

National Policy on Languages

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Preamble: The Importance of Language

Language is most obviously a form of human communication. In all its manifestations - oral, written, non-verbal - language is the most sophisticated and fundamental form of human communication. It is less obvious that language fulfils a wide range of other functions but these are critically important to individual and social life. Virtually all human endeavour has correlates in language which is the tool humans use to negotiate and create meaning and to articulate their perception of experience.

The study of human individuals has allocated a central place to language. It is central to the intellectual development and socialisation of children, basic to all learning and concept formation. It is a means of personal growth, individual cultural enrichment and recreation. Language is a source of individual, personal identity.

The study of human groups and cultures has revealed the centrality of language. As the primary means of interpreting reality, language becomes basic to cultural evolution and change and, therefore, becomes a code for the unique experiences of different cultural groups. Language is a source of group and cultural identity.

The study of human societies and nations gives prominence to language. Human society is inconceivable without language. Language is the primary means for transmitting knowledge and

past achievement, for ensuring contact between generations. Social groups often mark their boundaries and distinctiveness with language. In society language is an instrument of power and sometimