as SAL lecturers helped speakers of Australian language develop their first-language literacy and basic linguistic understandings relevant to work in bilingual education. In 1981 Gavan Breen moved to Alice Springs to run a branch of SAL there, and Graham McKay joined SAL staff from 1982 to 1985. Both on campus and in Indigenous communities SAL ran its programs for speakers of a wide range of languages throughout the NT and sometimes other states. In 1983 alone, for example, the seven full-time linguistic staff and 27 part-timers taught 250 students in eighteen courses in nine locations, offering language-specific instruction to speakers of thirty different Indigenous varieties (Black and Breen, 2001, pp. 169–170).

While SAL began as part of Darwin Community College, in the 1980s that institution also began developing a basic program in applied linguistics for teachers. David E. Ingram was involved in this program from 1983 to 1986, and in 1983 it ran a six-week program for teacher-linguists, i.e., (usually non-Indigenous) teachers assigned to look after bilingual programs in their schools. This was taught at SAL in Batchelor by David Zorc, with assistance from five specialists from the NT Department of Education, including the linguist Bruce Sommer.

In Alice Springs in 1980 the Institute for Aboriginal Developments (IAD) gained its first Indigenous Director, Yami Lester, a Yankunytjatjara man who suffered impaired vision from the British nuclear testing at Maralinga in South Australia in the mid-1950s. From 16–20 February 1981 it hosted a conference during which an

Indigenous organisation for language, namely the Aboriginal Languages Association (ALA), was established (Bell, 1982a). This met in Batchelor in April 1982 and again in Alice Springs in the mid-1985, when and where the Australian Linguistic Society also held its only conference in the Northern Territory. On that last occasion ALA developed a statement of 'Linguistic Rights of Aboriginal and Islander Communities' that was subsequently endorsed by the both the Australian Linguistic Society (2021) and the Applied Linguistic Association of Australia (1998). Meanwhile IAD continued to publish such practical works as learners' guides to Warumungu (Evans, 1982) and Arrernte (Green, 1984).

The Decline in the Late 1980s

The second half of the 1980s saw some negative developments for linguistics in the Northern Territory. In 1984 the Department of Education cut back the number of centrally based bilingual education positions to just a Principal Education Officer, Principal Linguist, and Education Officer. In 1985 it appointed two new linguists to bilingual programs, namely Nicki Piper to Yuendumu and Melanie Wilkinson to Elcho Island, but during the same year it cut back two of the existing linguistics positions as well as one of three senior education advisers and half of the teaching assistants. Bruce Sommer's position as Principal Linguist was lost in 1986 and that of the Education Officer in 1990 (Harris and Devlin, 1999, p. 36).

In December 1985 Darwin Community College became the Darwin Institute of Technology (DIT), and soon the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) lost its school status, becoming a department of linguistics within the Faculty of Arts, although it was still allowed to use the name SAL. In the mid-1980s it lost both Patrick McConvell and David Zorc, the latter after completing a locally published Yolŋu Matha dictionary (Zorc, 1986) that formed the basis for an online dictionary that was later developed further by Michael Christie, Waymamba Gaykamaŋu, and John Greatorex (Yolŋu Matha dictionary, 2014). While other lecturers, such as Nicholas Evans, joined SAL for a time, by 1989 SAL had suffered staff cuts, and in mid-year it was transferred into Batchelor College, eventually to become the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL) with further changes and reductions in staff.

At the same time, by the time Darwin Community College became the Darwin Institute of Technology (DIT) at the end of 1985 it was offering a more general Graduate Diploma in TESL. By 1987 the several applied linguists in the program were joined by Brian Devlin, who helped develop this into a more general Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics that was first offered in 1988, with distinct strands for TESOL, bilingual education, languages other than English (LOTE, as it was called in those days), and one with a focus on English in schools. One of the strengths of this program was that many of the subjects were offered externally, by correspondence, as well as on campus. This program included a specialisation designed to support teacher-linguists in bilingual education programs, and at SAL Paul Black

was asked to contribute an external unit, *Field Linguistics*, to help prospective or actual teacher-linguists who had had little more than a one-semester introduction to linguistics to develop some ability to learn and analyse local languages in the Indigenous communities they were working in.

During the 1980s there was considerable interest in setting up a university in Darwin, and in 1987 this aspiration was temporarily satisfied by the establishment of the University College of the Northern Territory as a Darwin-based higher education institution that granted degrees through the University of Queensland. Its Department of Anthropology included the linguist Patrick McConvell, who had been working in the Kimberley after leaving SAL.

DIT's applied linguists played a major role in a highlight of the later 1980s, namely a Conference on Cross-Cultural Issues in Educational Linguistics held in Batchelor and Darwin in 1987; see Walton and Eggington (1990). Another major event in Darwin was a conference with the theme 'Across the borders: Language at the interface' held jointly by the Australian Reading Association and the Australian Association for the Teachers of English on 30 June to 4 July 1989 (ABLI conference, 1989). Among the papers presented were ones on Indigenous language literacy by Cliff Goddard, Stephen Harris, and Patrick McConvell.

The 1980s also saw the establishment of the first Indigenous language centres, which often hosted linguistic studies. The first was the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) (2016) established in Halls Creeks, WA, in 1984. In the Northern Territory the Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation ('Home or House of Language') was established in Tennant Creek in 1987 with a mission 'to record, restore and revive the Languages of the Barkly Region and to promote employment and economic opportunities and training pathways for the Indigenous people through various programs, enterprises and in particular new media and multimedia technology' (Papulu Apparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation, 2021). Subsequently, positive developments in Australia's language policy (DEET, 1991; Lo Bianco, 1987) provided an additional basis for the establishment and funding of other regional Indigenous language centres. Another in the Top End was the Katherine Regional Language Centre, operated by the Diwurruwurru-Jaru Aboriginal Corporation, from the Alawa word for 'letterstick' followed by the Ngumlom word for 'story' (Diwurruwurru-Jaru, 2016). It was established in 1992 to serve the needs of about 32 Aboriginal language groups in the middle third of the Northern Territory.

Meanwhile, throughout the 1980s TELC meetings continued to be held a couple of times each year, hosted at different times by SAL, SIL, and the Northern Territory Department of Education. It was an entirely informal organisation, with no set membership or dues, but in 1989 an attempt was made to charge dues of $10 per year, and to form a steering committee to run the association, but these efforts did not continue beyond the early 1990s (Black, 2018).

The 1990s and the Northern Territory University

During the 1990s the NT Department of Education continued only weak support of bilingual education. While some of the programs remained relatively strong, Black recalls visiting the school in Barunga in 1997 or 1998; nominally it was running a bilingual program in Kriol, but at that point it seemed a program in name only, with no Indigenous teaching staff involved. By 1 December 1998 the NT government had found reason to phase out bilingual education in favor of the 'further development of ESL programs' (Harris and Devlin, 1999, p. 44), although bilingual programs were able to continue to some extent with local support in some schools.

Meanwhile, in 1989 the Northern Territory University (NTU) had been formed, largely by combining the Darwin Institute of Technology (DIT) with the University College of the Northern Territory (UCNT). The School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) was not included; as noted earlier, it had been transferred to Batchelor College to become the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL), which will be discussed later.

The new university started out with programs in both linguistics and applied linguistics. The latter continued DIT's applied linguistics program in a new Faculty of Education, enhanced by bringing the systemicist Frances Christie in as Foundation Professor of Education. Frances Christie was instrumental in establishing a Centre for Studies of Language in Education that continued until about 2000. Since this program was available for external study, it developed a sizable enrolment, with some one to two hundred full- and part-time students, primarily from the NT, Queensland, Western Australia (WA) and SA. Enrolments gradually decreased during the 1990s, perhaps due to increased competition, although the program also lost Fran Christie. In about 1996 the graduate diploma was joined by a coursework Master of Applied Linguistics, which soon became more popular than the former, although total student enrolments in the Applied Linguistics program were declining.

In the late 1990s NTU's applied linguistic program came to have a unit on Australia Indigenous languages taught for a couple of years by one of their speakers, Marina Babia from the Torres Strait, and another section of the university began to teach Yolŋu Matha varieties, with Waymanba Gaykamangu working with Michael Christie (e.g., Christie, 2008).

In 1998 NTU's applied linguistics program received a grant from the NT Department of Education to develop a Graduate Certificate in Australian Indigenous ESL Teaching (GCAIESLT), for the benefit of teachers new to teaching in Indigenous communities. The first unit was designed to help the teachers become familiar with Indigenous communities and the issues they involved, in the hope of helping the teachers cope with and perhaps even enjoy the experience. This was followed by a unit by Black and Devlin on the relevance of the Indigenous languages in these communities, to develop some understanding of the principals of bilingual education and how the first languages of children could impact on their English (e.g., contrastive

analysis). The final two units were on approaches to teaching English in such situations. Despite providing teachers with linguistic and applied linguistic insights into their teaching situations, it ran for only a few years before it was discontinued.

As for the university's program in linguistics, this was a continuation of the somewhat limited UCNT linguistics program provided by Patrick McConvell within Anthropology. This program allowed undergraduates majoring in anthropology to gain a basic knowledge of linguistics and for more advanced linguistic work to be pursued by honours and postgraduate students. As one example of the latter, a doctoral thesis on Kunwinjku that Carroll (1996) had begun when UCNT was still part of the University of Queensland was supervised by McConvell and co-supervised by Bruce Rigsby. While McConvell was with the program he was very active. In 1991 he was the main organiser of an international 'ARCLING' conference on archaeology and linguistics held in Darwin (see McConvell and Evans, 1997). He also became the convenor of TELC, and under his leadership it produced three substantial newsletters and ran its only two-day conferences.

In the late 1990s there was a significant development in the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). The local Australian Aborigines Branch was joined by staff from the Asia branch, which ran its one-year linguistics course at SIL-AAB's Berrimah site from about 1998–2002 before subsequently being relocated to Manila. While the presence of the Asia program was comparatively brief, for a time it brought some new linguistic talent into Darwin. It also brought in their students of linguistics from various countries. Some of these stayed on to complete the Master of Applied Linguistics at the Northern Territory University, and three completed honours theses in linguistics, supervised by Black in the Faculty of Education after the departure of Patrick McConvell. Little of that work related to the Indigenous languages of the NT, however.

During the 1990s the earlier work of the School of Australian linguistics was continued to some extent in the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL) within Batchelor College, eventually renamed the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE). Between 1994 and 2004 the certificate level courses of SAL were increasingly replaced by higher level programs, which included associate diplomas, diplomas, and advanced diplomas (Caffery, 2008, p. 76). Student numbers were not as large as they were at SAL in the 1990s, but during those eleven years 75 CALL students earned 99 such awards (p. 77), for an average of nine per year. The program also came to involve fewer linguists than SAL; those known to have worked in CALL for more than a couple of years include Ian Green (about 1995–1998), Josephine Caffery (1995–2004, largely in Alice Springs), and the Indigenous linguist Jeanie Bell, who had been on staff since 2006. In Alice Springs Gavan Breen continued to work for BIITE until 2001, after which he continued activities at the Institute for Aboriginal Development. In 2016 he was awarded the title of Officer of the Order of Australia for his lifetime of work on Australian Indigenous languages (Old boy's Australia Day honour, 2016).

The Decline of Linguistics After 2000

While linguistics tended to have fairly strong support in the Northern Territory during the 1990s, this diminished considerably after 2000. It was noted earlier that the NT government started to phase out bilingual education in 1998. It did not entirely succeed, and in 2008 bilingual programs in NT government schools were classified as either language maintenance (in eight schools) or language revitalisation (in one school) (Devlin, 2021). Subsequently the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority developed a national 'Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages' for Australian schools (Australian Curriculum, n.d.; see also Marmion, Walsh, and Troy, 2013). The Department of Education (2017) of the Northern Territory developed a range of curriculum documents to support the several types of programs, including a 'First language pathway'. At the same time there was little central support for bilingual programs, although the Department continued to employ a few linguists as Language Resource Officers, including Melanie Wilkinson and Rebecca Green. Some Catholic schools in Indigenous NT communities still maintain programs in the local language, with the Murrinhpatha program in Wadeye being described as using a bilingual approach (Catholic Education n.d.).

The Northern Territory University became Charles Darwin University (CDU) in 2003. As noted earlier, it had essentially lost its linguistics program in Anthropology when Patrick McConvell left at the end of 1997. The applied linguistics programs were also cut back as enrolments continued to drop, first the Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics and then the Master of Applied Linguistics in late 2009. A few applied linguistic units remained in the Master of Education until it was replaced by the Master of Education (International) in 2014, while there continued to be a linguistically based introduction to language in the bachelor's degree for primary education.

To the extent a few linguistically orientated staff remained, they continued to supervise various postgraduate work relating to language. Theses supervised by Black included an award-winning thesis by Etherington (2006) on Kunwinjku views on pedagogy, which related to Stephen Harris's work, and a thesis by Caffery (2008) on linguistic training programs for speakers of Australian Indigenous languages. There were also two major research initiatives at CDU. One was the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages, a project begun in 2012 to create an electronic archive of works produced in bilingual education programs in Indigenous languages of the Northern Territory (Bow et al., 2014). More recently CDU employed the linguist Steven Bird in connection with a 'Top End Language Lab' involving several other staff and doctoral students (e.g., Charles Darwin University, n.d.).

Meanwhile, Gillian Wigglesworth (University of Melbourne), Patrick McConvell (AIATSIS), and Jane Simpson (University of Sydney) had obtained an ARC Discovery Grant for an Aboriginal Child Language Acquisition Project (ACLA1, n.d.) to investigate the types of linguistic input children receive in four multilingual communities in the Northern Territory from 2004–2007. NT-based linguists in the

project included Samantha Disbray and Felicity Meakins. This project was followed by a second ARC grant in 2011–2015 to investigate how well such children manage the transition from their home environments to school, in which Standard Australian English is the dominant language (ACLA2, n.d.).

In 2012 CDU and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) began offering courses jointly, with students enrolling in CDU to take programs developed by BIITE. Those programs included BIITE's diploma and bachelor courses in Indigenous languages and linguistics, which were significantly restructured for reaccreditation by Nicoletta Romeo (personal communication) after 2014. While the program could be accessed by non-Indigenous CDU students, a one-year diploma course was especially popular among Indigenous students. In 2020 these more specific courses were being discontinued, but with language and linguistic studies continuing as a major within the Diploma and Bachelor of Arts. About a dozen units are currently being offered by BIITE linguistic lecturers, including such practical units as 'Community Language Planning', 'Language Centre Management', and 'Resource Production and Use.'

After SIL's Asia branch left Darwin after 2002, the local branch was renamed the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages (AuSIL). In the Darwin area it moved out of its large Berrimah site to a smaller location in nearby Palmerston, which became the base for linguistic work in Indonesia, especially in nearby Timor (AuSIL, n.d.a), principally by Charles ('Chuck') and Barbara Grimes. What remained of AuSIL's work on Australian Indigenous languages was moved to a branch in Alice Springs. The organisation had stopped publishing their two 'Work Paper' series after 1990 (AuSIL, n.d.b), perhaps because their linguists were publishing elsewhere, but the branches did produce a few other publications, including one on Arrernte by Neil Broad in 2013.

Another organisation that has sometimes engaged in linguistic work in the Northern Territory is the ARDS Aboriginal Corporation, which grew out of a 1974 Methodist Overseas Mission development to provide community development services to NT communities (ARDS, 2016). They have produced a number of publications on Yolŋu languages of the NT, run the Yolŋu Radio service, and in recent years they have employed Hannah Harper as a linguist.

Both the Central Australian Linguistic Circle (CALC) and the Top End Linguistic Circle (TELC) continued to have occasional meetings. When we wrote this in the mid-2021, CALC had held its last meeting on 20 September 2019 (CALC, n.d.) while the last TELC activity was to host a visiting speaker on 24 February 2021 (TELC, 2021).

Meanwhile, it is pleasing to note that there are language centres in the NT which currently employ linguists; namely, Alice Springs (David Moore), Groote (David Nathan), Ngukurr (Greg Dickson), and Bininj Kunwok (Murray Garde). In addition, there are linguists working at Literature Production Centres such as OLSH Wadeye (Bill Forshaw) and Maningrida (Rebecca Green).

Conclusion

With its wealth of Indigenous languages, the Northern Territory has long attracted linguistic research, increasingly over the past century by professional linguists. The more practical applications of linguistics advocated by Harris and Graham (1985) were fostered by both missionary concerns for Bible translation and first-language education and the implementation of bilingual education in a number of schools in NT Indigenous communities since the 1970s, if less so today than in the last decades of the twentieth century. Such practical concerns came out especially strongly in the linguistics programs for speakers of Indigenous languages offered by the School of Australian Linguistics and subsequently the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education. Naturally they were also prominent in the applied linguistic programs for teachers and teacher-linguists from the 1980s into the early 2000s of what is now Charles Darwin University.

Clearly the heyday for linguistics in the Northern Territory ran from the 1970s to the early years of the twenty-first century, extending little beyond the years in which bilingual education was best supported by the NT Department of Education. That linguistics tended to lose support in the NT after this probably relates not only to the decline in bilingual education but also to a more general decline in language studies in Australian schools and thus also at Australian universities, especially after stringent budget cuts to the latter in the late 1990s (Martin, 2005). The loss of programs at Charles Darwin University (CDU) described earlier can be seen to be a continuation of the same process; for similar issues at another Australian university, see Macdonald (2016). At CDU this resulted not only in the loss of its linguistics and applied linguistic programs, apart from those taught by BIITE staff, but even its programs in English as an additional language, which stopped taking new enrolments in 2019. Even so, a few linguists have still been able to find employment in various positions in the Northern Territory.

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Dr Paul Black retired in 2015 as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Charles Darwin University. After completing a doctorate in linguistics at Yale based on a comparative study of Cushitic languages, he came to Australia in 1974 to undertake descriptive and comparative studies of Australian Indigenous languages, for which many of his publications relate to his specialisation in comparative lexicostatistics. In the 1980s he became increasingly involved in applied and educational linguistics, and in 1990 he joined the Faculty of Education of the (then) Northern Territory University. There he provided both the on-campus and external delivery of applied linguistics and continued to publish in areas of language education as well as on Australian Indigenous languages.

Brian Clive Devlin is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at Charles Darwin University. One of his recent projects has been to help create a digital archive of the texts published by literature production centres during the bilingual era of education in the Northern Territory (see www.cdu.edu.au/laal). His research interests include the use of vernacular languages in educational programs, interactive e-learning for isolated communities, and the history of bilingual education policy in the Northern Territory. His association with Arnhem Land dates from 1979, when he began work as a teacher-linguist at Yirrkala. At that time he was assigned a role in the traditional kinship system as a son of Muŋgurawuy Yunupingu, the Gumatj clan leader. His leadership roles since then include School Principal, School Council Chair, Faculty of Education Dean, Chair of the Education Advisory Council (NT), President of the Northern Territory Institute of Educational Research (1992–2000) and director of two university-based research centres.

Chapter 18
'Becoming Different' in an Indigenous Education Context

Kathryn Gale

Abstract Kathryn Gale honours the work of Dr Stephen Harris by reflecting upon his research, example, work, writings and mentorship during her early formative teaching years and beyond. She learned from Stephen to 'become different' as she aspired to be an effective non-Indigenous teacher and teacher-linguist in the context of living and working in Indigenous communities. Kathryn maintains that Stephen's wisdom and life-lessons are just as relevant and powerful today, as they were back in the 1970 and 1980s. In referencing his writings, she reflects upon how a non-Indigenous teacher needs to be a vulnerable learner, a 'good' person, a relationship builder, a servant, a believer and a leader—in 'becoming different' and an effective teacher for students and families in Indigenous education today. She concludes that although Stephen's legacy in Indigenous education is still significant nationwide, it was his impact upon the lives of individual Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike, which will be remembered and will live on. He humbly walked alongside so many, celebrating difference and inspiring and guiding others to 'become different', regardless of their cultural heritage.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Anthropology · Teacher-linguist · Bilingual education · Applied linguistics · Northern territory

Introduction

It was in the very first years of my teaching career at Milingimbi bilingual school in the mid-1970s that I met Stephen Harris and his wife Joy. They were my neighbours and friends when Stephen was conducting his PhD research (Harris, 1977a) at Milingimbi, and our connection continued into the years that followed when Stephen worked as a senior adviser at the head office in the Northern Territory Education

This paper is written to honour and respect the life, career, teachings and wisdom of Dr Stephen Harris, who was a much-admired researcher in the field of Indigenous education, as well as my colleague, mentor, neighbour and friend.

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Department. I was a newly graduated teacher from ‘down south’ in the mid-1970s, with little-to-no appreciation that Stephen’s research and subsequent writings, as well as his work supporting Indigenous education, would become so foundational to future generations of educators working with, and learning from, Indigenous Australians.

For me personally, Stephen’s impact upon my future career in education was significant, but it wasn’t just his research and extensive writings that helped me and so many other educators to modify our teaching practices in understanding and appreciating ‘cultural difference’. It was much more about learning to ‘become different’ in the many contexts across the three states in which I have lived and worked alongside Indigenous Australians—as a teacher, teacher-linguist, friend and, eventually, a school leader and education consultant. His mentorship, wisdom, understanding and guidance led me into new areas of learning and into ‘becoming different’ as a person and a more effective educator.

Stephen’s palpable passion and belief in what we were striving to do and to achieve in Indigenous education over time, and his example—as a keen observer, a courageous inquirer, an incessant questioner and the humblest of leaders—inspired us. Being encouraged to ask the ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions about our perceptions, our understandings, our actions, our teaching practices and our relationships with Indigenous students, their families and communities helped us to learn and become different people and different educators. As my friend Beth Graham recently said, ‘Stephen was able to shine a light upon all those things that we were seeing, experiencing and questioning about our work (in Indigenous Education) and then explain them in very simple terms for us to understand, so that we could learn, grow, think and act differently’ (Graham, personal communication, May 15, 2021).

Now that my teaching career is ending, I am often asked by newly appointed or graduating non-Indigenous teachers for insights about working in Indigenous education. I am forced to reflect upon my own early formative learning years in the profession, to acknowledge the work and wisdom of Stephen Harris, and appreciate how abundantly relevant and powerful his lessons are today—just as they were many years ago. So, in highlighting just a few examples of Stephen’s wisdom concerning living and working, ‘becoming different’ and learning in Indigenous education, I will channel his insights, using his own words and referencing his writings in order to shine a light upon what is required to become a good, effective, non-Indigenous teacher in Indigenous education today.

In recent years, John Hattie and his associates have critically examined hundreds of worldwide studies in an attempt to list the determinants of student achievement and teacher success—all of which correlate perfectly with what Stephen Harris has always advocated. They suggest that what

> truly makes the difference between those who have high impact and those who have low impact on the learning lives of students…(is less about) the structures relating to the schools and more (about) the expertise of the educators…(and) that educators have to be mindful of their impact—the nature of what impact means, the magnitude of that impact, (and) the worthwhileness of that impact. (Hattie and Zierer, 2018, pp. xvii & xviii)

In referencing the work of Howard Gardner, Hattie and Zierer also suggest that

> a successful worker knows what she is doing, sees to it that she gets it done, and can name reasons why she is doing what she is doing…: Good work is a question of excellence, engagement and ethics… the values and reasons that are always connected with performing any kind of work. (Hattie and Zierer, 2018, pp. xiii & xiv)

Becoming a Vulnerable Learner

Stephen was a keen observer of people and an excellent storyteller, and it was through stories that he often best taught his powerful lessons. Many of those stories had him front-and-centre, willingly demonstrating his own discomfort and vulnerability as a learner, whilst navigating his way through living and learning in a cross-cultural context. In his view, non-Indigenous teachers working in an Indigenous community cannot begin to think about their possible effectiveness without becoming vulnerable and open to learning the value of a new way in the community in which they live. He maintained that unless non-Indigenous people are able to put themselves into a context where they are able to relate to Indigenous people on their terms, in their world, their personal learning can be neither valid nor meaningful. Further, he claimed that, as teachers, if we cannot place ourselves in the same learning context as our students, and choose instead to 'ignore the reality of the children's expectations about verbal behaviour…(and at the same time) seek to relate to the children's expectations and, possibly, help them to become bicultural people', then we are ignoring and disrespecting 'the cultural background with which yolŋu (Indigenous) children enter school' (Harris, 1987a, p. 12).

As an example of this, he suggested that unless non-Indigenous teachers have an understanding of the language and paralinguistic features of communication, 'such as tone and loudness of voice, facial expression, body posture and, perhaps most important, all the experiences that the speaker and the listener have previously shared' (Harris, 1987a, p. 11), then there is huge potential for unnecessary and unwanted miscommunication and misunderstandings.

Therefore, the most worthwhile and vulnerable learning experience for non-Indigenous teachers is the learning of an Indigenous Australian language, in the context of shared real-life 'vulnerable' experiences. Stephen's belief was that all 'breakdowns in communication and understanding… (invariably) arise from the failure of the majority of balanda (non-Indigenous people) living in Aboriginal communities to make any effort to learn a local Aboriginal language' (Harris, 1987a, p. 12).

One of Stephen's oft-told stories about being a vulnerable learner involved a young teacher who, in her early attempts to get to know some of the local community members, excitedly accepted an invitation on a Friday to go on a fishing trip with a local Yolŋu family the following day. Arrangements were made for them to meet down at the beach in the morning. The next day, the teacher duly arrived at the time arranged, and sat patiently, waiting and waiting for them to arrive, until finally deciding to make her way home, feeling very disappointed, let down and confused.

Stephen's analysis and explanation for this young teacher's benefit came out of his own similar experience, and was as follows:

> From a yolŋu point of view, there need be no direct connection between what they do and what they have promised to do. Also, from their point of view, it seems very strange behaviour to carry out a commitment if what looked like a pleasure yesterday has turned into a chore today. They are much more pragmatic in their reaction to present circumstances and in this context less governed by what balanda (non-Indigenous people) call 'principles of keeping your word'. What this behaviour really means is that 'extenuating circumstances' become valid at a different level for them than for the balanda. For example, if a balanda committed himself to a fishing trip and broke his ankle, his failure to make the trip would be considered as being due to valid 'extenuating circumstances'. By contrast, if your potential yolŋu friend agrees on Friday night to go fishing on Saturday—but on Saturday morning feels very tired—that tiredness probably qualifies, in the yolŋu value system, as 'extenuating circumstances'. A balanda will often, without thinking, interpret this difference between the two value systems as rudeness on the part of the yolŋu. (Harris, 1987a, p. 15)

In admitting that I was the person in the story, I can say that his lesson, in this case, opened up a whole world of new learning for me. It ultimately led me down a path of deeper knowledge and understanding, one that allowed me to continue to front up for new shared experiences with Yolŋu and to become different through these experiences. I have continued, naively and patiently, to attempt to interpret many more experiences since then, and this has allowed me to become a more confident, yet still vulnerable, learner. It has not only helped me to understand what my students are experiencing in the school-learning context, but it has helped my acceptance as a member of the communities in which I have worked and it has validated my growing relationships with students, Indigenous teachers and community members in both school and community contexts.

Becoming a 'Good' Person

Stephen maintained that, in the view of Indigenous students and their families, 'assessment of the teacher in the classroom will be based more upon who they are as people than what they do as teachers' (Harris, 1987a, p. 25). Hence, understanding about how a good person behaves, and conversely, which behaviours are seen as bad manners in an Indigenous community, is essential for new teachers.

Our reputations (good and/or bad) are established as a direct result of our behaviour outside of the school, as viewed by the community's adults and students. Generally, a 'good person' tends to be seen to be

> more informal than formal, needs to be warm, friendly, have a sense of humour, be relaxed, patient, accepting, tolerant, respectful of difference and ways of 'being', not pretentious, understated, generous and not pushy or a clock watcher. (Harris, 1987a, p. 14)

In Stephen's view, a good person also understands what is considered bad manners to Indigenous people. For example, one could be seen to have bad manners by being too curious, asking too many questions, going uninvited into somebody's space,

entering somebody's home without being invited, using 'strong' language, singling someone out in front of a group and publicly reprimanding them, not observing commonly understood protocols, like not using someone's new name (if someone with that name has died), or seeming to be irritated by Indigenous ways of doing things, and not being willing to come 'half way'.

In the case of someone who uses 'strong language', Stephen gave this personal example:

> 'Strong Talk' in yolŋu culture is associated with animosity or anger, especially where there is a difference of opinion. A statement such as: 'There's nothing personal in what I'm going to say, but...' is meaningless to yolŋu. They have no objective, impersonal form of conversation. Often, in my own home, several young children, teenagers or adults have sat with horror and amazement written all over their faces while observing quite hard or heated debates between groups of balanda, expecting them to come to blows at any moment, and somewhat confused when one of the debaters laughs or offers coffee all round. (Harris, 1987a, p. 18)

Therefore, learning who is viewed as a 'good' person, and what constitutes good and bad manners in an Indigenous community, goes a long way towards becoming accepted and respected, and being someone more able to work towards becoming effective in one's role as a teacher.

Becoming a Relationship Builder

In building relationships, with the goal of developing genuine understanding, it is essential that any person moving into living and working in an Indigenous community develop a bank of shared experiences (as mentioned previously) with those with whom they share their lives. In addition, Stephen considered it essential for incoming staff to learn the local language and sociolinguistic rules of Indigenous interpersonal communication, as a way of enabling them to be more tolerant and effective. Clearly, every relationship begins with effective communication, but when living and working in a community where the majority of the residents speak a language different from one's own, it takes will, patience, motivation and resilience to listen, hear, comprehend and finally understand another's language, communication styles and cultural ways. Inevitably, everything may at first seem to be completely unintelligible, but that's exactly the experience of Indigenous students in our classrooms—for most of the time.

Stephen said, 'I believe that a teacher who speaks the Aboriginal language can be much more effective as a teacher of English' (Harris, 1987a). He also posed the question, 'How many of you have been in a situation in which an outsider comes into your home and expects you to speak his or her language?' He claimed that this situation is what most non-Indigenous Australians expect Indigenous people to accept. However, showing respect by attempting to learn the language of your students and their families is just the first step in building deep and meaningful community relationships. Stephen contended that if non-Indigenous teachers engage in self-examination and question their personal behaviour and interactions in various

shared community experiences, it can assist in their relationship building. It is helpful to pose questions such as what is polite, what shows respect, what demonstrates your commitment to building relationships and what demonstrates a lack of arrogance and proves that your intent is genuine?

Further, if teachers are to know their students, families and community well, then building personal rapport through language and putting themselves into awkward and uncomfortable second-language-learning situations (as is required of their students). However, in saying this, Stephen conceded that in the community setting, you 'shouldn't be afraid to switch back to English when your level in the Aboriginal language is poorer than the level of English of the young person to whom you are speaking' (Harris, 1987a, p. 12).

The late Charles Manydjarri, who was a Yolŋu teacher and community elder at Milingimbi, wrote in 1979:

> Think about the community. Think about the children and their backgrounds and their mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers and uncles and aunties and you will become part of the yolŋu people… I think that it's very important that we work to understand the little children and their language. And later on, they want to see you and tell that you are a good teacher and they will like you so much, I'm sure. (Manydjari, 1979, p. 3)

Becoming a Servant

Stephen advocated that, in Indigenous communities, the school should be

> seen as a servant and not a leader; and where an Aboriginal student can learn modern academic and survival skills without rejecting his heritage. In a society where social change is inevitable, the bicultural school is one context where modern Aboriginal society can evolve and adapt with continuity. (Harris, 1978, p. 13)

Just as the school should be seen as a servant of the community, so too should the teachers regard themselves in a similar vein—adopting a mindset that surrenders any desire for personal authority based on the position they hold. In Stephen's words, non-Indigenous staff should 'think of themselves as servants of the local community, holding delegated authority, rather than being a direct source of leadership in the process of (community) adaption and social change' (Harris, 1990, p. 18).

It is imperative therefore for teachers to understand that they are guests of the community in which they live and that their prime purpose is to serve that community through the work they do in the school. In this way, they show respect and ultimately empower the community to choose the form and balance of non-Indigenous and Indigenous education content they desire for the future of their children.

Matjarra, a close friend and respected elder in the Ramingining community, is quoted by Stephen as saying,

> we don't want to lose our culture with too many Balanda ways of living. In other words, we don't want to learn more Balanda education and less Yolŋu education, or more Yolŋu education and less Balanda education. We want to learn both, with even understanding. (Harris, 1990, p. 5)

In Stephen's view, 'even more important than teaching children is the non-Aboriginal teacher's responsibility for on-the-job Aboriginal teacher training—in both the "what", "why" and "how" of school education' (Harris, 1987b, p. 47) and to 'promote the (formal) training of Aboriginal (Indigenous) teachers' (Harris, 1990, p. 157). In so doing, this ensures the power structures within the school context are not weighted towards non-Indigenous leadership. Non-Indigenous teachers are indeed servants of the community, enacting the wishes of, and choices made by the families of the students they teach.

Becoming a Believer

Stephen was a passionate believer in the rights of Indigenous children: to grow up proudly Indigenous, to learn in both their own language as well as in English, and to experience school learning success in both languages (as evidenced in Gale et al., 1981). He was therefore a passionate advocate for bicultural/two-way/both ways education. As he wrote in 1990:

> Two way schooling makes pedagogical and administrative sense… (and it is) a potentially powerful means of handing authority over Aboriginal children back to their parents…I see no more hopeful way to prevent schools…from being inevitably and unwittingly assimilationist. I see no more hopeful way of structuring schools to be supportive of the long-term maintenance of Aboriginal culture (and languages). (Harris, 1990, p. 20)

Although this was written more than 30 years ago now, Stephen's words are as applicable today as they were then, if not more so. We are still faced with the harsh reality that Indigenous children struggle to succeed in the school-learning context if their cultural identity is diminished and/or displaced. Stephen believed that 'schools can be a powerful positive or negative influence in the (Indigenous education) context and (non-Indigenous) teachers in schools are one of the largest influences…and potentially one of the most destructive of Aboriginal culture' (Harris, 1990, p. 1).

Nevertheless, his vision—for a bicultural school 'which allows for learning of a second culture without destroying or demeaning the first' and his belief that 'schools can be structured so that new skills learned from a new culture can be added to a person's primary culture make-up, rather than displace it' (Harris, 1990, p. 1)—is still worth striving for.

He was also of the opinion that, in any situation, 'it is true that sound theory leads to sound practice, but theory should be altered in the light of experience' (Harris, 1990, p. 1). This contention would then leave the way open to design the best model for a bicultural school in light of the past 50 years of bilingual-bicultural education (despite being seriously interrupted and impeded over the past 30 years) in the Northern Territory. Ultimately, the long-term benefit of a two-way education model of schooling in Indigenous communities is summed up in Stephen's words: 'I see no more hopeful way of structuring schools to be supportive of the long-term maintenance of Aboriginal Cultures' (Harris, 1990, p. 20).

In a classroom context, Stephen was all too aware of the inherent danger of non-Indigenous patterns of thought and culture dominating. Therefore, he was keen to point out that a bicultural education model should create a possible solution to the potential destructive culture clash that could occur. He stressed that it is up to educators to ensure that non-Indigenous content and processes in the curriculum are presented with care so that there is no impact upon, nor denigration of, the students' identity. He contended that good two-way schools and classrooms

> should provide for the skills and knowledge from both cultures to be learned; all involving a source of knowledge, a style of doing things and learning contexts that authentically match each body of learning. Teachers and students must know in which of the two ways they are engaged at all times, otherwise too many grey areas and confusions will eventuate and lack of direction and teacher ambivalence will set in. (Harris, 1990, p. 14)

Again, at a classroom level, Stephen warned against Indigenous students being set up for failure and advised that teachers need to value the many different cultural ways of viewing, perceiving and interpreting the world that students bring with them to school. In addition, he promoted the notion (referencing the work and writings of Jim Cummins, 1978, 1979) that 'time and careful preparation' should be afforded to the balance of students' oral vernacular development and English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) development to ensure students' continuing thinking development at abstract levels in their own language/s (Harris, 1990, p. 96).

Students will only grow cognitively if they can think (in their vernacular language), and to do that they need fairly good control of that language before they can verbalise their thoughts. To cut off work in the mother tongue (vernacular) in school, just because bridging to English has taken place, leaves the child in a kind of thought vacuum during school hours, which does not allow for continued optimum development of cognitive ability (Harris, 1978).

Interestingly, what has been made clear, following work with Maori students in the New Zealand Effective Teaching Profile (EFT) program (as reported by Bishop 2011), is that

> positive measures of student success can be evidenced when teachers demonstrate that they care for the students as culturally located individuals; they have high expectations for students' learning; they are able to engage in a range of discursive learning interactions with students …. they know a range of strategies that can facilitate learning interactions; they collaboratively promote, monitor, and reflect upon students' learning outcomes so as to modify their instructional practices in ways that will lead to improvements in student achievement; and they share this knowledge with the students. (Hattie and Anderman, 2020, p. 29)

Stephen Harris believed that Australian Indigenous students (and First Nations students worldwide) have the right to grow up culturally strong, proud and to experience school-learning success in bicultural education programs. In addition, he believed that for this to be achieved in any community, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers need to be effective. In fact, they need to be believers, working with parents and elders to empower students to achieve the best learning outcomes possible, learning modern academic survival skills whilst respecting Indigeneity, and fostering continuity between home and school and old and young (Harris, 1978).

Becoming a Leader

There is no questioning the fact that Stephen Harris was an outstanding leader in the field of Indigenous education nationwide, but he was also an outstanding leader in his own small working teams in the NT. It is from his example in the small-team contexts and at a one-to-one level that I learned most. There is one particular story that I must tell that typifies what I most admired about Stephen's leadership style, which I have tried to emulate in the various leadership roles I have held over many years. It relates to his work with the indomitable Beth Graham.

In the early 1980s, I was working as a teacher-linguist at Barunga and Beth was working as an adviser in the Bilingual Education Office in Darwin, alongside Stephen. One day, when visiting their office, I overheard a conversation between Stephen and another visitor to the office. This visitor had obviously heard of Beth and her fearsome reputation and was quizzing Stephen about her. He asked, 'Stephen, how do you manage a worker like Beth?' Stephen looked at him with a wry smile, and replied laconically, 'Oh, you don't manage Beth! You just give her her wings and you let her fly!'.

What a great response this was. It spoke to the confidence and trust that Stephen had in his amazing co-worker, who had intimidated many a fellow educator because of her incredible intellect, experience and prodigious work ethic. However, Stephen recognised the potential that Beth offered to him, his team and everyone she supported. He admired and respected her as a friend.

Personally, as a young teacher-linguist at the time, I was challenged by the demands and responsibilities of developing fledgling bilingual language programs and I was eternally grateful to Stephen for taking such a sensible and forward-thinking approach to his collaboration with Beth. Allowing her to 'fly' strengthened her capacity to support teachers and teacher-linguists like me, along with the many Aboriginal teachers and literacy workers with whom we all worked. From that moment on, as a leader in my own school and in each leadership position I held later on, I endeavoured to follow Stephen's lead in recognising talent and potential in others and encouraging them to fly.

Stephen encouraged me to explore leadership roles. After my classroom teaching experience at Milingimbi, he urged me to undertake further study in the United States with some of the world's authorities in the field of bilingual education and languages education, including Joshua Fishman and Courtney Cazden. He and Joy also put me in contact with their personal friends and contacts in Albuquerque whilst I was studying at the University of New Mexico. It was a life-changing experience of becoming and knowing, and understanding that there was a worldwide community out there that shared our passion for Indigenous education and for working alongside First Nations people. Through Stephen's example, my passion in this field has continued throughout my career and I have benefitted significantly from his influence and encouragement, which has given me the confidence to find my own learning wings and fly.

What a man Stephen was, and he will forever be remembered for his contribution to so many, over so long. His legacy and impact upon Indigenous education, in general, was most significant and long-lasting. But it was his impact upon the individual lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike, alongside whom he walked so humbly, that will be remembered most. He celebrated and valued difference, and he made a difference in our lives—inspiring us in our learning and in our becoming who we want to be, regardless of our cultural heritage.

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Kathryn Gale has enjoyed a 45-year career as an educator working in a diverse range of education settings across Australia. In the mid-1970s she was working at Milingimbi bilingual school in north-east Arnhem Land, where Stephen Harris and his wife Joy Kinslow-Harris were her next-door neighbours, when Stephen was undertaking his Ph.D. research. In those formative teaching years, she developed a passion for Indigenous education, under the mentorship and influence of Stephen, Joy, David McClay, Michael Christie, Beth Graham, and the many Yolŋu teachers with whom she worked. She spent 15 years in the Northern Territory and South Australia, working in remote bilingual schools as a teacher and teacher-linguist, in urban schools with Indigenous

students, and in Indigenous language maintenance, revitalisation and revival programs. Kathryn then spent the next 20 years working in Victoria, as an English teacher in independent schools, as an education adviser in the National Partnerships Program at Independent Schools Victoria, as a training manager at Australian Volunteers International, and in multi-cultural and cross-cultural education and training roles at two Melbourne universities. In the last decade of her career, she was Deputy Principal of an independent Indigenous school in the Yarra Valley, and then Head of School at Melbourne Indigenous Transition School for the first three years of its operation. Now based in Geelong, Kathryn continues to support Indigenous students to access education opportunities and conducts professional development programs for teachers of Indigenous students.

Chapter 19
Carving Out Domains for the Use of a Re-Awakening Language

Rob Amery

Abstract In his book *Two-way Aboriginal Schooling*, Stephen Harris advocated for domain separation in order to preserve Aboriginal culture in the face of overwhelming intrusion from English. Harris mounted this argument in the context of bilingual education in communities where Aboriginal languages were still relatively strong. By contrast, in situations where Aboriginal languages are being re-awakened, their owners/custodians have been speaking English, and only English, for several generations. Rather than reserving domains of use in the interests of language preservation, there is an imperative to create or carve out domains of use for the re-awakening language and to (re-)establish functions for the fledgling language. This chapter describes such efforts over a thirty-year period for the awakening Kaurna language of the Adelaide Plains in South Australia.

Keywords Kaurna · Re-awakening languages · Domain separation · Formulaic method · Language revival

Introduction

In writing the book *Two-way Aboriginal Schooling: Education and Cultural Survival*, Stephen Harris strove to present a theory of education that 'allows the learning of a second culture without destroying or demeaning the first' (Harris, 1990, p. 1). Harris drew heavily on Joshua Fishman's theory of domain separation and cites a conversation he had with Fishman, which for Harris, summed up the situation:

> it is possible to live in two cultures, and it is sometimes exciting and stimulating as well. But people cannot live in two completely inter-penetrating cultures and still maintain them both, particularly when the balance of power between them is great. Cultures need to have their own breathing space so they can try to be different ('themselves') too. If the school values 'cultural differences' then it has to respect and even strengthen cultural boundaries as well. The weaker culture has a chance (no guarantees) only if differences and boundaries

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too are provided and reinforced at the same time that bicultural exposure and expertise are provided. (Fishman, 1987 in Harris, 1990, p. 17)

Harris applied this theory of compartmentalisation or domain separation in the context of bilingual education programs in 'strong' languages in the Northern Territory. He advocated planning the school curriculum around two 'semi-autonomous culture domains' (Harris, 1990, p. 121) and suggested that 'local traditional and contact history; storytelling (both as content and as a cultural identity process); music or song poetry and song history and geography' might be included in the Aboriginal curriculum, whilst the Western curriculum would include 'the three Rs, which in practice means reading, writing and Western maths' (Harris, 1990, pp. 138, 143). Still, he left considerable room for the Indigenous community to decide which subjects belong in what domain, whilst still maintaining a fairly strict division between the two.

In keeping with the theory of domain separation, Harris frowned upon code-switching, but in an effort to accommodate alternative views, Harris began to draw a distinction between code-switching, which was OK, and code-mixing, which should be strongly discouraged. He defined code-switching as 'conscious and deliberate switching of chunks of language' and code-mixing as 'unconscious and random mixing of bits of languages' (Harris, 1990, p. 70) without specifying further the nature of the distinction between 'chunks' and 'bits' of language. Nowhere in his book are actual examples of code-switching or code-mixing provided so that in practice the distinction remains vague. Presumably he meant that in code-switching, the switch from one language to another might occur between topics (paragraphs), or in between two well-formed sentences or at the very minimum in between complete clauses or phrases, whilst code-mixing might see random words or partial phrases drawn in from the other language, but this is not made clear. I question the distinction made between code-switching as conscious and code-mixing as unconscious language use. Being conscious or aware of behaviour and being unconscious or unaware of behaviour is not a simple polar opposite. There are various states of being vaguely aware of using language in a certain way, or being aware of it after the fact. In my own experience, I am most aware of the content of what was discussed rather than being aware of which language it was discussed in when I am talking with a bilingual person who shares the same languages as I do. Even just a short time after the conversation has taken place, I am quite uncertain when asked which language I spoke in on the phone, though I remember clearly what was discussed. We simply don't have a high level of conscious awareness of the choice of language we use or the form of particular grammatical constructions or turn of phrase we employ, unless of course we are intentionally monitoring our own speech.

Translanguaging, Code-Switching and Domain Separation

'Translanguaging' as a term arose from the translation of the Welsh *trawsieithu* by Baker (Garcia and Wei, 2014, p. 20). In its original sense it referred to the use of two languages in a seamless, integrated manner. In its pedagogical context, it might require the student to read in Welsh and write in English, or vice versa. There is now a burgeoning literature on translanguaging with multiple nuanced definitions, sometimes far removed from its original meaning and context. For many scholars, 'translanguaging' refers to the use by the individual of multiple language resources within a single cognitive system. They hypothesise that an individual has just one mental lexicon with words drawn from one or more languages. Makoni and Pennycook (2007, p. 2) go so far as to deny the concept of a language as a distinct entity with respect to other languages, claiming that 'languages do not exist as real entities in the world and neither do they emerge from or represent real environments; they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements'. Consequently, they also dismiss long-held concepts of bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism and call into question the notion of language planning.

The translanguaging concept may have more relevance when we consider the linguistic behaviour of children who grow up in multilingual environments and do indeed appear to acquire a single linguistic system. Jack Kanya Buckskin, who himself acquired Kaurna as an adult, reports that his young children know some concepts only in Kaurna, others only in English and still others both in Kaurna and English. He observes that they just speak the languages and seem to be largely unaware of the differences between the two (pc Jack Kanya Buckskin, October 2020). He reports:

> I can say sentences in [Kaurna] language like *Ipiti-ana padni! Ninku tiyarla wirrantu!* ['Go and have a shower! Clean your teeth!] and my daughter would go and do it. But then I'd ask her what's the word for 'shower' and she'd have no idea because the context and the sentence tells you. It's not the language learning (pc Jack Kanya Buckskin 30 May 2021).

But this rather special situation in terms of the Kaurna language is not the concern of this paper.

Rather, this paper focusses on the English-speaking adults who are struggling to learn to use a new language system with a very different phonology, lexicon and grammar and where lexical semantics is sometimes radically different between the two languages. Their decision to embrace their ancestral Kaurna language is a deliberate political decision, an act of identity. It seems to me that, in this context, the notion of translanguaging has little to offer and that traditional notions of bilingualism and code-switching resonate more strongly with and are more relevant to this situation. However, it should be borne in mind that the reclamation and re-introduction of Kaurna is a very different situation to those which Harris had in mind. Nonetheless, his and Fishman's theories have struck a chord with many in the context of language revival.

Re-Awakening and Re-Introducing Kaurna, the Language of the Adelaide Plains

Kaurna is the name now used to refer to the original language of Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains in southern South Australia. The Kaurna language probably ceased to be spoken on an everyday basis in the early 1860s within just three decades of colonisation, and Ivaritji, the so-called 'last speaker', died in 1929. Kaurna people have been speaking English, and only English, for the last several generations. Most users of Kaurna, except for a handful of children whose parents are new speakers of Kaurna, are attempting to learn the language quite deliberately as adults. For many, their initiation into speaking Kaurna is to deliver a speech of welcome to country (WTC).

Fortunately, a reasonable written record of the Kaurna language, including a sketch grammar and about 200 translated sentences, was made by two German missionaries, Christian Teichelmann and Clamor Schürmann (1840), henceforth T&S. Teichelmann continued to work on the language, sending his handwritten manuscript with hundreds more phrase and sentence examples (Teichelmann, 1857), henceforth TMs, to George Grey, then in Cape Town, South Africa. T&S and TMs remain the main historical sources upon which the re-awakened Kaurna language is built. Exceedingly little would be known about Kaurna grammar without these German mission sources.

Efforts to reclaim and re-introduce the Kaurna language began with the writing of several Kaurna songs at the Ngarrindjeri, Narrunga and Kaurna songwriter's workshop held at Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute in March 1990. This was followed in June 1990 by a Kaurna language workshop at Kaurna Plains School followed by further workshops of one or two weeks duration annually over the next few years. In 1992 Kaurna was introduced at Kaurna Plains School by Dr Alitya Wallara Rigney as the school's Language Other Than English (LOTE) programme. In 1994 senior secondary Kaurna language programs were introduced at Elizabeth City High School and Elizabeth West Adult Campus. In 1997, a course in Kaurna linguistics was introduced at the University of Adelaide and, over the next few years, it was attended by a number of teachers from Kaurna Plains School.

An evening Kaurna class was offered through the School of Languages from 2004. Over the next few years a number of Kaurna people attended. Jack Kanya Buckskin, who enrolled in 2006, was encouraged to join by Steve Gadlabarti Goldsmith. In 2007 Buckskin taught the course together with the author and in 2008, took over the teaching (Amery and Buckskin, 2012). Buckskin soon emerged as the most knowledgeable and proficient Kaurna speaker. He also taught Kaurna at Adelaide High School, Salisbury High School, Kaurna Plains School and other schools throughout the Adelaide Metropolitan area.

Since 2012 Kaurna people have learnt the language from participating in the Certificate III course 'Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language' now offered at Tauondi College, Port Adelaide, working on the job with the Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi

(KWP) team at the University of Adelaide or teaching the language themselves in schools.

Domains of Use of the Kaurna Language

In 2000, in a series of workshops, we developed words and expressions for use by parents and caregivers with babies and young children (Amery and Gale, 2000). We figured that if the Kaurna language was going to become a vibrant language again, we needed to re-establish intergenerational transmission. However, there is a complete absence in the historical record of sentences uttered to or by women and children. Almost all the sentences included in T&S and TMs were spoken by men to men. However, there was a sizable vocabulary and a workable sketch grammar. What's more, numerous processes including derivation (several derivational suffixes are known), compounding, reduplication, semantic extension, backformation and onomatopoeia are exemplified in the scores of neologisms, such as *nurliti* 'key', *piltiti* 'scissors', *tipukardla* 'matches' (lit. spark-fire), *maki* 'glass' (from *maki* 'ice') and so on, documented in historical sources (see Amery, 1993). As a result, we were able to develop many new words and expressions that were fit for purpose in the childrearing context. Some new words such as *nuinpiti* 'dummy' (lit. sucking thing) and *warnupaltha* 'nappy' (lit. bum covering) were needed. And, of course, many new phrases and expressions were constructed.

Talking with babies and young children is an ideal domain in which to introduce an awakening language. It does not matter what you say to a baby or young child in a context of care and affection. That baby or young child will not judge or be critical. They will only give positive feedback. So this is a very safe environment in which to begin to speak a language, whereas talking with teenage or adult friends or strangers can be daunting, humiliating and defeating.

In 2008 Kaurna language worker Emilie O'Brien and I gave a presentation at the Indigenous Languages Institute at the University of Sydney on strategies for re-introducing a sleeping language. We focussed on talking with babies and young children, football and fishing. This led to talking about the 3Fs: family, football and fishing. The number of Fs gradually expanded to nine where I now identify football, fishing, family, friends, funerals, festivals, film, fun and the formulaic method as a useful mnemonic. Of course, songs too are a very useful strategy that we employed from the very beginning. But songs make their way into many of the F-domains including family, football, funerals and festivals and, of course, they are fun.

At a 1990 songwriters workshop, the seven Kaurna songs produced there invoked the very first creative Kaurna sentences to be formulated since the language had gone to sleep. Song was an excellent way to begin the journey of the Kaurna language movement. Songs are a stand-alone product and don't require an ongoing progression of activity with increasing difficulty as language classes demand. It is much easier to sing in a foreign language than it is to speak it and songs are a wonderful mnemonic device. As Jack Kanya Buckskin comments, 'It's one thing to be told a story, but you

can forget the story very quickly. Song is the next stage of learning'.[1] The focus on songs has waxed and waned at various times over the last 30 years. During the 1990s when Nelson Varcoe was actively involved, his passion for song, songwriting and performing saw the development of many Kaurna songs, some written for specific projects and events. Nelson taught Kaurna to adult students at Para West Adult Campus, where he formed a choir and, together with Chester Schultz and I, produced the Kaurna songbook (Schultz et al., 1999). Nelson also worked with children at Kaurna Plains School and Alberton Primary School where he formed Kaurna choirs. Nunga Kaurna teacher, the late Cherie Warrara Watkins, and two non-Aboriginal teachers at Kaurna Plains in the 1990s, Jamie Parkin and the late Kevin Duigan, also had a strong passion for music and song. The Kaurna Plains School choir sang Kaurna songs at numerous events across Adelaide in the 1990s. Song has played a less prominent role in the Kaurna language movement in recent years, though following the deaths of Ngarrpadla Alitya Wallara Rigney and Stephen Gadlabarti Goldsmith in 2017 and Cherie Warrara Watkins in 2019, an impromptu choir was formed to sing their favourite Kaurna hymns at their funerals and memorial service.

Young Kaurna dancers Jamie Ngungana Goldsmith and Jack Kanya Buckskin incorporate Kaurna song in their cultural dance performance. Their Kaurna song is modelled to some extent on Yolŋu song traditions as a result of their attendance of the Garma festival held annually in northeast Arnhemland, and their ongoing relationships with young Yolŋu men living in Adelaide. The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra recently collaborated with Buckskin, Goldsmith and Grayson Rotumah from the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide to produce their own Kaurna acknowledgement of country.[2]

We had focussed on football and fishing because these are very, very popular leisure activities for most Kaurna people and they invoke quite different strategies. Football requires in the most part short utterances, mostly imperatives or negative imperatives and exclamations (such as *Parni tatuntu!* 'Kick it here!', *Ngai kudla* 'I'm open' and so on), but these need to be very well-rehearsed and spontaneous. There is no time to sit and think. The utterances must be able to be produced in the spur of the moment in the cut and thrust of the game. By contrast, fishing is for the most part a slow, leisurely activity with plenty of time to think and formulate what you are wanting to say. Often the expressions are simply statements or questions (e.g., *Kuya payanthi?* 'Are the fish biting?') or they might be simple commands (e.g., *Tuku-intyarla. Nurnti parltantu!* 'It's too small. Throw it back!'). Both these domains are actually fairly easy ones in which to begin to use the Kaurna language in the form of simple well-formed expressions that often stand alone without demanding a verbal response. See Amery and Simpson (2013, pp. 84–92) for further detail.

Meetings held within Kaurna groups and organisations are another domain that should prove promising, but are yet to be developed. In fact, the late Paul Dixon asked me back in 1995 (see Amery, 2016, p. 237) if it would be possible for them to conduct their Kaurna Aboriginal Community and Heritage Association (KACHA) meetings in the Kaurna language. In fact, it should be fairly easy to at least conduct the procedural language of the meeting if all participants were prepared to learn the expressions such as *watu* 'agreed', *ninku nurli wangkatitya* 'your turn to speak',

Warrarti! Kudnartu wangkanthi, ‘no voice (i.e., be quiet)! Kudnartu is speaking’, *ngartiti*? ‘questions?’ and so on.

In writing the *Kaurna learner’s guide* (Amery and Simpson 2013) we focussed on several key domains: talking with friends, in the home, talking with children, talking with Elders, football and fishing, with each of these constituting a chapter to the book.

Mary-Anne Gale’s *Kaurna for Smarties* book (Gale et al., 2020) has taken this a step further by developing phrases, sentence and short conversations around these and a broader range of topics. As with the development of the learner’s guide, most of the expressions in the *Kaurna for Smarties* phrasebook have been developed in collaboration with students in the Kaurna classes held at Tauondi College throughout 2019 and 2020.

The classroom itself is one of the most important domains for use of the Kaurna language. Mary-Anne Gale and I have been running Kaurna classes for adults at Tauondi College, one during the day and another in the evening throughout 2019 and 2020 and kept the evening class going in 2021. A strong sense of camaraderie has developed within the group. Even so, unlike the German language immersion classes I attended at the University of Cologne in 2010–11[3], both English and Kaurna are spoken in the Tauondi classroom. It is a very long way from being a strict Kaurna-speaking domain.

We have held several weekend events billed as ‘Kaurna language immersion’ activities based around the making of Kaurna artefacts, both wood and skins. These ‘language immersion’ weekends have been very good in terms of developing the skills to make artefacts and building camaraderie and solidarity, but have not been a resounding success in terms of speaking Kaurna. Most learners of Kaurna do not yet know enough Kaurna to sustain a conversation. The introduction of card games at these weekends has been more successful. If learners are provided with the phrases they need, such as *ninku nurli* ‘your turn’, *Niina milatidli*? ‘Do you have a five?’, *Mila parniapintu*! ‘pass (me) the five’, *milatangkurla* ‘a pair of fives’ and so on, then they are able to sustain the game without resorting to English. At this stage we need to make use of a lot more language games with a range of prefabricated Kaurna expressions to give learners the confidence in speaking Kaurna.

The Formulaic Method

Language immersion is ideal for language acquisition and many successful methods, such as the Kohanga Reo/Punana Leo ‘language nests’ for Maori and Hawai’ian or Leanne Hinton’s Master Apprentice method developed in California, are based on language immersion. For an awakening language though, such as Kaurna, where there are no native speakers and few opportunities to hear Kaurna spoken, language immersion is not a viable option. In this circumstance I have proposed the Formulaic Method (see Amery, 1998, pp. 393–394; 2009, 2016, pp. 237–242).

The Formulaic Method introduces well-formed utterances of graded difficulty and salience into what otherwise might be predominantly English. Some utterances such as *Nii*! 'Yes', *Wuintyi* 'maybe', *Ngana*? 'Who is it?', *Ngantu*?' 'Who did it?', *Wanti*? 'Where to?', *Pidna*! 'Hang on! or Wait!', *Wai!* 'Wow!' (an expression of admiration) and so on consist of just one word and many of these are easy to say and easy to remember. And expressions such as these are extremely useful. It doesn't matter if the response comes back in English or even if in the early stages the remainder of the conversation proceeds in English. But the learner is strongly encouraged to use whatever well-formed Kaurna expressions they have in their repertoire at every opportunity. The learner is encouraged to move on to longer and longer expressions, but to focus on those which are able to be used often. Expressions such as *Pakadla parni-apintu!* 'Pass the salt!' or *Waa pinyata?* 'Where is the sugar?' may be able to be used every day or even several times a day. And, of course, sentences such as these provide a useful template, lending themselves to the insertion of numerous nouns referring to foodstuffs or everyday items.

Speeches of welcome to country (WTC) are, in fact, speech formulas. The user does not need to understand the grammar to be able to make a successful welcome to country speech. Of course, the level of difficulty in delivering a WTC speech is much greater than the foregoing expressions, but the WTC speech is culturally salient and the main reason why some Kaurna people engage with the Kaurna language. For many, the words of the WTC speech may be the first Kaurna words that an individual ever uses in public.

Now the Formulaic Method exploits code-switching in a very deliberate way, but strongly discourages the sprinkling of Kaurna words within English, something which people are prone to do. I have heard the use of expressions such as 'Sit on your maras' ('Sit on your hands') by Kaurna people, but the use of Kaurna in this way is simply relexifying English, and the speaker is not obliged to engage with Kaurna grammar in any way, shape or form. Admittedly, in the early stages, the use of Kaurna speech formulas does not oblige speakers to engage with Kaurna grammar either, but sooner or later they will begin to notice recurring patterns in the language and will often begin to ask about the suffixes and word order, etc. At this point it may be useful to introduce some overt grammar in ways that are commensurate with the learner's interest in the structure of the language. However, to begin by introducing overt instruction of Kaurna grammar can be a major turn off, especially for those who may have missed out on a good education and whose literacy skills and knowledge of parts of speech may be extremely limited or non-existent.

So the Formulaic Method has some alignment with Stephen Harris's distinction between code-switching which is tolerated and code-mixing which is strongly discouraged, if indeed code-mixing is defined as the sprinkling of vocabulary items from one language into another where the grammatical integrity of the second language is maintained. The Formulaic Method encourages the learner to switch into the grammatical system and turn of phrase of the other language whenever they are able to, even if though do not yet understand the grammatical construction employed. Consequently the Formulaic Method does not align with domain separation.

Code-Switching

Just as the Formulaic Method exploits code-switching in order to encourage learners to make maximum use of the language that they already know, code-switching is also used to keep the audience engaged. We could, for instance, produce our Pirltawardli Puppet Shows entirely in Kaurna, but in so doing we would lose the audience, who are all first-language speakers of English, and most have no knowledge of Kaurna whatsoever. Some puppet personas (Kurraka 'magpie' and Ngungana 'kookaburra') are Kaurna speakers. Kuula ('koala) is a beginner who sometimes tries to speak Kaurna, but makes lots of mistakes. Pirlta ('possum'), on the other hand, understands both Kaurna and English and is able to unpack the misunderstandings between Kuula and the other puppets.

We used the same technique earlier in the production of two hour-long radio shows for the Nunga Wangga show on Radio Adelaide. We exploited the ambiguity resulting from the double meaning of key Kaurna words in order to generate humour. The use of English alongside the Kaurna to unpack the Kaurna language is essential to make it intelligible to the audience.

Discussion

When re-introducing an awakening language as an auxiliary language, it is well-worth thinking about the functions that this language might serve. Amery (2020) considers this question in the context of teaching Aboriginal languages in universities. There is little point, for instance, in teaching someone the language needed to be able to book into a hotel or to catch a taxi in an Aboriginal language, as Aboriginal languages are never used in these situations. The situations in which the Kaurna language might potentially be able to be used revolve around the emblematic function of the language (WTC speech giving and so on), identity and cultural expression, as well as situations involving family and close friends. Nor should the Kaurna language classroom itself be forgotten as an important domain for the use of Kaurna.

It is unlikely that Kaurna will ever have a role to play in many areas of modern life, such as banking and finance, business, shopping, travel or education and work beyond the teaching and learning of the Kaurna language itself. On the other hand, Kaurna is gaining a strong foothold in the public domain where it plays an increasing role in Kaurna cultural expression and identity formation.

Kaurna-naming activity, first initiated by Kaurna/Ngarrindjeri woman, Auntie Leila Rankine in 1980 with the naming of Warriappendi Alternative School, has increased exponentially. Kaurna people are adopting Kaurna names[4] for themselves, their children and their pets. Katrina Karlapina Power is currently working with the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital to bestow Kaurna birth-order names on all newborns delivered within the hospital.[5] Numerous Aboriginal organisations based in Adelaide have also adopted Kaurna names as well as programs designed by

and for Aboriginal people. But the use of Kaurna names by non-Aboriginal people and organisations has also mushroomed. Kaurna names have been given to all kinds of entities and across a broad range of sectors, frequently within education but seldom within the business sector.

The Kaurna language has also been incorporated into public artworks beginning in 1995 with the Yerrakartarta installation outside the Hyatt Hotel on North Terrace (Amery, 1998 Vol.2, pp. 333–334). Some of these works have been created by Kaurna artists or through collaborations with Kaurna artists (Malone, 2007), though many have been the brainchild of non-Indigenous artists who have consulted with Kaurna people, Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP) or Kaurna Warra Karrpanthi (KWK).

Kaurna people are also seeking out the Kaurna language for more private, personal expressions of identity through the writing or translation of poetry (see Telfer in Proctor and Gale, 1997, pp. 49–51) or song.

Funerals bring many of these elements together. Funerals are intensely personal, but they are also public events. They are ceremonies that celebrate the life of the deceased. In 2002 we embarked on a Kaurna funeral protocols project where we discussed the conduct of Nunga funerals, researched traditional Kaurna funeral practices, looking at the conduct of funerals in remote Aboriginal cultures such as those of the Ngaanyatjarra and Yolngu, and worked out an order of service. This culminated in a book of Kaurna funeral protocols (Amery and Rigney, 2006) and an accompanying CD, such that it would be possible to conduct the entire funeral service in Kaurna if so desired. Whilst Kaurna hymns have been sung at several Kaurna funerals and memorial services, to date only limited use has been made of this resource. It is difficult to ensure that the Kaurna language will be incorporated into the funeral proceedings, even if the deceased has been a Kaurna language activist for many years. Whilst the deceased may have been passionate about the use of Kaurna language, their family may not be so familiar. Katrina Karlapina Power is planning to work with funeral directors to increase their awareness of the language and develop a kit to facilitate more use of the Kaurna language within funeral ceremonies.

Conclusion

Harris (1990), with his focus on domains and his distinction between code-switching and code-mixing, has provided some inspiration for strategies adopted in the re-introduction of the re-awakening Kaurna language. Whilst we have focussed attention on certain key domains (especially family, fishing, football and funerals) for the early introduction of Kaurna, there is certainly no emphasis on domain separation as Harris (1990) proposed. On the contrary, the use of two languages, side by side, is actually encouraged in the Formulaic Method in an effort to get people to start to use the little language they have learnt without waiting until they have a good command of the language or an understanding of the grammatical structure. Being able to move from one language system to another is promoted, though sprinkling words from one language into the other, which is perhaps code-mixing in Harris's terms, is strongly discouraged.

The Kaurna language will never replace English, but it is emerging as an auxiliary language, a language of cultural expression and a language embodying Kaurna identity. In its use as an emblematic language within the public domain, it is not important that the audience understands what is said. The medium is the message. But it is important that the use of the language sounds authentic. Thus, delivery needs to be fluent and confident and the pronunciation needs to conform to Indigenous norms.

Endnotes

1. Adelaide Symphony Orchestra commissions a musical Acknowledgement of Country—News—ABC Classic Posted 26 May 2021.
2. Adelaide Symphony Orchestra commissions a musical Acknowledgement of Country—News—ABC Classic Posted 26 May 2021.
3. The lecturer would become visibly angry and strongly reprimand any student who broke the rule and began to speak English in the classroom, even if it was only to seek clarification on a point of German grammar. The language immersion classroom was treated as a very strict German-speaking domain.
4. Kaurna, like other Thura-Yura languages in South Australia, has a system of birth-order names up to the ninth born and differentiates between male and female (see Amery and Simpson, 2013/2021, pp.15–16).
5. ILAD00007 Workplan and Budget 2021–2022 submitted on 31 May 2021.

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Chapter 20
Mul̲mul̲—Flecks of Foam in an Everchanging Educational World: Community-Based Participatory Research

Kathryn McMahon

Abstract The chapter explores the research processes and outcomes and some of my own personal experiences in a collaborative community-based research project at Yirrkala. Yolŋu elders, a younger generation of Yolŋu educators, and non-local educators and teacher-educators initially undertook a research project to improve mathematics education for Yolŋu students and ended up transforming the way education was delivered at Yirrkala. Where does Stephen Harris fit in you might wonder? Firstly, he was a leading light in theorising the unique kind of bilingual education under development in the Northern Territory. He went on to support communities in their efforts to transform the bilingual education program. His advocacy and his efforts to make these programs theoretically rigorous and accepted at a system level gave us a framework to work with, and a platform to debate educational issues pertaining to the development of 'bothways' education.

Keywords Garma maths · *Mul̲mul̲* · Bothways · Collaborative participatory research · Yolngu or Yolŋu education

Mul̲mul̲, in the Yolŋu languages of North East Arnhem Land, are the flecks of foam that form on the surface of the water where freshwater and saltwater meet. Mr Roy Marika, an important elder at Yirrkala, once suggested that we, a group of younger participants in the Ganma Mathematics Research Project, were like *mul̲mul̲*—finding new knowledge in the mixing of different waters, while bobbing up, being pushed along, sometimes feeling empowered and often feeling like we were drowning or being drowned out. It is a description that has stayed with me for four decades.

I was immensely privileged to be involved in participatory bilingual education research, and community-based Indigenous teacher education for three-and-a-half decades in the Northern Territory. My final role in 2015, as Bilingual Education Manager, mirrored the one Stephen Harris had as Principal Education Officer, Bilingual in the 1980s, albeit with severely reduced resources in my time. My brief in 2015 was to support the remaining nine bilingual schools across the NT, even though government policy at the time was unclear about whether bilingual education would

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continue to be funded as an approved program. The NT government was introducing a tightly scripted English teaching tool, Direct Instruction (DI), into Northern Territory schools, one that had been directly imported from the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI), Oregon, USA. In this program students would spend 40% of their day on decontextualised DI English literacy activities, another 40% of their day on DI numeracy activities, and the remaining 20% of the day (the last hour of the day) on teacher-directed tasks, so it was virtually impossible to run any kind of bilingual program in tandem with Direct Instruction. Yirrkala Bilingual School and Shepherdson College absolutely refused the DI program, but the other bilingual schools were forced to comply.

This chapter explores some of the experiences and processes that Yolŋu elders and a younger generation of Yolŋu[1] and non-local educators undertook while transforming mathematics education for Yolŋu students at Yirrkala in North East Arnhem Land.

Where does Stephen Harris fit in you might wonder? Firstly, he was a leading light in theorising the unique kind of bilingual education under development in the Northern Territory. His efforts to make these programs theoretically rigorous and accepted at a system level gave us a framework to work with and a platform to debate educational issues pertaining to the development of 'bothways' education.

Stephen's book *Culture and learning: Tradition and education in North East Arnhem land* (1980) was required reading for teachers 'going bush' in the 1980s. This work provoked debate about informal Aboriginal learning styles in relation to the formal western learning styles required in schools. As Bob Hughes and Bob Teasdale noted, 'the work of Stephen Harris had provoked the most debate, analysis and change' (Harris, 1990, p. ix).

In addition to fostering informed debate on important educational issues, Stephen was not only a strong advocate for bilingual education, but he also gave professional support to new educators working in a highly politicised and complex environment. His background was in anthropology, and from 1979 to 1985 he worked alongside Beth Graham, an experienced Early Childhood teacher, teacher-educator, educational adviser, and curriculum writer. Together they and their team in the Bilingual Support Unit assisted staff in remote Aboriginal schools—principals, teaching teams and teacher linguists—to develop practical ideas and processes for team teaching and the use of two languages for learning.

As the NT Bilingual Program developed in the mid-1980s, Stephen continued to listen to Aboriginal people and to advocate for them, which was highly unusual for bureaucrats within the Northern Territory Education Department. (Jim Gallacher was another person who did that.) This was at a time when many Aboriginal communities were asking for self-management of their schools, which included requests for appropriate community-based teacher education programs, and for a school curriculum, which placed their languages and knowledge systems at the centre. As a response to these new initiatives, Stephen wrote *Two-Way Aboriginal Schooling Education and Cultural Survival*, which was published in 1990. This text examined his ideas and thinking around two-way learning and included a description of educational work going on in schools in the Northern Territory, including Yirrkala.

The journey towards self-management Yirrkala was taking is described below:

> At Yirrkala, however, where Aboriginal control is more advanced, there was a real struggle—a two-way school was not handed to them on a platter, and they built up to it over many years with positive influence from many sources. One influence was the philosophy of community development which the Uniting Church has had in place for at least twenty years. Another positive was non-Aboriginal teacher support and persistent Aboriginal teacher training. This training began in earnest in 1974 when the bilingual program began and became more formalised through Batchelor College. Under the influence of Deakin University staff working through the College, the Aboriginal school staff learned to articulate their wishes and assert them through an Aboriginal Staff Action Group. There was some opposition from non-Aboriginal teachers, but that became useful practice for Yolngu assertion (Harris, 1990, pp. 118–119).

Yirrkala 1984: Beginning My Educational Journey

It was with some excitement and a little trepidation that I set out in January 1984 to fly to Yirrkala in North East Arnhem Land. The Northern Territory Education Department has a haphazard way of allocating staff to community schools. All my previous experience had been in upper primary classes in Australia, followed by two years teaching English as a foreign language to adults in Greece. However, I found myself in an early childhood class. I was definitely thrown in at the deep end, as I spent the first two weeks alone with a rowdy bunch of six-year-old children. The students were all Yolŋu speakers, who had a little emergent conversational English, consisting of questions like 'what you name?', 'where you country?' and the inevitable endless queries about the names of your family and relatives. They attended school in family/clan groups and seemed to take turns at attending. It was a rare occurrence when all the students on the class roll were there on the same day. This made developing a sequential teaching program quite challenging, so flexibility became an essential tool.

Devlin (2009) has shown where 1984 fitted into the timeline of The Northern Territory Bilingual Education Program:

> The first five years of operation (1973–78), which included Cyclone Tracy in 1974, can be regarded as the establishment phase, which coincided with the period just before the Northern Territory became self-governing. During this time, a Bilingual Education Consultative Committee (BECC) was set up to monitor the first bilingual programs. Annual Territory-wide conferences gave staff opportunities to 'meet for mutual support and ideas-sharing. These in turn created a wide basis of support for the program' (Harris & Devlin, 1999). Bilingual programs then entered a consolidation phase (1978–1986), though staff reductions and a decline in funding support for programs began to affect operations from about 1984 onwards. 'Consolidation' was essentially understood to mean that there was no money available to establish new programs (Devlin, 2009).

In 1984 Stephen Harris was the Principal Education Officer, in charge of the Bilingual Unit in Darwin. In his role as PEO Bilingual, Stephen was charged with the development of educational programs in bilingual schools. He was an important influence on my early years as a teacher at Yirrkala, as was Beth Graham. She was in

the process of developing what became a highly influential resource for Aboriginal schools: *Team teaching in the Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory*, which was published in 1986. Beth and Stephen visited our classroom several times in my first two years at Yirrkala (1984 and 1985) to offer professional support and advice. At that time support for teachers in Northern Territory schools with bilingual programs was still available and relatively well organised but, unfortunately, this support slowly disappeared as staff reductions continued into the 1990s, until the Bilingual Unit was reduced to one disenfranchised manager.

In the 1970s and into the 1980s, the Bilingual Unit in Darwin included a group of competent professional staff—highly experienced educators, qualified anthropologists, and linguists. These officers worked alongside schools to support the development of bilingual schools in Aboriginal communities.

The bilingual program at Yirrkala was 10 years old in 1984 and, as Devlin's timeline cited earlier shows, I had arrived as support for bilingual programs were being seriously reduced. Bilingual programs in the Northern Territory are different in practice from those in the United States and Canada, where teachers in bilingual schools are expected to be competent bilinguals, holding at least a master's degree in education. In the NT all classes in bilingual schools in the 1980s were taught by team-teaching partners, usually consisting of a qualified, often inexperienced, non-Aboriginal teacher, and an Aboriginal Assistant teacher, often with many years of teaching experience (Devlin, 1993, p. 25).

In the third week of my first term at Yirrkala, a young Yolŋu woman came into the class and introduced herself as Wanymalka. She told me the school principal called her Wendy, but she would prefer I used her Yolŋu name. We were to work as team teachers. By then I was clear that team teaching had to be an essential element in the bilingual program in Year 1. Having spent two weeks by myself struggling with the names of an excitable, rowdy bunch of six-year-olds, I was immediately appreciative of her expertise and could see that the students were settling down and becoming more engrossed in the learning activities planned for them when there was instruction in their own language as well as English.

It took me a term to be able to say the children's names properly. As I learned more about the community, it became obvious that teaching at Yirrkala was a very new professional and cultural experience, one that I felt ill-equipped to deal with. The experience of suddenly feeling so perplexed about my teaching expertise helped me understand how important the teaching team was in this new educational context. Not only was my team-teaching partner bilingual, she knew the children, the languages they spoke, and the appropriate cultural ways that were the norm at Yirrkala. Together we supported the children's learning in ways that I knew we could not have done as separate entities.

Stephen Harris and Beth Graham came into this messy educational space towards the end of the first term in 1984 to assess how our class was progressing. Beth had been a teacher at Yirrkala during the mission school days, and then later as the first teacher-linguist at Yirrkala when the bilingual program was introduced in 1974. She was a significant mentor during her first years at Yirrkala. What a relief it was to be able to say, 'I'm afraid I'm not quite sure what I'm doing. I'm not even sure we're on

the right track'. Stephen was a gentle, very quietly spoken person. He congratulated me on my frankness and said that it was a particularly good sign that I had identified gaps in my teaching experience and that my openness and my ability to ask for support was the first step to improving outcomes for the students.

After a day spent observing in our classroom, Stephen and Beth reported that, from what they had observed, the Yolŋu Matha Language Arts program was working well, the ESL oral language program was well structured, and they saw evidence of the children developing appropriate levels of English. They could see we were having trouble with our Mathematics teaching (possibly because two of the livelier boys decided to jump in and out of the window several times during 'Maths time'). There was no need to worry, he said, because I would be attending a two-week training course on bilingual education next term, and Beth would be focusing on mathematics education in a bilingual setting there.

That promised professional development workshop ultimately ensured that I stayed teaching in the Northern Territory. The workshop provided an exploration of the unique teaching and learning situation in different bilingual schools across the Northern Territory, and included sessions on bilingual theory and practice, and some applied linguistics for language teachers. We had time to work on the Aboriginal language of our respective programs and to learn how to do a comparative analysis of Aboriginal languages and English to strengthen our ESL program. There was a time dedicated to working in small groups with other teachers to share our experiences and develop solutions to the problems we had. As well as hearing from Bilingual Unit advisors, there were sessions with some very experienced teachers from other bilingual schools, including Michael Christie from Milingimbi, and John Greatorex and Michael Cooke from Galiwin'ku. Such a wonderful professional development experience made it possible for me to go back and continue the journey, gaining experience and confidence in being a part of a bicultural teaching team.

Teaching Mathematics!

Teaching mathematics at Yirrkala was our most serious pedagogical challenge. Our guiding curriculum document at the time was Mathematics in Aboriginal Schools (NT Department of Education, 1982), which had been adapted from the Western Australian Mathematics Syllabus (WAMS), the mathematics curriculum used in urban NT schools. Our teaching team used this document assiduously. It was highly prescriptive, with lesson plans set out, and dialogue scripts. In McMahon (1992) I described this text as 'organised around technical control procedures, like the pre-packaged sets of curricular materials described by Apple' (1982, p. 146). I was incredibly grateful for it as a framework. Our team spent the time we needed to plan lessons thoroughly so that the students would learn well. We practised the maths activities ourselves first, discussed the mathematical ideas, pondered language issues, and after teaching sessions assessed what we had taught. Because we were carefully following the syllabus, I assumed that we had all bases covered. After a few months

though I was puzzled when the students were not learning what we thought we were 'teaching'. For some reason, the students became very fond of the number seven, and would consistently answer any number problem with a hopeful 'seben?'.

Beth Graham worked with teachers to plan learning in two languages. She had a particular interest in mathematics. In 1985, she approached our teaching team to see if we would work with her as part of her Master of Education research project, 'Language and mathematics in the Aboriginal context: A study of classroom interactions about addition in the early years'. We cautiously agreed and were subsequently filmed taking the class for several additional lessons based on the Northern Territory Mathematics in Aboriginal Schools curriculum. Transcripts of these lessons were later analysed for meaning using a systemic-functional linguistics approach. The research findings were unsettling, but not surprising: the analysis showed that the children's participation in the discourse was minimal, and only occurred at the request of the teacher; that the children did not seem to be aware of the purpose of the interaction in which they were engaged, and that the lessons did not reveal to children the way mathematics meanings are made and shared in the wider world (Graham, 1986, pp. ii–iii).

We were a little mortified, but not surprised by these results, as we already had our own evidence that the students were not progressing appropriately. This was the first Mathematics research project I was involved in and our participation gave me an insight into what was going wrong in our classroom mathematics teaching and learning program, but we weren't clear about how to proceed.

A second mathematics project began very soon after this and completely changed the way maths education was implemented at Yirrkala. The Ganma Mathematics Research Project was a part of a coursework unit submitted by Bakamana (later known as Mandawuy, now Dr. B.) Yunupiŋu's final year of education study at Deakin University. He was one of a new generation of Yolŋu educators at Yirrkala determined to have a central role in their children's education. He had listened carefully to Beth when she discussed the findings of her mathematics research with the Nambara School Council. Nambara has several meanings; in the context of the school council it meant a Shelter of Knowledge. The Council then invited Deakin University's Mathematics and Science lecturer, Dr. Helen Watson, to visit Yirrkala to support the staff to develop a more effective mathematics program. In the professional learning workshops that followed we were encouraged to see mathematics as an active thing, something in and of the world, rather than as a set of abstract ideas waiting to be discovered. As a result, we started to use quite different practices in our teaching. Lots of new actors entered Yirrkala classrooms: thousands of drinking straws, pop sticks and rubber bands, base 10 matrixes, tape measures, trundle wheels, buckets, and hoses to measure lung capacity. We developed a large chart called a Personal Information matrix, which showed the multiple and often confusing ways numbers are used in the western world. Dates of birth, addresses (at Yirrkala these were lot numbers rather than street numbers), bank account numbers, flight numbers on plane tickets, arrival and departure information, weights, heights, tyre pressure, numbers telling us our blood pressure or if we were anaemic: all these things were instrumental in showing us and our students the way numbers had entered Yolŋu life at Yirrkala.

As we were all doing quite significant learning about Western mathematics as a part of a cultural system, questions about Yolŋu cultural systems and their place in the mathematics curriculum began to emerge. Through this work the notion of Yolŋu maths emerged, as a way of referring to the cultural interface between Balanda and Yolŋu knowledge systems and social practices at Yirrkala. So, the exploration of western mathematical ideas and practices became something far more complex.

Self-management at Yirrkala Community School

The revision of our mathematics curriculum and pedagogy was only one change occurring at Yirrkala School at this time. During the 1980s, Commonwealth Government policies regarding Aboriginal communities involved the implementation of self-determination. This was an ill-defined and rather nebulous concept that everyone had their own ideas about. Questions revolved around what it meant, how it could be realized, and how long it would take. Stephen Harris was involved in these discussions and wrote *Two-way Aboriginal Schooling: Education and Cultural Survival* in 1990 outlining the wishes and aspirations of Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

From 1986, the Nambara School Council directed the school at Yirrkala. In close collaboration with the Nambara School Council, a group of Yolŋu educators including Mr. W. Wunuŋmurra, Dr. B. Yunupiŋu, Dr. R. Marika, and Ms. D. Ŋurruwutthun devised a practical plan for self-management at Yirrkala Community School. Mr. Wunuŋmurra was the chairman of the Nambara School Council. He had been an interpreter for Yirrkala elders in their landmark lawsuit against the Commonwealth Government in the Gove Land Rights case (Northern Territory Supreme Court, 1971). Dr. Yunupiŋu wrote under one of his names, Bakamana, until a death in the community meant he was referred to as Mandawuy. Raymattja Marika wrote under several names: R. Marika, R. Munuŋgiritj, and R. Marika-Munuŋgiritj. Since her tragic death at 49 in 2008, because of rheumatic heart disease, she is now referred to as Dr. Marika.

With strong guidance from Mr. Wunuŋmurra, the staff at Yirrkala School developed a Vision Statement and a five-year Aboriginalisation plan. This plan included all staff documenting their plans for further study and included a plan for Yolŋu teachers to take over full classroom teaching duties at the end of their studies. Dr. Yunupiŋu described the goals that Yolŋu people at Yirrkala and in the Laynhapuy Homelands had for education in the *Nambara Philosophy of Education* (Yunupingu, 1986, p. 4) as self-management, self-sufficiency, and self-determination. To assist with the journey towards self-determination at Yirrkala School, the role of non-Aboriginal staff was ‘to carry out advisory/facilitatory roles as they assist the community in achieving its goals’ (Yunupingu, 1986). Non-local teachers were no longer key players in school leadership roles or in classrooms. The redefinition of our roles took us from holding leadership roles, or from working as the key teacher of teaching teams to mentoring Yolŋu teachers, and teaching English as a second language, working under the direction of community elders. We were also expected to undertake further study to ensure

we were able to fulfil these new and different responsibilities. 'Doing ourselves out of a job' was the colloquial way we described the process. The community elders at Yirrkala were clear in their desire for education with Yolŋu teachers in classrooms and leadership positions but were also accepting of working with non-local teachers who understood and supported their plan.

The Yirrkala Aboriginalisation Plan was accepted by the Northern Territory Department of Education at the end of 1986 by the Secretary of Education Mr. Geoff Spring at a community meeting at Yirrkala. To say it was accepted enthusiastically would be an exaggeration; it was more a shrugged, 'well we haven't done much good have we, so I will approve this plan'. As a result, Dr. Yunupiŋu (often known as Dr. Y) became the Yirrkala School Principal in 1987, and an Action Group consisting of all Yolŋu staff was formalised under the auspices of the newly incorporated School Council. The members of the Action Group were the younger generation of teachers who had witnessed the unsuccessful struggle their elders waged against the Commonwealth Government in the Gove Land Rights case in 1968. Together with their community elders, they were clear about the need for an educational system for their children which had strong, recognisable links to Yolŋu ways of 'doing' education.

Curriculum content and curriculum processes continued to be challenged. There was now a non-negotiable requirement for non-local staff to learn about Yolŋu languages, knowledge systems, and social practices so that we could grasp what their inclusion in the school curriculum might entail. Up until this time, Yolŋu language classes had been offered once a week after school, but attendance was voluntary, and the classes were not well attended. After the changes in the school, all non-local teachers were required to attend Yolŋu language classes. Yolŋu staff led by different members of the senior leadership team also ran Learning Together sessions teaching about *gurruṯu* ('kinship') and *djalkiri* ('land') and kept staff up to date on curriculum developments emanating from the Ganma project.

The Ganma Mathematics Research project evolved from the Deakin University context to Yirrkala and Laynhapuy communities, and then into the RATE (Remote Area Teacher Education) course run by Batchelor College (now BIITE), beginning with Stage 2 Remote Area Teacher Education program in 1988 (McMahon, 1989). Our work was well documented in the 1989 Stage Two RATE Evaluation Report by Yirrkala Community Action Group, edited by Yunupingu et al. The work involved elders working with teachers and teacher education students to develop a curriculum which was inclusive of Yolŋu knowledge. In 1989 the workshops began in the school and the surrounding Laynhapuy Homeland communities with students.

All the participants in the Ganma project—community elders, grandparents, parents, Yolŋu, and non-local teachers and teacher-educators—explored educational possibilities in order that the children could be educated in a way that ensured that Yolŋu languages, knowledge, and social practices would take a central role in the curriculum. The elders' direction of the project was essential. It was a participatory process using Yolŋu forms of interaction and learning in which collective responsibility was expected.

The research was well documented, both through participants' research journals and through papers developed and delivered at conferences and workshops. Journal writing was a key element of the research project; our entries were regularly shared with the group as a means of extending our shared understandings. Workshop booklets from every workshop were published by the Literature Production Centre at Yirrkala School to build a resource base for future teaching and learning.

Working from first principles, a seminal paper by Marika, Ngurruwutthun & White (1989) explained how participatory action research was viewed from a Yolŋu perspective:

> Always together, yaka gana provides an emphasis on the collective involvement in participatory research. Yaka gana conveys the meaning of never on your own, or individually. Always a group, never an individual (1989, p. 1).

Negotiation and Reciprocity

Two of the essential elements of participatory research which struck a chord with the Yolŋu participants were negotiation as fundamental to learning and reciprocity. The above paper went on to describe the negotiation process from a Yolŋu perspective:

> …in a yolngu school, there is a proper yolngu way to negotiate a plan of action…to think about this proper yolngu way we considered an example of situations where there is a ceremony. Ceremonies must be planned so that all the correct interrelationships are taken into account. Negotiations take place to find the right place to start and the right direction to follow. This negotiated started point is called the Galtha (Marika, Ngurruwutthun & White, p. 16).

In a 1990 paper, Marika-Munuŋggiritj talks about the concept of reciprocity for elders, teachers and teacher-educators, and the students involved in the Garma curriculum process:

> Teaching is built on explicit understandings of reciprocity as expressed by the phrase bala lili. Working in our approach to participatory research we have to fulfil obligations to the ngalapal (elders) who instruct us and the children. Bala lili means 'giving' and then 'getting something back'. The obligations we are under require us to do the things that they expect us to do particularly by being good Yolngu role models for the children in our community and to be seen to the use the learning they organise for us (1990, p. 7).

From the research two major curriculum areas were developed: the Garma Maths Program and Galtha Rom curriculum. Garma means an open ceremonial space. One of the meanings of Galtha is a negotiated starting point. Rom is usually translated as 'law' in English. It embraces several meanings concerned with ritual and religious beliefs. It also means custom and the body of rules which are binding on people; for example, avoidance relationships.

Our research ultimately became an exploration of the mixing of knowledge systems and social practices with the aim of finding a form of education that would support the on-going demands for self-management of the school at Yirrkala.

Garma Maths curriculum brings together two systems of knowledge, Western and Yolŋu, using the conservation of order in the two systems as a bridge: from the Yolŋu world, the *gurruṯu* (relationship) system; from Western mathematics, the Base 10 system. Galtha Rom workshops emerged as another important element alongside Garma Maths. Galtha workshops were usually held on the land related to learning. Dr. Marika (Marika-Mununggiritj, 1990) describes the processes which led to the successful implementation of Galtha Rom workshops:

> The participants in these workshops were community representatives from each homeland, mala (a clan group, a group) leaders, Yolŋu, Balanda (non-Aboriginal), students both from Homelands Schools and Yirrkala Central School. The workshops were organised by all Yolŋu teachers (Action Group) with the support of our mala leaders and balanda from the Central School. They were run by all Yolŋu teachers including Balanda teachers through negotiating, sharing ideas, learning together, working together, planning together…This is what we call 'working in a team' (Marika-Mununggiritj et al., 1990, p. 49).

Learning Outside School

While this significant educational research was going on in the school setting, I was also learning outside the school. I found myself 'adopted' into the Rirratjiŋu clan, the Marika family, gaining both a skin name (Galiyan) and a Yolŋu name. The flow-on effect of this was that I had become a member of the Yolŋu Dhuwa moiety through my father's clan, with close connections to the Yirritja Gumatj clan, through my mother's clan. As the adopted daughter of one of the traditional owners of Yirrkala, Mr. Roy Marika, I became an older sister of his daughter Raymattja, who worked as a language worker in the Literature Production Centre at the school and I acquired a large extended family. I was learning about *gurruṯu* and how this system formed relationships with, and responsibilities to, the land. *Gurruṯu* is usually translated in English as the kinship system: this system connects all Yolŋu people across North East Arnhem Land in a complex extended family and clan relationships. *Gurruṯu* and *djalkiri* form the basis of lived experience in Yolŋu life. *Djalkiri* literally means 'foot' but on a more profound level it refers to the foundation of life expressed through Yolngu song lines, ceremonies, and ancestral stories.

As a result of participation in the Garma research project, I began to see that a complex system of logic lay behind the (to me) confusing networks of relationships I was being taught in the everyday social networks in the community at Yirrkala and the Laynhapuy Homeland communities. Working *gurruṯu* is a process of tracking a system of names and moving across different levels of engagement and complexity. Trying to work out new relationships in *gurruṯu* left me with a similar level of confusion to that experienced when trying to work out a mathematics problem beyond my mathematical competence. I openly admit to using some tried and true rote learning tricks when it came to working out relationships having discovered that due to the reciprocal nature of kinship names, you can learn all the kinship terms off by heart. So, if a new person arrives calling you *waku* ('daughter') you know you must reciprocate with *ŋandi* ('mother') if it is a woman, or *ŋapipi* if it is a man. A

great strategy to be sure, but the downside is it makes you appear to be far more knowledgeable than you really are.

This was something I learnt in the very first school-based Galtha Rom workshop with elders, Yolŋu teachers, and secondary students in 1989. I wrote about this in *The Promise of Milmarra* (McMahon, 2013).

I present here my journal entry about Day 1 of the first school-based Galtha Rom workshop at Yirrkala School from 6 to 10 February 1989 and later Dr. Yunupiŋu's account of the same day.

> Monday, Day 1
>
> Earlier in the morning the room was buzzing with anticipation; now there is absolute silence. Workshop participants are listening intently to the guest speaker at the front of the room. Yolŋu teachers and students are transfixed. He has their full concentration. Several Yolngu teachers are taking notes. For the first time in five years, I am experiencing an unusual, focussed attention which is not normally evident in the school, or in teacher education sessions. I am witnessing an intense engagement that hasn't emerged in other learning situations. It is also the first time in five years that I am unable to get any help in understanding what is going on. I am struggling to understand much of what is being said although I can understand some Yolŋu language.
>
> I know that the speaker is talking about milmarra, an important element in Yolŋu kinship practices. Milmarra invokes Yolŋu dowry practices, often called the 'promise' system in English. The speaker is a significant elder, djirrakay for Yirritja clans, an elder with responsibility for Yirritja knowledge practices, not just those belonging to his own clan but for all Yirritja clans.
>
> At the beginning of his talk today he informs the students that he does not read or write with djorra' (paper) but as djirrakay he has high-level Yolŋu qualifications which he learnt from his elders and from the land. He says he went to school in the bush. As the lecturer now, the djirrakay's demeanour is serious, and he is clearly intent on passing on information he believes is important. He speaks for a short time and then directs Bakamana (the Principal) to set out what he is saying on the blackboard. As he talks, a diagram emerges with several columns. The lecturer reads it back, perfectly, word for word. The younger students I am sitting with whisper how clever he is, look he has just now taught himself to read. I see that he is unfolding relationships out into the workshop but at a level way beyond my comprehension. An older woman, known for her Yolŋu expertise and knowledge, questions something on the board. After some discussion amongst the older people in the room he agrees with her and directs the scribe to change a name and then add another. None of the younger teachers interact in the discussion but they write everything down. I could not recognise any of the categories on the board.

An excerpt from Dr. Y's journal writing (1989) about the same session outlines his full understanding of what the *djirrikay's* lecture was unfolding:

> Monday Day 1
>
> Our first task was to arrange for community members to come up to the school and take part in the informing us and the children in the types of gurrut̲u knowledge that exist in to-day's social order. Three dil̲ak (elders) members talked and laid out a particular order in which students should be grouped and taught. Dula outlined the importance of the gurrut̲u system and how the new program should enhance the different clan group's understanding of one another.

> We mapped out the structure of the YOTHU-YINDI (mother child) structure and came out with a very comprehensive diagram which showed the Yirritja clans their märi bäpurru (mother's mother's clan) or milmarra, and who they should interact with...
>
> Yolngu life is divided into two moieties: Dhuwa and Yirritja.

This initial Galtha workshop was for a week's duration. On the third day of the workshop, I was needed to support the teachers in the Early Childhood section which was running its own Galtha program suited to the level of the children. I found myself managing the learning there and could follow the activities and interact in an intelligent way. So, after five years of learning about Yolŋu gurrut̲u, I found I had made the third grade, as my rote-learned tricks were not tested at that level.

Below is the final curriculum map, the written product of our endeavours. It is set out in the Garma Living Maths Curriculum (2014) printed at Yirrkala Literature Production Centre (Fig. 20.1).

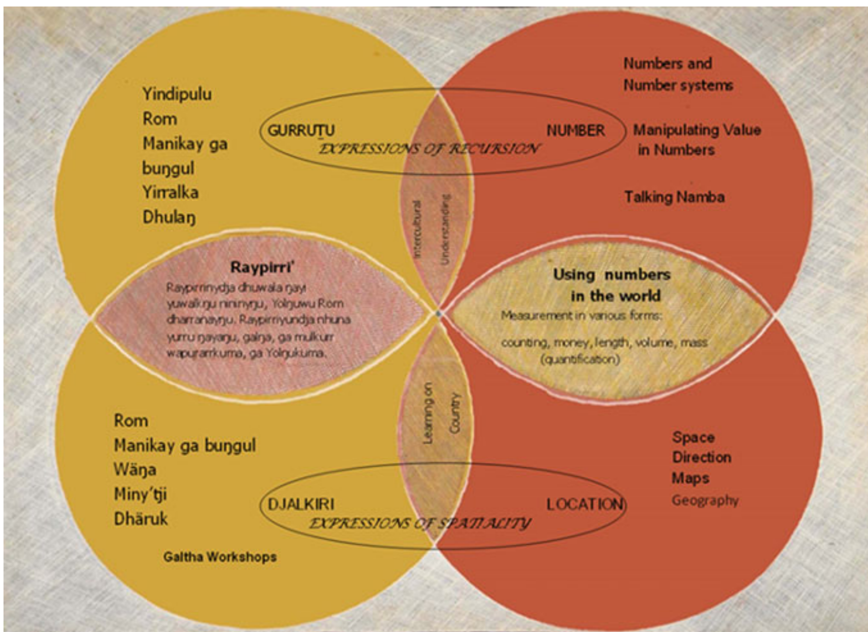

Fig. 20.1 Curriculum map, Garma living maths curriculum (2014), Yirrkala

Stephen Harris Again

Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, Stephen was in touch regularly taking note of the educational work in progress. Applying his own theory of culture domain separation, he tried to fit it in with the Ganma approach and perhaps saw the complexity of the two different knowledge systems coming together, as evidenced here:

> The Yolngu writers, Yunupingu (1988) and Wunungmurra (1989) seem to support both a culture separation approach and a culture bridging approach. There are two domains of activity, but Yolngu control of ideas and agenda in the Yolngu domain is promoting Yolngu control of ideas and agenda in the whole school (1990, p. 52).

The last time I remember meeting with Stephen was in 1989 at the school and there was a debate about culture and domain separation. Bakamana had been the principal for two years at this stage, and he used a Yolŋu way of showing how he saw bothways education. He was at this stage already the co-leader of the Yothu Yindi band and he brought a rough-cut video clip of the band into our Learning Together session. We watched the clip and were then asked to work in small groups to decode the Yolŋu elements of the clip from the Balanda elements. It proved to be an impossible task as the music was so intertwined with elements from both traditions. We could all agree that it produced a very powerful message about Yolŋu people taking on the music world with their own languages, song and musical traditions, using western instruments and rock and roll traditions to great effect.

In conclusion, Stephen's work was important in opening a space for communities to make their own pathway, presenting schools with ideas like informal vs. formal learning, domain separation for language teaching, and then cultural domain separation. It appeared to many participants in the Ganma Maths Research that a dichotomous relationship did not really make sense as we were all living in a contemporary Yolŋu community where western ideas and technology were being used in ways that were quite distinctly Yolŋu. Stephen's ideas however provided platforms for much debate and his ability to continue his advocacy for the Aboriginal bothways curriculum is remembered and respected today.

Many precious relationships were built during this journey. The educational work we were a part of is a reflection of the much wider struggle on the part of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to ensure the integrity and continuance of Indigenous ways of being in the overwhelmingly monocultural world of white Australia. In the process there have been puzzles, confusion, heartbreak, joy, and much learning on my part, much of it about the ways my own cultural world functions and the ways education and government forces continue to refuse to deal with Indigenous Australians in a respectful and equitable way.

Yirrkala School staff and community members have continued the Garma and Galtha curriculum journey with strength and an incredible ability to keep a focused approach, despite many attempts by the NT Education Department to undermine their efforts (Marika, 1998) and to mandate inappropriate curriculum directives. In 2005 Yirrkala School celebrated its first Year 12 graduates albeit without the prized Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score. Since 2005 Yirrkala students

have continued to graduate from Year 12 with a Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training award. Finally, in 2020 eight students graduated with the NTCET, and in a first-time achievement for the school, four students with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR score), the first in an Aboriginal community school in the Northern Territory. To readers not involved in remote area education it may seem a very long time to achieve such a small success, but considering the complex intercultural processes involved, the appalling health issues facing NT residents in remote areas, chronic underfunding of remote schools, and the often-active resistance from the Northern Territory government and Education bureaucracy, we are extremely proud of that achievement.

I know that Dr. Stephen Harris, Mr. W. Wunuŋmurra, Dr. Yunupiŋu, Dr. Marika, and Ms Ŋurruwutthun, for whom this article was written, would also feel that we are still on the track of real educational success for Yolŋu students at Yirrkala and in the Laynhapuy Homelands.

Yaka gana (‘always together’).

Endnotes

1. In particular, this chapter is dedicated to four leaders in the educational work we did—Dr. R. Marika, Ms. N. Ŋurruwutthun, Mr. W. Wunuŋmurra and Dr. M. Yunupiŋu: all sadly deceased long before their time.
2. The Yirrkala Action Group sent this brief message about their experiences of working with Stephen Harris after reading a draft of this chapter on 22 June 2021: ‘The Action Group did approve for you and Brian to go ahead and finish this book. We strongly did say his [Stephen Harris’s] time with Yirrkala school was productive and the contribution he made with this school’.

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Chapter 21
Stephen Harris and the Domain Separation Debate

Brian Clive Devlin and Paul Black

Abstract Domain separation was one of the strategies advocated by Stephen Harris. While some have seen merit in this approach, others have contested it. This article reviews the debate in the context of Aboriginal bilingual education in the Northern Territory. As the second author had participated in that debate, his reflections have been included.

Keywords Stephen Harris · Domain separation · Bilingual education · Northern Territory · Cultural difference · Language shift · Both-ways philosophy · Two-way education

Introduction

Two-way Aboriginal schooling (Harris, 1990) provoked some acrimonious responses in the decade following its publication, although some bitterness lingered well beyond that (see, e.g., Gilbey, 2014, p. 149). Some of the issues raised in this book had been debated in the decade before as well; in particular, domain separation, a topic that will be prominent in our discussion here. Our intention in revisiting some of these contested issues is not to inflame tensions, take sides, or even to arrive at a final judgement. Rather, to the best of our ability, we intend to set the debate in its context and to gauge its significance.

It might be worth noting here that the cover of the 1990 book showed an empty, two-lane road. Beside it, superimposed over a road sign, were the words, 'Two Way Aboriginal Schooling', along with two blue arrows: one pointing up and the other down. We were not surprised to find out recently that Stephen Harris had been 'pretty devastated' when he received the proofs from the graphic designer, for the cover misleadingly suggested that 'two-way' meant going in opposite directions, rather than in parallel. Our informant added, 'I was surprised he didn't insist the

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cover design be changed' (Mary-Anne Gale, personal communication, 7 October 2021).

Three years earlier, an Indigenous leader had sketched a very different model of what a 'two-way' school curriculum might look like (Wunungmurra, 1997). In particular, Wunuŋmurra's two-way model implied 'an exchange of knowledge' where 'both sides learn from each other' (1997, p. 12). The result of 'negotiating meanings', Wunuŋmurra hoped, would be a 'common negotiated ground' (*djalkirra*). The key components of this model are indicated in Fig. 21.1.

We begin by sketching a fairly broad picture, starting with some earlier publications (Harris, 1975; McConvell, 1982, 1984), and the insights of scholars in fields such as anthropology (Stanner) and the sociology of language (Fishman, 1987), before summarising the particular claims in Harris (1990) that were contested. Second, we consider some of the positions in the ensuing debate. Since much has been written already about such notions as domains, cultural difference, language shift, both-ways philosophy, and two-way education, we will endeavour to cover

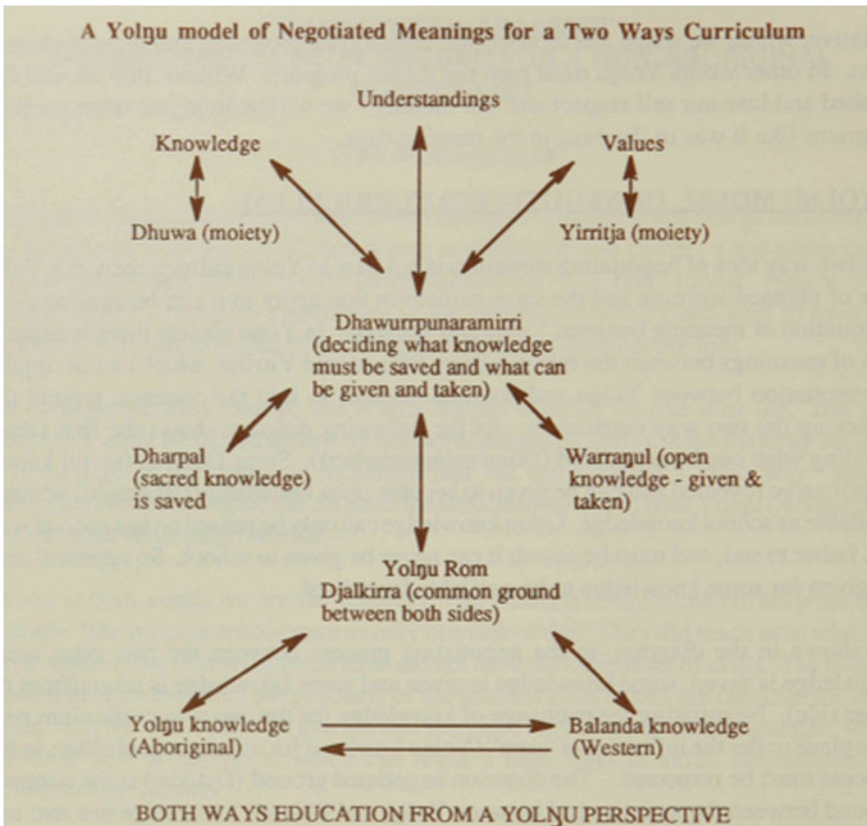

Fig. 21.1 The two-way model of negotiating meanings

these topics succinctly. For the convenience of readers though, each has also been defined in the glossary at the back of the book.

In writing this chapter we had hoped to co-author it with Patrick McConvell, who was a major contributor to the debate on domain separation at the time. While we have benefited from his comments, ultimately health issues prevented him from fully contributing to this chapter. Accordingly, we can only hope we have managed to represent his positions fairly and adequately.

Two Key Intellectual Influences on Harris (1990): Stanner and Fishman

While Christie (2021) has very usefully sketched some of the important local influences on Harris's thinking before 1990, such as the *Free to decide* document written by Jim Downing (United Church in North Australia, 1974) and the ideas of Mitsuru Shimpo, who worked with Stephen and Joy Harris over eight months in 1978, we wish to draw attention to the work of other scholars which also had a major bearing on Harris's thinking, particularly with respect to *domain separation* and *cultural differences*.

While still conducting research on Milingimbi as a doctoral candidate, Harris wrote an article that explored some theoretical issues associated with bilingual schooling (Harris, 1975). After discussing, then dismissing, the transfer approach, he argued that the maintenance model was better, for reasons to do with 'political ethics and long term cultural identity' (Harris, 1975, p. 4). As he explained it, 'A transfer bilingual education model is one that utilises the home culture and first language of the child merely as an affective emotional and linguistic *bridge* to the school culture and language of the dominant society' (Harris, 1975, p. 4).

However, Harris argued that in order to implement the preferred maintenance model, 'the idea of language domains' was needed, since it was a tool that was both 'practical and essential' (1975, p. 9). Acknowledging Fishman (1968, 1971) as his source, he explained that 'basically the idea in domain theory is that language use varies along three criteria: person, topic and place' (1975, pp. 7–8). As Black (1990) put it later, domain theory arose from the view that people could only continue to maintain two languages, such as English and an Aboriginal language, if they used them for different purposes, functions (or domains) in the community (Fishman, 1987, p. 4; Paulston, 1986, p. 501) and, in that way, develop 'safely stabilized spheres exclusively for the endangered language' (Fishman, 1987, pp. 14–15). Harris later pointed out that Eduardo Hernadez-Chaves, an experienced educator and sociolinguist, had claimed in 1974 that 'the use of language domains in bilingual schooling is the most powerful curriculum design towards maintenance of the minority language' (cited in Harris, 1977, p. 130).

Harris noted that the bilingual-bicultural program for Navajo students at Rock Point had been designed using a model of

> co-ordinate bilingualism, that is, usage of the two languages in separate domains...the two criteria of 'topic' and 'person' mutually support domain usage; that is, Navajo teachers teach some subjects in Navajo and English teachers teach other subjects in English. (Harris, 1975, p. 9)

It was the view of some scholars (e.g., Reyhner, 1993) that the Rock Point model had been successful. Harris's discussion about the role of domains in supporting the maintenance model concluded with this observation about rethinking the control of Aboriginal schools:

> …the vernacular on its own cannot overcome inadequacies in curriculum design and teacher attitudes and administrative ways of doing things that are still basically oriented to monocultural English, Western and technological priorities. In the first analysis, if the control over the planning of the school life (in terms of what language is used, what the curriculum plan is and who does the teaching) is in the hands of monolingual and monocultural representatives of the dominant society, the use of the vernacular language in primary school education will never amount to more than a powerful veneer. (Harris, 1977, p. 134)

By the mid-1980s domain separation theory had been taken up officially in the Northern Territory. For example, the *1985 English/Language Core Curriculum for Aboriginal Bilingual Schools T-7* stated that:

> Children need to think about the use of each language in separate domains as a means of promoting language maintenance, or even survival. It should be noted that much of this work depends on consciousness raising with Aboriginal staff—e.g. through tape recordings of classroom usage and code mixing. (Northern Territory Department of Education 1985, p. 89)

In the 1980s several articles in the *NT Bilingual Education Newsletter* also advocated domain separation (e.g., Graham, 1983). However, that newsletter did not simply engage in one-sided advocacy, as alternative views were considered. For example, a critical article under the heading 'Domain and domination' was published in 1984. It warned that 'to insist on "purity" and strict separation of languages into domains is to cut off a real avenue of expressiveness for the children' (McConvell, 1984, p.50). McConvell noted that 'functional separation, or strict domains for the two languages' was an idea that was 'quite current in bilingual education circles at the moment' (1984, p.49). As an indicator of this, he cited Barbara Sayers, who had suggested in 1983 that a traditional language such as Anindilyakwa should be 'left for family life and traditional interest' and that, when teaching subjects such as mathematics, English terms should be used 'unless there is community desire to develop vernacular terminology' (Sayers 1983, cited in McConvell, 1984, p. 49). In a subsequent paper, McConvell (1985) developed his position further, dealing also with a contentious issue of code-switching, which was considered to be a violation of domain separation.

The first paragraph in Harris (1990) anticipated a school structure that would allow 'the new skills learned from another culture' to be 'added to a person's primary cultural makeup, rather than displace it' (Harris, 1990, p. 1). The sociocultural imperative for this was derived from Stanner (1979, p. 60), who was strongly influenced by what he had observed at Port Keats: 'The Aborigines are widely in an obscure

struggle with us…the essence of their struggle is to go their own way' (cited in Harris, 1990, p. 1). It underpinned the claim in Harris (1990, p. 21) that remote Indigenous and Western culture were fundamentally different. This struggle, and the perceived need to juggle two social worlds, would become a preoccupation of the 1990 book:

> The struggle against cultural absorption, the felt need of Aborigines to live in two social worlds, and the search for a design of a bicultural school which allows the learning of a second culture without destroying or demeaning the first, are the interests of this book. (Harris, 1990, p. 1)

Since Stanner's notions of 'struggle' and 'unrelated components' had a crucial influence on Harris (1990), it might be helpful to elucidate them a little with reference to *The Dreaming & Other Essays*, which was reissued in 2010 with an introduction by Robert Manne. This accessible publication gathered together some of the most memorable pieces penned by W.E.H. Stanner, who was Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the Australian National University in Canberra from 1964 to 1970.

In Stanner's view Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have similar abilities; they just use them in different ways. Aboriginal people struggled to achieve something beyond what 'European interests' had in mind or could readily understand. The result was 'a dusty encounter in which nothing is yet particularly clear'. This 'struggle' was not violent. Rather, it referred to an encounter between two peoples who failed to comprehend each other properly. In that sense it is 'an obscure struggle', partly fueled on one side by 'their wish to go their own way'. The result could sometimes be sensed as 'two unrelated compartments of Australian life'. Despite their widespread desire for 'a decent union of their lives with ours', Aboriginal people clearly wished to 'preserve their own identity' and practise 'a new way of life', one that had 'the imprint of their own ideas'. Nonetheless, while it was important to acknowledge the 'true distinctiveness of the Aborigines', Stanner was determined to avoid strengthening the 'perverse' effect of work by Spencer and Gillen (1899), which had 'deepened the plight of the Aborigines by strengthening the impression of their singularity'.

Two-Way Schooling

Ideas which Harris gleaned from Stanner were extended, sometimes radically, in *Two-way Aboriginal schooling*. For example, this sociocultural generalisation was proposed:

> The nature and degree of difference between Aboriginal and European culture is so great that the only honest conclusion we can arrive at is that they are largely incompatible. The two cultures are antithetic—consisting of more opposites than similarities. They are warring against each other at their foundations. Recognising and accepting the truth of the term incompatible was for me in this study the point of theoretical liberation and the starting point for a more effective educational theory to be applied in Aboriginal schools. (Harris, 1990, p. 9)

Though this sociocultural framing was based on Stanner, Harris derived his 'starting point for a more effective educational theory' from Fishman (1980, 1983, 1985, 1987). In Fishman's view intergenerational transmission was key to the maintenance of a language, for if children did not learn a language as they were growing up, there was little chance that they in turn would be able to pass it on to their children. However, in addition to intergenerational transmission, what also mattered were societal and institutional choices. Fishman referred to the social spaces in which languages are used as 'domains of use'. In each domain a configuration of participants, location, and topic is associated with a particular language.

Given his earlier statements on the subject (Harris, 1975, 1977), it was not surprising that, in Harris (1990), curriculum planning in Aboriginal schools would be conceived around *domain separation*, but there was now a crucial difference. Domain separation no longer referred to different teachers being responsible for teaching particular subjects in different languages at different times (Harris, 1975). What was now meant by the theory was 'separating the school into two-semi-autonomous culture domains, and staffing those domains with their respective specialists' (Harris, 1990, p. 121). This was not only a dramatic restatement of the earlier position, but it was one that was now presented as 'the only choice' (Harris, 1990, p. 63). Similarly, an early concern about who controls schooling (in Harris, 1977) had given way to the more strongly worded contention that 'putting control of schooling into the hands of Aboriginal parents is crucial' (Harris, 1990, p. 121).

The 1990 book endorsed the principle that people should have the opportunity to determine their own future—a position advocated by Paolo Friere, Abraham Lincoln, and Julius Nyrere (p. 154). For that to be achieved, it was argued, a 'different type of bilingual education' was needed, a compartmentalised one, which would allow children a choice; for example, 'the only children who should attend the Western domain would be those whose parents specifically wanted them to' (Harris, 1990, p. 16).

Rethinking Domain Theory

Two fellow staff members at the Northern Territory University were among the first to critique the 1990 book: Dr Paul Black, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the time, and Dr Patrick McConvell, then Senior Lecturer in Anthropology. Their approaches were different: Black (1990) was responding as much to the Department of Education views of domain separation in the 1980s as to a pre-print draft of Harris (1990). Writing in the Batchelor College journal *Ngoonjook*, he aimed to tease out ideas of value for educators, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and to save the notion of 'domain' by suggesting one way in which it could be retrieved. McConvell (1991), in a more hard-hitting critique, drew attention to what he saw as fundamental flaws in domain theory.

Black (1990) did not take a position on the relative roles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Indigenous education, but he published his views in the journal

of Batchelor College—now the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE)—to make them more available to Indigenous educators. Black's main concern was how to prevent English from taking over from the remaining Aboriginal languages, and how domain separation might best be used to support this.

Black (1990) saw problems with how domain theory tended to be interpreted in the Indigenous school context. One problem was the artificiality of the domains being proposed for schools, such as having children use English when they sat on one mat but their own language when they sat on another. Harris (1990) actually proposed that 'some rules for language usage can usefully be adopted in schools which might be naive outside the classroom'.

Black (1990) could not see how this would be helpful, but it may have related to a second, more serious problem, namely a focus on maintaining strict domain separation rather than promoting the use of the Indigenous language. For example, Harris (1981, p. 17) had expressed concern about how domain separation in some communities was being disrupted by the increasing use of the local Aboriginal language in previously English domains, such as the store, bank, hospital, and garage. Meanwhile, Sayers (1982, p. 16) took the position that:

> ...unless there is community desire to develop vernacular terminology,.. it would be better if English terms were used and the vernacular left for family life and traditional interest. This could lead to stable bilingualism, a much more realistic goal than having Aborigines able to talk about anything under the sun in both languages...

Domain separation was thus emphasised even at the expense of the use of the Indigenous language. Black (1990) noted that Schiffman (1987) had found that limiting the topical domains of the threatened language actually promoted the demise of German in communities in the United States. Accordingly, Black preferred McConvell's (1984, p. 51) proposal that:

> To maintain the vernacular it is not enough to build a wall against English and put the vernacular inside a 'reserve'. The vernacular could grow in the hands of Aboriginal people themselves, to challenge the domination of English not in everything, but in situations the people themselves feel capable... This is the way that the 'balance' between languages and cultures can be maintained.

Fishman (1987, pp. 14–15) later expressed a similar view:

> Language policy on behalf of endangered languages must assure the intimate vernacular functions first, and, if possible, go on from there, slowly building outward from the primary to the secondary institutions of intergenerational mother tongue continuity. The entry-level work sphere is a must; the more advanced work sphere is a maybe. Diglossia is a must (with safely stabilized spheres exclusively for the endangered language); monolingual economic autonomy and political independence are maybes. Widespread reconquest of the vernacular intimacy functions is a must; language spread into the higher reaches of power and modernity is a maybe.

Black (1990) accordingly proposed an alternative way of looking at the relationship between domains and language maintenance that he called 'one-way domain restriction':

> To promote the maintenance of one of the languages in a bilingual situation, we should try to make sure that the language is the only one used for enough important purposes (or 'in enough important domains') to make it worthwhile for younger generations to continue to learn.
>
> I will call this as the 'one-way domain restriction' position because it... would restrict only the domains of English in a bilingual situation. That is, I propose that it is enough to protect the Aboriginal language from English, since English is not really in danger of dying out, not even in Aboriginal communities.

At the same time, Black (1990) saw the best application of domain theory to be in terms of person, rather than such things as topic, since it seemed entirely natural and useful for people to use their own language with other speakers of that language and English with speakers of English.

However, a complicating factor was code-switching, which Black (1993) addressed in a second paper. Harris (1990, p. 70) had noted that:

> advisors to the Northern Territory Aboriginal bilingual program between 1980-1985 became concerned about language mixing when they observed some of the more sophisticated Aboriginal teachers, apparently unconsciously, using a mixture of their first language and English with children in class.

These advisors worried that such mixing could promote the demise of the Indigenous language (Harris, 1990, p. 71) because it represented 'the overlap of two languages in one domain, which is assumed to be a sign of unstable bilingualism' (p. 74). Black (1993) questioned whether such code 'mixing' actually violated domain separation. In view of Scotton's (1986, pp. 412–413) suggestion that it was a means of identifying with both languages and cultures, stemming from positive feelings about bilingual and bicultural identity, one might view it as a distinct language variety rather than a mixture of two. At the same time, as 'a symptom of a change from a society that treasures its traditions to one that values its bilingualism and biculturalism' (Scotton, 1986, p. 413), it could conceivably foreshadow the loss of the Indigenous language. However, it was not clear that one could actually address the fundamental reasons for change by merely attending to its symptoms.

McConvell (1991) also proposed an alternative perspective. He began by contrasting the views of Pincher Nyurrmiyarri, a 'great Gurindji thinker and land rights activist' with those of 'Stephen Harris… a white man who is engaged in the same struggle for Aboriginal equality and cultural maintenance through a changed education system'. Although both thinkers wanted 'more power for the Aboriginal community in making educational decisions' (McConvell, 1991, p.13), it was unlikely, McConvell thought, that Pincher would have endorsed the key spatial metaphors that were used in Harris (1990), such as 'culture domain separation' (pp. 11, 14, 63), or 'compartmentalisation' (pp. 17, 63). It should be noted that McConvell (1982) had earlier outlined the key elements of Pincher's vision, and these had also been faithfully summarised by Harris (1990, p. 13).

Pincher's way of framing a two-way school was acknowledged by Harris (1990), in this way: 'A school should reflect a spirit of exchange between the European Australians and Aborigines involved, in terms of equal power relations. There should

be a two-way flow in reciprocity and recognition of equality; a two-way exchange of knowledge' (McConvell, 1982, pp. 61–62, cited in Harris, 1990, p. 13). However, although Harris was quite aware of these metaphors of flow, reciprocity and exchange, he resisted using them in the 1990 book, as appealing as they may have seemed, because 'teachers and students need to know in which of the two ways they are engaged in at all times, otherwise too many grey areas and confusions will eventuate and lack of direction and teacher ambivalence will set in' (Harris, 1990, p. 14). In other words, Harris wanted teachers and students to be clear about which domain they were operating in.

McConvell (1991) took issue with the domain separation and compartmentalisation ideas that were said by Harris to be less confusing alternatives, and not simply because such spatial metaphors or rhetorical devices were thought to be divisive. In his view they stemmed from an idealised, romanticised and ultimately polarising 'Manichean vision' which underlay 'much of the book and the work of other cultural domain separatists in Aboriginal education' (McConvell, 1991, p. 14). The danger of such an ideology, he asserted, is that it 'can easily lead to stereotyping' (McConvell, 1991, p. 14). Not only that, too much focus on differing world views—echoing 'the neo-Whorfian ideas of Margaret Bain, Michael Christie and others on the relationship between culture, thought and language'—could lead attention away from 'the conflicts between blacks and whites over control of land, control of family members and other urgent sociopolitical questions' (McConvell, 1991, p. 14). However, McConvell was gracious enough to acknowledge that 'the point is here not so much whether Harris is "right" or I am, but that both of our viewpoints are couched in terms imposed by a Western discourse about non-Western cultures' (McConvell, 1991, p. 21). A better starting point, he believed, was to make use of metaphors proposed by Indigenous people themselves. One of these was *ganma*, which refers to the mixing of freshwater and saltwater (Muller, 2012).

Willis (1996) critiqued *Two-way Aboriginal schooling*: *education and cultural survival* from the perspective of 'post-structuralist understandings of discourse'. One of the aims of her critique was to demonstrate that Harris (1990) set out 'to perpetuate 'traditional' Aboriginal culture and identity'. However, this was not really the position argued by Harris, who went to some lengths to emphasise that.

> The Aboriginal domain has different priorities—to strengthen Aboriginal identity and to maintain distinctively Aboriginal ways of doing, feeling, learning and believing, and to 'hold' Aboriginal knowledge. This domain does not attempt to freeze Aboriginal culture in the past. All live cultures are changing and adapting, but it is crucial that those undergoing such change have a large part in directing that change. (Harris, 1990, p. 149)

McConaghy (2000) also took issue with Harris for emphasising cultural differences rather than connectedness and common ground (Wunungmurra, 1988). In her view, these dualisms in Harris (2000) were examples of problematic 'cultural incommensurability theory', for they drew on anthropology and objectivist science to draw attention to irreconcilable differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture, such as contrasting communication styles, and ways of thinking (McConaghy 2000, p. 100).

Concluding Reflections

Reflecting on the preceding, Black notes that it involves two distinct issues, namely what might be referred to as Indigenous self-determination as well as the issue of domain separation that he was concerned with. While he supports the former in principle, he also sees it as a vexed and complicated issue that he is not prepared to deal with as a linguist. After all, every person is limited by laws and circumstances in what they can do with their lives, and he could only hope that such things will not interfere with Indigenous aspirations.

Applying domain separation in schools has the potential for doing that unless it is an Indigenous initiative, but this seems largely a dead issue in Northern Territory schools. The question of whether domain separation can support language maintenance remains a theoretical issue, but not one that seems to have attracted much attention outside the Northern Territory. A search on the internet turned up one paper that found that immigrant parents in Sydney showed evidence of domain separation, with a greater tendency towards the use of and preference for the mother tongue in intimate interactions, as opposed to the public domain, where the tendency to use English was higher, but that this did not apply to their children (Tannenbaum, 2003). Another paper proposed that 'clear separation of languages in dual language instruction models is seen as a way of perpetuating the social stratification and marginalization of language minority students' (Leverenz, 2016, p. 2).

McConvell (1982) explained why he favoured the phrase 'two-way school', rather than 'bilingual' or 'bilingual/bicultural school'. One reason is that it was a less complicated, more accessible, and not so Latinate expression borrowed from Aboriginal English. Another was that the term 'bilingual school' had taken on a restrictive meaning in the Northern Territory.

Harris acknowledged the contribution that McConvell (1982) and Pincher Nyurrmiyarri had made in proposing that two-way schooling should fairly represent Aboriginal and Western culture, allow for reciprocity and two-way flow, and re-establish a healthy relationship between younger and older Aboriginal generations. He also pointed out (1990, p.12) that the notion of a two-way or both-ways school had been taken up by several Yolŋu educators and Yipirinya School elders.

Just as McConvell (1982) criticised NT Education Department policy for making 'no reference to community input in language planning and structure of programs in the primary grades', Harris (1990) repeatedly stressed the importance of community-based control of planning in the Aboriginal domain. He observed that 'since 1987 the mood expressed by Aboriginal people about schooling at various conferences and meetings around the country is that they want to keep their languages and they want control of their schools' (1990, p. 149).

As McConvell noted (1991, p.18), strict domain separation was not always advocated in Harris (1990). Indeed, there was a willingness to countenance 'flexible domain separation' (1990, p.70), to concede that there were inadequacies in the theory (1990, p.75), and to avoid narrowing the Aboriginal language domain (1990, p.79). Yet, there was one key point of difference between Harris and McConvell that was

never bridged. Harris favoured an idea that had been developed by German sociolinguists in the 1930s; namely, that language choices made by bilingual speakers were best explained with reference to domains, and that such a theory was the best model for developing a maintenance model of bilingualism. McConvell (1991, p. 19). argued instead that the newer field of interactionist sociolinguistics held more promise:

> In the interactionist view, people use different languages because they express social meanings by their choice of language; people in and around bilingual conversations make inferences from language of choice about the aspects of social identity of participants that are being stressed and about...linguistic constraints, as specific interpretations of the words used. This is not a variety of theory which is about probabilistic determination of language behaviour by fixed frameworks. It is theory of pragmatics of how people read off messages from combinations of language and other contextual clues.

McConvell was in no doubt that that ‘Aboriginal language and cultural maintenance is not something that will “just happen” if left to informal practices outside of school or other institutions’ (1991, p. 22). Harris (1990) was in complete agreement, even if his vision of how two-way schools should be formally arranged did not win strong support from other scholars such as McConvell and Black.

McConvell (personal communication) reports that his views on domains and related issues have only become stronger. He was not impressed by Fishman’s work because it did not fit the patterns he saw in code-switching and mixed languages in contemporary Indigenous communities and elsewhere. He sees domain separation and the imposition of other educational policies as appealing to researchers and educators with strongly prescriptive backgrounds, and considers it no accident that these prescriptive practices are usually promoted by members of the dominating culture, and do not align with the views or practices of many Indigenous or other bilingual people. McConvell tried to balance the picture by showing how a great deal of research on code-switching has pointed out its positive value in bilingual and multilingual communities.

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Chapter 22
The Enduring Voice of Harris in NT Aboriginal Education Policy Debates: Comments from an Aboriginal Scholar and Former Student

Gary Fry

Abstract I was a student of Stephen Harris during the late 1980s. I am fortunate to have experienced a lecturer and researcher of Stephen's calibre. He was a person who pushed back against the colonisers' account of my Aboriginal family and the many other people whose lives were dramatically and negatively affected by simply being 'different' in a world of Western imperialism. This chapter is dedicated to him, in acknowledgement of his legacy. It has been conveyed through the voice of an NT Aboriginal, critical race theorist. The ideals that Harris stood for remain centred, unresponded, unresolved and unstable within policy debates concerning NT Aboriginal education. Australia's official policy environment targeting NT Aboriginal families, particularly those living traditionally oriented lives in remote communities, has marginalised Aboriginal children. This policy environment has prevented Aboriginal children from gaining a good quality education, as Australia's National Assessment program (NAP) has continued to remind us since 2008. For Stephen, 'quality' was achieved by succeeding in a broader world of Western capitalism through an Aboriginal identity, rather than despite it. This key existential principle is discussed in this chapter, and I show why Harris's ideals, which are punctuated throughout my discussion, remain relevant today. They are in fact more relevant than ever, particularly given that Australia's education system still grapples with a pattern of unsustainable schooling performance, layered by wealth and racial identity.

Keywords Critical race theory · Indigeneity · Racism · Classism · Capitalism · Neocolonialism · Neoliberalism

Introduction

It was during the late 1980s that Stephen Harris became known to me through his lecturing roles at the Northern Territory University (later Charles Darwin University), when I was doing my undergraduate teacher training. I remember Stephen

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well, because for me he was one of the very first of a relatively few 'white' voices who strongly valued Aboriginal identities. He also demonstrated, from his earliest research, why Aboriginal existentialism needed to be tailored into the matrix of education policy and service modelling (Harris, 1977). His was not a romanticised leftist agenda, built on the coattails of successive Australian governments' attempts to chart a moral way forward from a destructive history of colonisation toward a path of democracy predicated on equality of opportunity for First Nations peoples to progress. Rather, the work of Stephen Harris was predicated on social justice that reinforced identities, as did the introduction of bilingual education in the early 1970s (Fry, 2020).

For the author, an Aboriginal man from Katherine in the Northern Territory (NT), Stephen was a humanitarian person who had a deep understanding of the fundamental role that identity plays in every facet of life. Stephen understood that this needed to be at the core of Aboriginal children's schooling, where achievement occurs through identity, particularly through Aboriginal languages and culture. In this chapter I offer an academic response to Harris, because for me this is the way to honour his contributions to the academy, particularly through showing why his ideas are still with us all today and will remain so into the future. In this chapter his voice harmonises with mine, and with the hundreds of thousands of Indigenous voices across Australia, all of which flow into contemporary education debates that Devlin (2011, p. 271) has highlighted as 'unresolved and unstable'.

In the following discussion I outline this position in two sections. The first section describes the enduring nature of the problem: one that holds direct relevance to the linguistic and identity issues highlighted by Harris concerning First Nations peoples' struggles in the education system. In this section I describe how these issues sit within broader Australian society struggling with a deepening level of social inequality. Social inequality in Australia has been accelerating since the early 1990s as a result of increased financial market deregulation and its monopoly over education policy architecture (Davidson, Saunders, & Phillips, 2018). In this discussion I outline several key policy actions leading up to 2015, because it is at this point, I argue, that the agenda was consolidated in the present, highly problematic paradigm framework, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015* (Education Council, 2015), which has played an ideological role in stagnating NT remote Aboriginal education performance. It has problematised identity as an 'ingredient' in achieving success in a western world, but through a 'whitened' lens, a perspective that Harris argued strongly against (Harris, 1993).

My story picks up from the early 1990s, which marks a significant ideological departure in education policy setting in the NT. For me, this period signalled significant shifts in the design and politicisation of the Australian education system, and in the NT context, movement away from the foundational work of Harris and many like-minded others. There was a steep rise in the politicisation of Indigeneity against a background of increasing inequality across non-Indigenous Australia (Keddie et al., 2013; Neville et al., 2015). For this Aboriginal researcher, such shifts have since been further enmeshed within the weaponised intersections of neocolonialism and neoliberalism. As a result, education policy has become anchored in ambiguity and reduced

performance, which O'Dowd (2009, p. 813) described as an 'ideological abyss'. Policy distortions in education are a by-product of a larger social and economic policy malaise, driven in part, in the NT context, by its unique demography, which has a high proportion of Indigenous people, many of whom are spread across remote settlements.

In the second section I demonstrate that in order for the entrenched patterns of NT Aboriginal schooling to improve, particularly in NT remote communities, Aboriginal identities, voices and controls are, and will always remain, the key cornerstones in remote education and community development (Fry, 2020). I use some practical examples, outlining the stories of the Gunbalanya and Yirrkala remote Aboriginal schools, which are celebrated sites of success due to many linked layers of language and identity. Most notably, each community site has taken away control of its education from the government, and into the world of an NT Aboriginal political economy, where education has increased relevance in the lives of those it serves (Fry, 2020). Indigeneity has long been subjected to the contortions of labelling and changing definitions. For example, McCorquodale (1986) identified that since 'white' settlement there had been at least sixty-seven classifications and definitions of what being Indigenous meant, contributing to ambiguity and arbitrary treatment within legal debates. This finding was based on the analysis of 700 separate pieces of legislation dealing with First Nations families. However, as I show in this second section, Indigeneity and its existential features has always remained a key foundation in NT remote Aboriginal children's education experience, irrespective of how privileged policy actors have sought to define its worth or role.

The Intersectionality of Race and Wealth Inequality Within NT Remote Aboriginal Education Design and Performance

As other contributors to this book also have mentioned, the story of Harris and his relationship with the NT Indigenous education context emerged soon after a Federal Labor government in 1973 commenced pilot bilingual programs that included local languages and cultural content. The initial remote communities in the initial program included Angurugu, Areyonga, Hermannsburg, Milingimbi and Warruwi (Devlin, 2009). The intent was to educate remote Aboriginal children through a staged language model where instruction for the first four to five years of schooling was in the vernacular, moving to 50 per cent English by Year 4 (Hughes, 2008). However, this 'staircase' model was troubled early on, at least from the political perspective of government. For example, the *Second Progress Report on the Bilingual Education Program in Schools in the NT* highlighted difficulties in retaining trained staff, while a second issue concerned the choice of language used (Department of Education Northern Territory Division, 1974), given that the contrived development of NT remote Aboriginal communities had pooled language groups, producing difficulties in bridging the diversity thereby created (Austin-Broos, 2011; Moran, 2010;

Tatz, 2009). These early challenges signalled that bilingual education, its underpinning language and identity maintenance models and their variants (Harris, 1993)—as delivered through school services—were under government scrutiny from the point of inception until its demise as an officially sponsored policy program in 1997 (Collins & Lea, 1999). Since this time, Aboriginal education policy and service design have languished within an ideological vacuum that continues to dislocate understandings around how Indigeneity should or could be considered a viable option for remote families, particularly in resolving the problem of deepening schooling underperformance across the NT (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017), which continues to deepen to the present.

As the Australian economy was moving into economic recession in the late 1980s, educational scrutiny intensified. This subsequently impacted on every corner of Australia's education policy design and service provision (Fry, 2020). The education sector was seen to be complicit in producing the recession (1990–1991), and this ultimately led to a raft of reforms, including three major structural shifts in the policy and service design of Australian schools. This commenced with the decentralisation of the schooling system from 1991, when schools became self-managing entities, functioning as *Learning organisations,* capable of renewing and adapting to uncertainty and change through transformational leadership based on dialectic teamwork (Copland, 2003; Stoll and Fink, 2001). However, and against such ideals, decentralisation of the Australian schooling system in the early 1990s involved shifts toward site-specific local controls and accountability, whilst simultaneously assigning increased control to centralised education departments (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007).

The second major policy reforms emerged after 1995, when public schools and their education bureaucracies adopted corporatised modelling in an effort to produce increased efficiencies in the way schools were managed, given the very real financial costs associated with resource wastage and poor strategic modelling (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003). Then, following from the first decade of 2000 onwards, the third set of policy reforms unfolded, which involved moves toward standardising the organisational structures of schools and their workforce, all of which were predicated on a belief that heightened specialisation of schools could counter social inequality produced within a hyper-capitalist Australian society, which was underpinned through a race for advantage (Commons, 2008; Giesinger, 2011). For me, this ideological tension was captured by the nationally recognised Indigenous lawyer, Noel Pearson:

> The Indigenous education achievement gap is a history of failure that has defied reform attempts for three decades now. There is a predictable cycle of public revelation and consternation about failure followed by a new policy review, a new policy framework and a new commitment. This Groundhog Day seems to occur every three to five years. (Noel Pearson in Hughes and Hughes, 2009, p. 1)

Despite the national pursuit over the past 30 years to create specialisation across the schooling sector, educational inequality persists and Indigenous people are poorly profiled in every state across the country and especially in the NT, which has the

lowest schooling performance outcomes (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). The ongoing work that occurs every day within schools by dedicated staff and families to alleviate this entrenched problem has seemingly had little impact on this persistent patterning for Indigenous families, as national NAPLAN results 2008–2020 confirm (ACARA, 2021). Alongside this systemic policy pattern, Aboriginal communities have been subjected to an unrelenting national campaign in Aboriginal affairs of 'attack, withdraw, placate and attack again' (O'Dowd, 2009, p. 814; Everingham, 2017). This leaves schools functioning as manufacturers of systemic inertia within a society that values individualism and as generators of social inequality and the layering that flows from it (Diamond and Spillane, 2002; Sadovnik and Semel, 2010). It is in this intersection that Austin-Broos (2011) identifies the ideological decay etched behind such politics: 'When it is racialised, cultural difference becomes a fault line along which inequality runs' (p. 157).

In this way, and as described by O'Dowd (2009, p. 813), such policy dysfunction produces an 'ideological abyss', where Indigenous educational inequality has become an unsustainable cost that all Australians have to bear. In a country where rights and equality are pursued as core national values played out within a democratic system, ideological contesting and its subsequent politicisation of the Australian education system has found fertile ground, increasing rapidly over the past 20 years in an environment of heightened public accountabilities (Fry, 2020). Nieto (2007) argued that socio-demographic and socio-economic profiles influence and shape the attitudes of individual participants, and described the socio-political context in countries such as Australia as an 'ideological problem embedded in a system with all manner of negative attitudes and perceptions of people from different social standings' (p. 302). The ensuing ideological contests around this 'problem' are witnessed in the intensification of centralised agendas in schooling reform (Fenwick, 2000), but more covertly in ideological contests, where ideals of Indigenous social justice centre on what Stewart-Harrawira (2005) referred to as Indigenous peoples' right to be different, as much as the right to be equal.

Within this corrosive space, key tensions have emerged in recent decades and have resulted in ongoing challenges to policies and their accompanying instruments in data collection, funding levels and national standardisations in teaching, curriculum, assessment and reporting (Mathews 2013; Rahman, 2013). Broadly speaking, this has occurred within an increasing level of Australian hyper-capitalism and its neoliberalist discourse, leading to policy matrices that for the most part have remained conservative in nature and economic in orientation, with policy actions grating across the high levels of variation and social complexity that schools exhibit nationally. As this has occurred, the education profession has arguably become more labyrinthine. Its political and philosophic divisions have arisen to accommodate increasingly complex demands which have been accompanied by heightened public attention; producing a widening distrust and disempowerment of a teaching profession caught within social ambiguity (Klenowski, 2011).

Australian Directions in Indigenous Education (2005–2008)

What is apparent, even after a cursory observation, is that the education policy settings aimed at Indigenous families, caught within the intersections of race and wealth inequality, have always been troubled, compounded by being force-fed an agenda of increased dosage of assimilatory reforms, as experienced elsewhere in countries such as the United States (Hulgin and Drake, 2011). In May 2005, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) agreed to commission a working party, comprised of senior Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and bureaucrats from each jurisdiction, to develop recommendations to focus national effort on improving outcomes for Indigenous students. These recommendations aligned with five domains: Early childhood education; School and community educational partnerships; School leadership; Quality teaching; and Pathways to training, employment and higher education. In 2009, MCEECDYA commissioned a research team of eminent Aboriginal educators and consultants to review the effectiveness of *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education.* This review found that:

> Over time there have been a myriad of schemes introduced to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. However, their application and success are uneven and spasmodic with funding limited to short-term solutions. All indicators from our review confirm that success would be achieved if longevity in program funding and monitoring of implementation occurs. In absence of these strategies it is almost impossible to know what works and to put in place long term programs. (MCEECDYA, 2009, p. 3)

As a result, the review noted that there was widespread agreement across jurisdictions and sectors about the need to develop a successor to Australian Directions in Indigenous Education, one that had a stronger focus on measuring and addressing Indigenous educational outcomes at the systemic and local levels. It was here that the later Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) firmly positioned Australian education within the global context, highlighting the importance of relationships with Asian countries, increasing international mobility, globalisation of the economy and rapid technological change. A clear shift from the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (MCEETYA, 1999) was the prominence provided to Indigenous children:

> As a nation Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society—a society that is prosperous, cohesive, and culturally diverse, and that values Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation's history, present and future. (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4)

However, and despite these moral pursuits towards equity, Australian governments have intensified an agenda of performativity and accountability, the measurements used in this pursuit have equally struggled in evaluating schooling outcomes, given the array of social variables that distort performance, particularly in respect to Indigenous students (Matthews, 2013; Ranson, 2003). This is evident in the National Assessment Program, which for this Aboriginal researcher has arguably functioned

in part to anchor the ideological intoxication around 'whiteness as rightness'; a consciousness that Harris (1977, 1993) spent an entire academic career arguing against.

National Assessment Program: A Measure of Whiteness?

As the Australian education system developed, the need to determine outcomes against policy and budgetary commitments became more focused. To this end the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) conducted the first national survey of literacy and numeracy in 1975, to provide a general outline of the state of literacy and numeracy attainment across Australian schools (Rothman, 2002). A section in the report compared the results of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and demonstrated there was a significant gap in the performance between both cohorts, one which remains the same nearly five decades later. What has changed from then, however, is the development of a national program that assesses the literacy and numeracy capability of school-aged children and young adults (ACARA, 2021; Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). Since 2008 the National Assessment Program (NAP) is the measure through which governments are able to determine whether student performance is meeting the outcomes outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). The NAP includes: the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN); three-yearly sampling in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology (ICT); and international assessments such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS (ACARA, 2021).

The current NAPLAN program has been in place since 2008 and provides jurisdictional and national level data on mean scale scores and the proportion of students at or above the national minimum standard for each of the NAPLAN assessment domains (ACARA, 2021). Change in student performance against each domain since 2008, except writing (2011), is significant, as this was the baseline against which targets for the national reform agenda were set. A comparison of longitudinal reading and numeracy scores since 2008 indicates that the gap of achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is not closing, as discussed by Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer (2017) in their *Australian Education Review* investigation into the state of Indigenous education. As Perso commented (2012), in promoting a more responsive approach to Indigenous education performance measurements:

> Standardized testing is often used at system, organization or national level in order to facilitate efficiency and minimize costs in gaining wide-spread information about student achievement. However, this type of assessment can privilege select groups of students whilst marginalizing or segregating others. This is largely due to the fact that these tests require literacy in the dominant language and consequently are culturally and linguistically biased in spite of the best efforts of writers to ensure otherwise. (p. 60)

In this way the performance measures have arguably remained, for NT Aboriginal families, a measure of whiteness, and education policy has become entrenched within

these shaping ideological forces. It is here that dynamics of institutional hegemony, as described in the US context by Lissovoy and McLaren (2003), enable linkages to be established within the bureaucratic modelling of the State, which serves as a key instrument in the (re)production of disciplinary power, with notions of an 'objective' truth underpinning bureaucratic rationality that 'legalises' exclusion (Jenkins, 2008).

The School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM)

The School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) is a highly problematic instrument where ideologically Indigeneity is positioned as 'othered' and subjectified as deficient. The SEAM measure was introduced by the Australian Government as a trial in the 2008–09 Budget in response to findings that around 20,000 Australian students of compulsory school age were not enrolled in school (Department of Education, 2014). In 2011 the NT government legislated to link family income with school attendance under the *Every Child Every Day* policy. At the core of this policy have been acts of punishment, through withholding welfare payments from remote Aboriginal families, where students do not attend school on a regular basis (Taylor, 2010, p. 690). At the time of its roll-out across the NT, researchers including Phillips, Franklin and Viswanathan (2011) argued that the policy was completely unworkable:

> A 'getting tough on parents' approach will not contribute to better educational outcomes in the long term, and is likely to exacerbate financial hardship, for example through the imposition of fines or the long-term suspension of social security payments under the school enrolment and attendance measure (SEAM) program. (p. 47)

While the NT government continued to use SEAM to attempt to strongarm Aboriginal families to engage in a dysfunctional education paradigm, other jurisdictions recognised the futility in pursuing the policy. In June 2012 the Queensland government announced that it would not participate in an extension of the federal government's SEAM trial on the basis that it had failed to improve student attendance rates in the thirty trial schools in Logan, Mornington Island and Doomadgee. The then Queensland Minister for Education, Training and Employment, John-Paul Langbroek, stated that:

> Continuing the trial would further burden our schools without any financial support from the federal government. The federal government's own evaluation report into the effectiveness of the trial showed that the suspension of income support payments made no impact on improving school attendance. This big stick approach just basically doesn't work and at the end of the day, ends up impacting on the kids. (Langbroek, 2012 in Smail, 2012)

The SEAM program used welfare reform as a response to the poor enrolment and attendance of Indigenous students in the Northern Territory, especially in remote communities. The policy was based on research that established links between poor education outcomes and the likelihood of unemployment, welfare dependency and engagement with the criminal justice system (Purdie and Buckley, 2010). The

measure involved working with targeted families of poor attenders, and quarantining their welfare payments, which stopped after 13 weeks of non-compliance. Despite early reports showing the policy has failed, the Australian Government, in 2013, announced a new model of the SEAM to be rolled out across the Northern Territory in the following two years across communities beset by school attendance problems.

At this time the Abbott federal coalition government moved all related Indigenous affairs activity from various government departments into the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and a new Indigenous reform agenda was prioritised to make sure Indigenous children went to school and received a 'good' Western education. As discussed in media reports by the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Casey, 2013), the government in 2013 also announced a $28 million, two-year initiative to improve attendance in remote Indigenous communities by funding 400 truancy officers to work in 40 targeted communities across the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia, with a commitment to expand the initiative if it proved successful. Five officers for every 100 children enrolled in schools would work with families on a case-management basis. It was intended that most of the officers would be Indigenous (Casey, 2013).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (ATSIEAP) (2010–2014)

In April 2010, MCEECDYA, taking into account the commitments outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008) and recommendations from the review of *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education*, endorsed the national *Action Plan.* The commitments comprised six priority domain areas viewed by the Ministerial Council as most likely to have an impact on closing the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. These included: Readiness for school; Engagement and connections; Attendance; Literacy and numeracy; Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and Pathways to real post-school options. MCEECDYA agreed that the *Action Plan* should identify a key group of 'focus schools' in each jurisdiction that had the greatest need for improving Indigenous student learning outcomes. The criteria were at least 75 per cent Indigenous enrolment, and/or a minimum of 25 per cent of Indigenous students below the minimum standard in NAPLAN literacy. In 2012 there were 942 focus schools across the eight jurisdictions and the selection of these schools appears, at best, ham-fisted, given that Tasmania had 75 focus schools for 5,530 Indigenous enrolments, whereas the Northern Territory had 63 focus schools for 15,501 students (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, p. 25).

Unlike the previous *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education*, the ATSIEAP outlined 55 national common systemic and local level actions to be implemented and measured over a five-year timeline. The plan also contained jurisdictional and sector priorities to provide a 'further perspective on how national collaborative action and

jurisdictional priorities will complement each other to close the gap' (p. 29). Although the agreed common local level action strategies were reasonably generic, it is difficult to understand how the actions could similarly be applied in such differing schooling contexts as the Australian Capital Territory and very remote schools in the Northern Territory.

However, and despite the positive intentions of governments and policy makers over the past 30 years, there remains a considerable inequality between the educational outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). As outlined, the problematic design of policies has long featured as contributing causes behind this performance pattern. It is only in the recent decade that national policy has utilised evidence and evaluation to inform the design and implementation of programs for improvement, as distorted as such 'evidence' has been, as described in this chapter. This call for an evidenced-based approach to improving outcomes for Indigenous students has continued from all quarters. As Noel Pearson (2013) stated in *The Australian*, 'Education reform has fallen victim to fashion, ideology and intuition at the expense of robust evidence-based policy…Policy is being directed at what can change, not what should change' (p. 2).

Chaney (2012, p. 65), in detailing the haphazard approach to national Indigenous policy to the Australian Government Productivity Commission's 2012 policy roundtable, quoted Dillon and Westbury (2007), to make this key point:

> How is it that governments at all levels, and of all political persuasions, have allowed this level of systemic failure for so long? Why is it that governments have found it easier to ignore systemic failure, while promoting worn out policy approaches that have proved unworkable? (p. 192)

External factors, driven by globalisation discourses and the rise of market-state economics have influenced the development of more recent national Indigenous education policy statements, predicated on increasing the performative outcomes of students so that they become active participants in the national economy. Thus, the national education policy architecture has been a major driver upon the national Indigenous policy agenda, since the outcome of the 1967 Referendum enabled the Commonwealth to legislate with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). Since this time there has been a proliferation of policies, reviews, inquiries, reports, research and programs proclaiming the importance of education in improving outcomes for Indigenous people, though always against the views of those, including Harris (1993), who placed First Nations peoples at the core of education policy architecture.

Globalisation and Educational Regression Aimed at Indigenous Australians

The story of Australia's education system and the problematic trajectory of Indigenous schooling policies is also that of other westernised countries, notably Canada,

the United States and the United Kingdom (Fry, 2020). Globalisation discourses accelerated towards the latter part of the twentieth century and in more recent years have gained currency in defining the transformation of social, political and economic systems and structures (Bone, 2012). It has variously been used to describe worldwide actions toward 'a global market economy, the new internationalism, the internationalisation of labour, and the emergence of a global culture and transnational or supranational policy structures' (Henry et al., 2001, p. 2). The impact of globalisation has resulted in a weakening of the margins and the capacity of the nation-state to control the way international organisations function within its borders. These events have led to the situation where the authority of nation-states to develop and control their own internal and external policy directions has been diluted. Deleuze and Guatarri (1987, p. 453) referred to this phenomenon as the 'new threshold of deterritorialization' where there appears to no longer be the need for a nation-state that employs political and hegemonic authority to sequestrate capital for economic outcomes.

Globalisation has been viewed by many commentators as the artifice of a neoliberal ideology on a supranational scale (Apple, 1999; Giroux, 2004; Hill, 2003). Bourdieu (1998, p. 126) argued that neoliberalism, as a 'new ecumenical gospel' and 'mathematical theology', has evolved out of an assemblage of forces such as globalisation, market reform and deregulation, and the market-state amongst others. McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005) defined neoliberalism in contemporary Marxist terms as:

> …a corporate domination of society that supports state enforcement of the unregulated market, engages in the oppression of nonmarket forces and antimarket policies, guts free public services, eliminates social subsidies, offers limitless concessions to transnational corporations, enthrones a neomercantilist public policy agenda, establishes the market as the patron of educational reform, and permits private interests to control most of social life in the pursuit of profits for the few. (pp. 15–16)

In this way, Ainley (2004) argued that the age of neoliberal philosophy calls for nation-states to expose and shift traditional facets of the welfare state into a new post-welfare state described as the 'market-state' (Ainley, 2004). Under the market-state regime, time-honoured social contracts that sustained safety nets for disadvantaged and othered sections of the community—such as people living in remote Indigenous communities, the unemployed, the elderly, and the disadvantaged—are severed and replaced with market autonomies. The market-state thereby dissociates its power and authority from social responsibility and moral concern by allowing capital to free itself from regulatory state control (Bone, 2012). Kellner (2000, p. 307) referred to this condition as representing 'the triumph of the economy over politics and culture…and the hegemony of capital over all other domains of life'. One of the main ideological thrusts of the market-state therefore is to discipline both culture and the body through a 'continual enterprise of ourselves…[by] governing without governing' (Olssen, 1996, p. 340).

The essence of market-state principles require the policy directions of nation-states to be aligned so that they focus upon the development of an environment that is a catalyst for economic competitiveness, rather than addressing the social needs of the community through the enhancement of educational policies that may

promote equality of opportunity across the labour market, as Carson (2011) outlined in respect to remote NT Aboriginal communities. Over recent decades, education has been viewed by the market-state as the basis for future economic prosperity, thereby resulting in the development and control of educational policy by politicians, rather than educators (Fry, 2020). This displacement, which weakens the agency of education professionals and politicises educational policy (Ball, 1990), devolves the responsibility for goal and policy outcome achievement to the local level. All of this is viewed by this Aboriginal researcher as having terrorised schools into an intransigent accountability schematic (Ball, 1999; Beckmann and Cooper, 2004; Henry et al., 2001).

Linked to this deepening of accountability for educational institutions is discursive formation of ‘performativity’, a normalising agent rejected by Lyotard (1984) some four decades ago in his landmark publication, *The Postmodern Condition*. The performative culture permeating schools has ensured that student and teacher efficiencies are measured by a series of targets, standards or outcomes that they are expected to achieve through a rigid disciplinary system formulated in educational policy that is framed by the power of capital (Fry, 2020). Pedagogical approaches that prove difficult to measure or do not directly contribute to performativity are at risk of being eliminated from the school curriculum; for example, the knowledges which Indigenous children bring to school and which are representative of their cultural upbringing. Apple (2000, p. 9) highlighted the point that powerful and dominant neo-conservative groups use the technologies of performativity to create a new politics of legitimacy about their ‘official’ knowledges in order to ‘increase their power in the larger social area’. Performativity is reinforced through a semiotic representation of a particular market-state discourse as part of the transformation of education and schooling. This discourse represents education ‘in a self-referential and reified form for consumption’ (Ball, 1999, p. 10), where efficiency is emphasised over ethics and critical thinking, and authority is assigned a positive meaning. The market-state’s dedication to this regulatory arrangement has ensured that education develops into a marketable commodity that is to be accessed for individualised advantage, rather than to demonstrate social responsibility (Ball, 1999; Reid, 2002). Indeed, it can be argued that students have become commodified, because they are positioned and evaluated differently, according to their potential to contribute to the capacity of the market-state.

For me, neoliberalism has contrived a moral panic about falling standards in public education, due to a perceived loss of authority in schools that is partly a reflection of the perceived spiritual and moral crisis proliferating throughout Western society (as I prefaced earlier). This view of the need for a restoration of ‘legitimate’ authority and knowledge appeals to ‘an established cultural tradition, whose practices and values appear beyond criticism’ (Giroux, 1997, p. 95). As a consequence, and as earlier touched on, the Australian school curriculum has been transported and condensed into values steeped in the dominant neoliberal traditions, thereby legitimising the new official knowledges that place an emphasis on students mastering the ‘basics’ and adhering to acceptable standards of moral behaviour. Lyotard (1984) claimed that the impact of this performative culture results in the condition where the ‘transmission

of knowledge is no longer designed to train an elite capable of guiding the nation towards its emancipation, but to supply the system with players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institutions' (p. 48).

Schools are 'obliged' to play a key role in reproducing these political and cultural processes with the execution of educational and social practices implicit in the various systemic policies through accountability discourses. A product of the market-state discourse has thus been the proliferation of school accountability practices to bring about desired educational change. Lipman (2004, p. 2) highlighted that school accountability practices are a totalising discourse that have become a regime of 'truth', because they 'normalise surveillance, punishment and obedience to authority'. These practices, through measuring the academic and behavioural standards of students, enable the state to sharpen the focus of the lens of scrutiny on to those who are deemed as failing, justifying their regulation and subjection. Further, the implementation of these practices is viewed as developing a 'common culture' that reinforces the regulation and normalisation of difference, especially towards students from Indigenous communities (Ainley, 2004; Beckmann & Cooper, 2004; Daniels-Mayes, 2016).

Miller and Rose (2008) used the term 'therapeutic authority' to describe the new market-state accountabilities of the problematising, diagnosing and intervening approach to address those identified and constituted as problems to be fixed. A common outcome for Indigenous students is that this therapeutic authority 'redistributes and intensifies the experience of distress and locates it upon the territory of normality and pathology' (p. 171). Andermann and Campbell (2007) noted that accountabilities added to the multiple life stressors that many young Indigenous people endure—including mandated engagement in formal education settings that are often culturally unfamiliar and contextually foreign—promote anxiety and negatively influence their attendance and participation rates. Further, I argue that such accountability processes actively contribute towards the intensification of the existing inequalities and segregation evident across sections of the community such as in Aboriginal and immigrant populations and are a critical component in the criminalisation of the youth of these communities (Parenti, 1999). These interrelationships of power, class, race and education have been extensively theorised by authors such as Apple (1999, 2000), Giroux (1997) and McLaren (1999), who have disputed the concept of a single grand narrative incorporating all relations of domination. This, precisely, was the point understood by Harris, whose intellectual analyses have powerfully presented the costs of disengaging from the existential points of our human condition.

The Costly Outcomes a Weaponised Western Education and NT Remote Indigenous Cultural Realities

Indigeneity is a changing identity that has been extensively politicised, usually on the basis of observed traits such as skin colour (Burbules, 1997). However, for me, a key consideration for policy architects is how such identity difference is treated within a sociological frame, in order to understand how its extrapolations, in contests for autonomy and power, evolve in ways that give rise to identity resistance and conflict (De Vylder, 2008; Dixon et al., 2010). As it presently exists, the national Indigenous education reform environment is predicated on survival in a Western capitalist economy and the content layering of curriculum and delivery processes pursue this ideal (Daniels-Mayes, 2016). In my experience, a key perversity of colonisation has been the galvanising of Aboriginal opposition to forced assimilation through a collective identity framed on oppression, and the simultaneous westernised ideals of meritocracy and choice to 'rationalize as logical' the state of social inequality (Neville et al., 2015). For this researcher, it is less an issue that Indigenous people resist change, as identity shifts in all groups are inevitable, but Indigenous members do need to be empowered and centred in its movement, as Harris (1977, 1993) highlighted.

The reality of a significant number of Indigenous members is the constant pathologising of those deemed inferior, corrupt, unworthy and illegitimate through discursive practices, which Stewart-Harawira (2005, p. 78) referred to as 'the subjectification of Aboriginal people and subjugation of Indigenous knowledge'. Where attempts are made at the highest levels to reconcile, these are followed by further acts that produce racial divides. In the context of Indigenous reforms there is scant attention to Indigeneity featuring, in a way that reflects Australia's First Nations peoples (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). Apart from the inclusion of two additional layers of expectation in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the modelling is essentially silent, apart from movements of incorporating 'inclusive' pedagogical practice. The present reforms do not take account of the large number of existing Indigenous languages and there is little recognition that mainstream non-Indigenous Australians have a birth right to being educated in their country's black history in a way that is not sanitised, watered down, or instilled in guilt (Daniels-Mayes, 2016). If the future of Australian education is to have relevance to the lived realities of its members, then a presumption of a future utopian world where reconciliation is a lived experience commences through a state-endorsed sponsorship of the steps in achieving such outcomes, which means the 'under the table' issues need to be addressed and a conservative, neoliberalist influence is displaced in the social architecture of school organisational spaces (Fry, 2020).

The educational research that has flowed in the space of Indigenous educational inequality for the most part has been established within an Anglo-western ethnocentric mould (Andrade, 2009; Prasad and Prasad, 2002) and has remained complicit with pathologised, Indigenous deficits, consistent with colonisation of Indigenous groups across the globe (Ornstein, 2007). Solomon et al. (2005), in discussing the

condition of white privilege, argued that the racial category 'white' in American culture, for example, is associated with a history of domination and control over other racial groups. Historically, such complicity was framed in white views as 'fixing the black problem', and in contemporary times a movement toward bicultural practice, premised on teaching western cultural threads through Indigenous cultural frames, remains consistent with a broader construct that pursues an agenda of cultural assimilation, as Harris (1993) pointed out. This approach has presumed that Indigenous members wish to abandon their identities (linked to historic and anchoring pasts in the same way non-Indigenous pasts define their present) and that the ideal of a stratified and unfair capitalist economy is an aspirational goal worth pursuing.

This dichotomisation between education policy intent and outcomes, between the state and community, is disturbingly unremarkable in the sense that many scholars, as shown in this section of my discussion, have described it for decades. Nonetheless such a trajectory is unsustainable and the intoxication and anchoring to this dynamism in human action is something Ritchie (2011) characterised as wicked, mutually interlocked problems. Here I end this section by outlining my concerns about the fruition of this national trajectory as it has manifested within the design fabric of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy* (NATSIES) 2015 (Education Council, 2015), as shown below. Based on the goals of the Melbourne Declaration 2008, I argue that this shift in policy modelling was subtle, yet damaging to First Nations families, since it represented departure in the sociology of school organisational spaces and the location of Indigenous identities at the core of strategic service provision (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017).

In the NATSIES (2015) framework, identity is located as a layer, rather than as the foundation. While this may seem insignificant, an alternative, Aboriginal-led, social modelling posits the opposite, and this has been supported by Stephen Harris and thousands of Indigenous voices across Australia. In stressed and disadvantaged environments, and as played across Indigenous social realities, 'under the table' forces have been shaping Aboriginal student and community attitudes, and the subsequent behaviours that ripple from them: issues that the 1989 NATSIEP and the Keating Federal Labor Government's National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (1996–2002) sought to respond to (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017) (see Fig. 22.1).

The NATSIES (2015) is premised on the 'homogenised child' and with learning outcomes as the core goal, rather than as a by-product of the social environmental frames of the school. For this Aboriginal researcher, what is cloaked is a dichotomised view that fails to recognise that learning is fundamentally a social exchange and that knowledge and skills applied within a social context are underwritten by ethical and moral dimensions (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yeaman, 2005). Conflict in schools, for example, arguably occurs less due to deficiencies in student knowledge of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, than how such behaviours are 'legitimised' within the broader culture of the school and community (Hinde, 2004). While an agenda of performativity has led to tightened controls, such attempts struggle to flex with the constant social tides they are bound within. It is here that Christie and Limerick

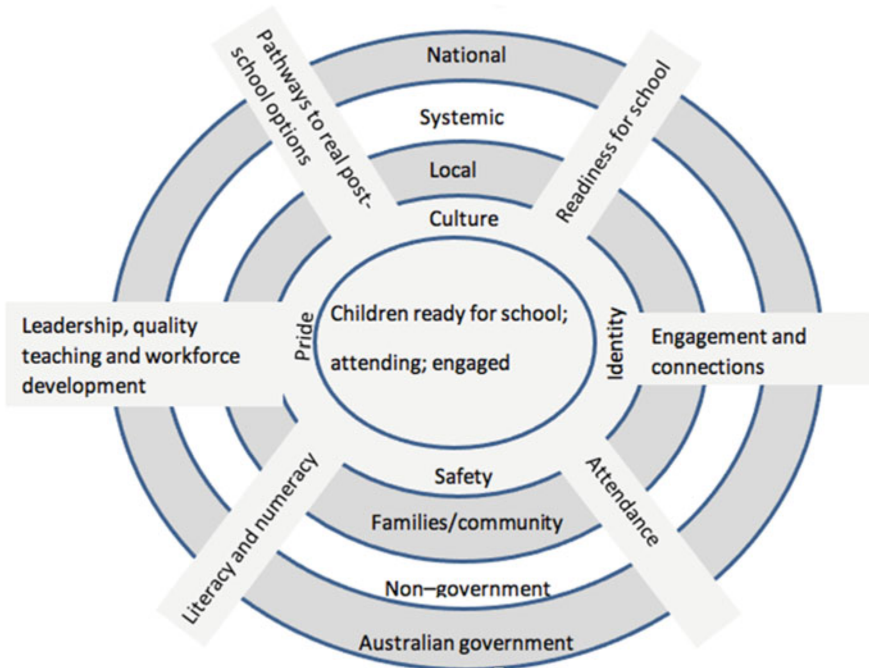

Fig. 22.1 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 (Education Council 2005, p. 4)

(2005) argued that politics and market conditions often have more pivotal roles in the way education has been problematised, and this policy has been a sinister application of these socio-political forces.

In this respect, the moral and social imperative of addressing NT Indigenous educational inequality, as graphically demonstrated in multiple reports including NAPLAN, appears to have more of a direct relationship with those in positions of privilege than Indigenous Australians (Stevenson, 2010), or for that matter a great many non-Indigenous Australians that occupy the lowest three quintiles. If education is as much about binding human beings in collective social enterprise, where societal and racial conflicts are reduced and social justice is a core pursuit (Noffke, 2009), then education policy modelling will benefit from reifying Indigeneity as a strength, rather than an impediment to a highly incomplete construction of educational purpose for those culturally othered and maligned. I now turn to two key examples that show how Stephen Harris, from the very beginning of this policy onslaught, was correct in his stance.

Contemporary Examples of Success Through Indigeneity

Stephen Harris was one of the very early scholars who paid intellectual respect to my identity, and by extension, the identity of my whole family and those that constituted my ‘othered’ community. This intellectual honesty was one of the key threads I observed in my interactions with Harris, which the following encapsulates:

> To be empty-headed on an issue, or to have a religious type fervour about it without theoretical foundations makes one neither more responsive to Aboriginal leadership nor a better listener to Aboriginal people. What matters is for Whites to have opinions or to theorise without trying to say how any *particular* group should be going about it. (Harris, 1993, p. 3)

Many of scholarly footprints within early NT bilingual education debates were left by Harris, and these have included a redefining of the architectural and power differentials, in what he described as ‘genuine bilingual and two-way’ designs. At the core of this work was his challenge to the usurping of bilingual education modelling, where vested ‘whitened’ controlling interests were positioned ahead of Aboriginal families and voices (Harris, 1993). Harris highlighted that true bilingual education, including its iterations in two-way modelling, was genuine where Aboriginal leadership, governance and controls over the form of service design were present. This meant an Aboriginal existential identity was maintained for the community through local vernacular languages rather than bilingual education simply being seen as a staged approach to English acquisition (Harris, 1993).

This enduring standpoint on Aboriginal ontologies is a policy pillar that I outlined in my recent thesis (Fry, 2020) and concerns the widened materialisation of Indigenous voices in education, which has international backing from key events such as the World Indigenous People’s Conference (WIPSCE) 1993 and 1999, which in turn led to the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Education (1999). This statement outlined two key principles: Indigenous people’s rights to an education in Indigenous language, and the need to teach cultural knowledge, spirituality and content (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). Aboriginal ownership of education is a key element in centralising and privileging community voices and injecting the nuanced sophistication and wisdom needed in building effective policy responses. This counter–narrative is embodied by two NT Aboriginal communities, Gunbalanya and Yirrkala, respectively located in west and north-eastern Arnhem Land.

The Story of Gunbalanya and Yirrkala

In 2015, the Gunbalanya community, which I know well, set up the first and to date, only NT remote Aboriginal Independent Public School (IPS) (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017). This is an extraordinary achievement and only came about after many decades of the community fighting for control over their education services. As one field research participant in my recent study stated, ‘We had to

wrestle back control of education' (Study participant, in Fry, 2020). The IPS designation refers to a government school granted increased autonomy concerning most aspects of schooling services, though it remains 'subscribed' to government legislation and policy, including a national curriculum and accountability measures. Significantly, even within the challenges imposed by these frames, this school has strengthened autonomy through the governance of a local Aboriginal education board. This Aboriginal governance structure has resulted in the delivery of a bilingual two-way program, and balanced employment of Aboriginal and non–Indigenous staff around this charter, including high attention to the school's secondary Vocation and Education Training (VET) programs and the tailoring to community development.

Gunbalanya's education performance has been acknowledged as outstanding, as highlighted in the most recent Australian Education Review into Indigenous education, The Case for Urgency: Advocating for Indigenous Voice in Education (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017).

Since 2013 Gunbalanya School, situated in East Arnhem Land, has consistently outperformed all other remote schools across the Northern Territory in student achievement. The average student attendance rate in 2016 was 53 per cent with 8 per cent of students attending 90 per cent or more of the time. What sets Gunbalanya apart from most other very remote schools is its ability to consistently have a core of students graduate Year 12. Over the past 4 years, 27 students have graduated with this qualification and moved onto employment or tertiary education (Gillan, Mellor and Krakouer, 2017, p. 69).

During visits to this community, I have consistently observed a strongly engaged and integrated services model which include health, early childhood and allied partners and employment organisations. Gunbalanya is one of very few schools with this level of engagement and outcome (Yirrkala school being another) and is distinctive because it utilises a dual principal model where an Aboriginal principal works collaboratively alongside a non–Indigenous principal (an arrangement which, for both principals, has existed for some 15 years). This is an example of the growth of Aboriginal sophistication, as discussed by Moyle and Gillan (2013) in their research into this partnership. But despite this high-performance outcome, there is little evidence to suggest this arrangement has been extended by the NT government. It is a model that could inform policy advancement; in particular, the underlying Aboriginal political power and governance processes need to be encased and reified.

Along with Gunbalanya School, Yirrkala School has achieved successful education outcomes through a broader investment of Aboriginal community controls. However, and unlike Gunbalanya, Yirrkala School is not an Independent Public School. Subsequently Yirrkala has been afforded less autonomy and capacity from government to build policy and program momentum to achieve a quality education experience for their children. But like Gunbalanya, permission to succeed through identity hasn't been a point of compromise:

> For almost 50 years, Yolngu people in Yirrkala, 900 kilometres east of Darwin, have insisted on having a say in how their children are educated, often defying shifting government policies. In 2009, the Northern Territory government ordered the Territory's remote schools to teach English for the first four hours of the day — even though English is not the first language of

> most remote Aboriginal students. The Yirrkala school ignored the order and continued its 'both ways' approach with a focus on bilingual education, where a child's first language is taught alongside English. (Masters, 2021)

In achieving a goal of two-way learning, which Harris (1993) championed decades ago as a responsive bilingual schooling option, this community school celebrated eight students in 2020 who became the first in their community to graduate from Year 12 with university entry-level scores, 'having plans for careers in medicine, teaching and the arts, and teachers arguing that the 'both—ways' approach is the most effective way to educate children from remote Aboriginal schools where, over decades, many have dropped out years before reaching year 12'. (Masters, 2021). This achievement came through the infusion of local language and ways of learning through an Aboriginal existential world, where students learnt through a cultural curriculum, as part of a long-term two-way bilingual approach (Marika et al., 2009):

> English-speaking children go to school speaking English and straight away they get to learn in English, they get to encounter curriculum and interact with teachers in English. Kids here come to school with a really rich language that needs to be valued so that the kids can learn at an appropriate age. They need to continue their learning through first language and (also) learn English. (Katrina Hudson in Masters, 2021)

In order to find success for their children, Aboriginal families, as reflected in these two key examples, are forced to reject the unrelenting assimilatory threats of (what I term) a weaponised education experience, and the dislodging and taking of control away from Indigenous people under the illusion of partnerships (Marika et al., 2009). And even where success is obvious, a colonising consciousness remains. A decade after the Territory government issued the order for English to dominate remote teaching, Lauren Moss, the current NT Education Minister, revealed signs of a paradigm shift, having stated, 'Bilingual education is continuing to come up as a really strong priority for communities, and I think we have to listen to that' (Masters, 2021). A key policy of her government, which came into office in 2016, is to return power to remote Aboriginal communities through local decision-making agreements (LDM), which include education services. It is unclear how the architecture of education is factored into these agreements (to date I am aware of just two such LDMs), but it appears to be a progressive step. However, like the consciousness imbued within the NATSIES (2015) framework, this response remains seated within 'white' western regimes of power, which recent history has revealed has its anchoring within many layers of a western political economy (Fry, 2020).

What enables the success of Gunbalanya and Yirrkala to lend insight to the broader narrative of progressive change has been their extraordinary energy and clarity, showing what is possible against an unrelenting tide of policy dysfunction. Their examples suggest that the future of remote Aboriginal children's education needs to be in First Nation's hands and to be facilitated through larger-scaled models of governance (Bandias, Fuller and Holmes, 2012). Regional education hubs led and managed by Aboriginal peoples have never existed in the NT, and they clearly should, given most schools in the NT are remote and in Aboriginal community settings. Regional education models exist (Bandias, Fuller and Holmes, 2012), but only as extensions of

'white', bureaucratic entities representing 'white' interests. Aboriginal regional hubs offer strengthened opportunity to build relevant policy responses to complex issues; only those living this complexity are likely to understand the existential nature of problems and their policy responses. In commenting on the NZ context, Santamaria et al. (2015) offered an example outcome of Indigenous autonomy: 'Responding to the issues being encountered by Maori within the Aotearoa NZ educational landscape in 2014, a core group of approximately 60 Maori and non–Maori school principals, independent of the NZ Ministry of Education, created the Maori Success Initiative (MSI)' (p. 95).

Walker, Eketone and Gibbs (2006) outlined that the goal of the MSI was to build a critical mass of education leaders and leadership approaches that rejected the majoritarian reforms that had resulted in inequities in Maori education. This independence ensured that policies aimed at Maori children's education were based on research 'by Maori, for Maori and with Maori' (p. 333). Similarly, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network decades ago developed this list of standards that were to be used alongside the majoritarian curriculum (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008).

Culturally knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community; are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local community as a foundation to achieving personal and academic success throughout life; are able to actively participate in various cultural environments; are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning; and demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in their world (pp. 958–959).

Conclusion

In my experience, many Aboriginal people across the NT who have an interest in education saw Stephen Harris as a person who was pushing to have Indigenous identities, in all their strengths and flaws, at the forefront of education service modelling. I have situated his ideals within my own work, as an Aboriginal critical race theorist in the pursuit of an education policy environment that is socially just for NT Aboriginal families and their communities, within the broadened tensions of capitalism and its western political economy (Lloyd, 2008). The central location of Indigeneity in education services for NT remote Aboriginal families was not for Stephen Harris an essentialist, ultra-leftist perspective, but one that recognised the enduring and deeply anchored dimensions of belonging (Blair, 2015). Like all groups, Aboriginal identities exist within a fluid world where Aboriginal member identities are not static, as discussed by Harris, Nakata and Carlson (2013). In navigating this challenge throughout my thesis (Fry, 2020), the counter–story I have offered is we need to to shift from the debilitating trajectory of hyper-capitalism (Bone, 2012) and the increasing opaqueness this generates around education's institutional role and

purpose. A key element of this counter–story is the fate of rural and remote Aboriginal people in the NT, taking into account both their success and their disengagement from education and what this means for a future Australia.

As I have detailed elsewhere (Fry, 2020) this means for me that a way forward in imagining our reality is required: a way which delivers a cost–benefit for everyone, beyond the disastrous and deleterious approaches to date. The current state of NT Aboriginal educational outcomes has been a direct result of continuous policy failures. At the core of this has been a political lack of recognition of the sociological foundations that give rise to the functionality and purpose of education. This was a key understanding that Harris (1977) made clear in his earliest work. Harris's work concerned how the education experience transports cultural members toward community building. Centrally, the education experience is underwritten by identity, language and the multiple layers that give rise to existing and what it means to be an Aboriginal person (Blair, 2015; Daniels-Mayes, 2016; Harris, 1977; Marika et al, 2009).

Aboriginal families need to have their voices deepened within school organisational spaces. They also need expanded regional financial control and increased governance over their lives. A new economic and social paradigm is required and it must be a form that avoids perpetuating a new version of inequality (Langton, 2019). For Aboriginal families located within a broader environment of turbo-charged capitalist-driven societal decay and its impacts upon NT remote Aboriginal communities, identity maintenance remains the uncompromising existential mandate. With this I leave the reader with this statement from the most prominent of Aboriginal educational leaders, Marika:

> Like the cycad nuts that have poison within their flesh so has our Government's policies and attitudes. Leach the poison out, let it be cleansed. The big bosses came down from Darwin, they are the ones that are disempowering, they are the ones pulling the strings. But we know from our fathers and their struggles with land rights that this is how we have to proceed, we had to draw a line in the sand. (Marika et al., 2009, pp. 407–408)

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Chapter 23
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Brian Clive Devlin and Joy Kinslow-Harris

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Brian Clive Devlin is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at Charles Darwin University. One of his recent projects has been to help create a digital archive of the texts published by literature production centres during the bilingual era of education in the Northern Territory (see www.cdu.edu.au/laal). His research interests include the use of vernacular languages in educational programs, interactive e-learning for isolated communities, and the history of bilingual education policy in the Northern Territory. His association with Arnhem Land dates from 1979, when he began work as a teacher-linguist at Yirrkala. At that time he was assigned a role in the traditional kinship system as a son of Muŋgurawuy Yunupiŋu, the Gumatj clan leader. His leadership roles since then include School Principal, School Council Chair, Faculty of Education Dean, Chair of the Education Advisory Council (NT), President of the Northern Territory Institute of Educational Research (1992–2000) and director of two university-based research centres.

Joy Kinslow-Harris is a research linguist from Texas, USA. Her 1968 article in Australian Territories was the catalyst for the establishment of bilingual programs in the Northern Territory, for it had argued that bilingual education was definitely possible, provided that Aboriginal people were allowed to do the teaching in their own languages through a system of team-teaching in partnership with qualified non-Aboriginal teachers. Her proposal was picked up in 1971 at a National Workshop, which recommended that '...pilot projects be established'. When Joy met Stephen Harris, she was undertaking research on Gunwingguan languages for a Ph.D. thesis at Australian National University. They were married in 1966. Later, when they were in Darwin, she started a class in English for speakers of other languages at Nungalinya for theology students as well as a women's study group, which studied English language use in the community. From there she went to Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to manage an access course leading on to university studies.

Glossary

ACER Australian Council for Education Research
AEP Aboriginal Education Policy
AIAS Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies
AIATSIS Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ALA Aboriginal Languages Association
***Amamalya ayakwa* (Anindilyakwa)** 'The people's language'
An̲TEP An̲angu Teacher Education Program
AT Assistant Teacher
ATAR Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
AusAID Australian Agency for International Development
AuSIL Australian Society for Indigenous Languages
Balanda Non-indigenous person
BATSIS Bachelor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
BECC Bilingual Education Consultative Committee
BIITE Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
Bicultural education 'A bicultural school is one where at all levels the Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal staff ratios, classroom subject content, languages of instruction, teaching styles, and sources of decision-making significantly represent both cultures'. (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education, 1985)
Bilingual education: maintenance model Since the goal of a maintenance bilingual program is to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, learners' first language use continues to be supported. So students not only learn bilingually as they receive content area instruction in both languages, they have the opportunity to become literate in both languages as well.
Bilingual education: transfer model An educational program in which two instructional languages are used. Over time, use of the student's first language is reduced and the amount of English is increased until it alone is used. 'A transfer bilingual education model is one that utlises the home culture and first language of the child

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merely as an affective emotional and linguistic bridge to the school culture and language of the dominant society' (Harris, 1975, p. 4).

Both ways philosophy Both ways is a philosophy of education that 'brings together Indigenous Australian traditions of knowledge and Western academic disciplinary positions and cultural contexts, and embraces values of respect, tolerance and diversity' (Batchelor Institute, 2007, p.4 cited in Ober and Bat, 2007, p. 60).

CAIS Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies

CALC Central Australian Linguistic Circle

CALL Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics

CDU Charles Darwin University

CMS (Anglican) Church Missionary Society code-mixing

Code-switching On occasion a speaker may alternate between two or more languages or language varieties, without being aware of doing so. This is regarded by some as an example of code-mixing. For example, Harris (1990, p. 70) stated that 'code-mixing is unconscious and random mixing of bits of languages'. This refers to those occasions when a speaker deliberately alternates between two or more languages or language varieties.

CTS Commonwealth Teaching Service

Cultural difference Students raised in different cultural settings may learn in different ways. What Stephen Harris argued (1990, p. 17), is that the smaller the cultural group and the wider the difference between its world view and that of the majority culture, the more need there is for 'culture domain separation' or compartmentalisation.

DEET Department of Employment, Education and Training

DI Direct Instruction

DCC Darwin Community College

DFAT Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DIT Darwin Institute of Technology

Domain separation This refers to the use of two languages that are used in separate domains; for example, Navajo staff might teach some subjects in Navajo whereas non-Navajo teachers would teach the other subjects in English. In this case, two criteria—topic and person—would mutually support domain usage. Harris (1990, p. 70) argued that when an Aboriginal language and English are used in bilingual education settings it should be on the basis of 'flexible cultural domain separation'.

EAL/D English as an Additional Language or Dialect

ESL English as a Second Language

Four Hours of English policy On October 14, 2008, the then Northern Territory Minister for Education, announced that henceforth 'the first four hours of education in all Northern Territory schools [would] be conducted in English'. The eight remote Indigenous Schools that offered bilingual programs had to abandon what they had been doing, irrespective of whether their programs were going well and/or had strong community support.

***Ga̲n̲ma* (Yolŋu Matha)** When a river flows into the sea, and fresh water begins to mix with the salt water, brackish eddies and whirlpools form. This is one example of *gan̲ma*. The notion of ancestral waters coming together can be

extended metaphorically to connote intermingling, seeking balance, different groups working together, and the 'dynamic interaction of knowledge traditions' (Marika-Munungurritj, 1992, p. 5). Wäli Wunuŋmurra used the term in the extended sense of a 'gathering place' in which ideas are exchanged. He referred to it as 'the Yolŋu concept of exchanging knowledge (saving, giving and taking knowledge' and explained that one *gan̲ma* project 'aimed to describe the mathematics in traditional Yolŋu society, information which will eventually be used in the exchange of knowledge with Balanda mathematics. This will enable us to teach a two-way mathematics curriculum in school' (Wunuŋmurra, 1988, p. 15).

FOBL Friends of Bilingual Education

GCAIESLT Graduate Certificate in Australian Indigenous ESL Teaching

IAD Institute for Aboriginal Development

ICT Information and Communication Technology

IJSL International Journal of the Sociology of Language

ILA Indigenous Languages and the Arts

IPS Independent Public School

***Jukurrpa* (Warlpiri)** This complex cultural concept refers to eternal processes that are associated with ancestral beings, their life-forces and creative powers. The activities and travels of these beings are manifested in dreaming places, tracks, law, stories, rituals, songs, designs. Knowledge of these ancestral beings may be conferred on some through dreams. More simply, *jukurrpa* is often referred to in English as 'the Dreaming'. For a fuller explanation see Goddard and Wierzbicka (2015), Laughren et al. (2006.)

KACHA Kaurna Aboriginal Community and Heritage Association

KLRC Kimberley Language Resource Centre

KWK Kaurna Warra Karrpanthi

KWP Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi

L1 First language

L2 Second language

LOTE Language Other Than English

Language maintenance When a minority language is spoken across all generations one can say that people are keeping it going or maintaining it. In that sense intergenerational language continuity is regarded as key to language maintenance. This doesn't mean that the speakers aim to conserve or preserve their language in unchanging form, for it can certainly be sustained while taking on new, modernising functions. 'Language change' and 'language maintenance' are not opposing terms, but 'language maintenance' and 'language shift' are.

Language shift Language shift is likely to occur when two linguistically different populations come in contact with each other, especially when a smaller, more vulnerable group is dependent on the language, economy and laws of the mainstream society. For example, if all people in a community formerly spoke Yanyuwa, but now use Kriol for almost all daily purposes, then one can say that an almost complete language shift has taken place.

LDM local decision-making agreements

***Luluai* (Tok Pisin)** Leader

MCEECDYA Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs

MCEETYA Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

MOTEP Milingimbi Onsite Teacher Education Program

MSI Maori Success Initiative

NAP National Assessment Program

NATSIES National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

NDOE National Department of Education [Papua New Guinea]

NIFDI National Institute for Direct Instruction

NSW New South Wales

NT Northern Territory

NTDE The Northern Territory Education Department

NTU Northern Territory University

Nunga Nunga is a self-identifying term, originally used by Aboriginal people in the southern settled areas of South Australia. It is mostly used by those of Ngarrindjeri, Kaurna and Narungga descent. It is now used more broadly throughout Adelaide and surrounding towns, and contrasts with Gunya, which refers to non-Aboriginal persons. The use of 'Nunga' by non-Aboriginal people is not always regarded as appropriate.

Nunga English The variety of English spoken by Aboriginal people in the southern settled areas of South Australia.

PEO Principal Education Officer

Performativity This term refers to mode of regulation in which judgements, comparisons and displays are used as incentives or controls. The performance of individuals (or organisations) is used as a measure of productivity or output. When a student's performance is assessed or a project is evaluated, for example, the judgements that result will be important markers of quality or value (Ball, 2003, p. 216).

PIRLS The Progress In International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment measure that monitors fourth grade student achievement in reading.

PISA This acronym refers to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment.

RATE Remote Area Teacher Education

SA South Australia

SAL School of Australian Linguistics

SEAM School Enrolment and Attendance Measure

SEO Senior Education Officer

SIL Summer Institute of Linguistics

SIL-AAB Australian Aborigines Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics

Staircase model of bilingual instruction A staged language model where instruction for the first 4–5 years of schooling is in the vernacular, moving to 50 per cent English by Year 4.

T&S Teichelmann and Clamor Schürmann (1840)

TAFE Technical and Further Education

TELC Top End Linguistic Circle

TIMSS Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Like PIRLS, it is an international assessment program that monitors student achievement trends in mathematics, reading and science.

TMs Teichelmann (1857)

Translanguaging In the 1980s Cen Williams and others were experimenting with some of the ways learners could incorporate Welsh and English in a single lesson. Their term *trawsieithu* referred to reading or hearing in one language (such as English) and writing or speaking about it in another (such as Welsh). When *trawsieithu* was translated into English by Colin Baker the equivalent term was known as 'translanguaging'. The term refers to the use of multiple languages, especially in learning situations.

Two-way school This type of school has been loosely explained as 'one which is designed primarily to assist in the socialisation of Aboriginal children into becoming bicultural Aboriginal people' (Harris, 1990, p. 18). The term has also been used to imply that non-Aboriginal school staff will 'think of themselves as servants of the local community' (Harris, 1990, p. 18) and that the aims of a two-way school would be defined by the Aboriginal community (Harris, 1990, pp. 18–19).

UCNT University College of the Northern Territory

VET Vocation and Education Training

Vic. Victoria

WA Western Australia

'The people' *Warnumamalya* (Anindilyakwa) 'The people'

WBT Wycliffe Bible Translators

WIPSCE World Indigenous People's Conference

WTC Welcome to country

Yolŋu Indigenous

Yolŋu matha This term refers to a language family. The languages in this family are spoken by Yolŋu, the Indigenous people of north-east Arnhem Land in northern Australia. The word *matha* can mean 'language, tongue or flame'.

Yurrwi Milingimbi

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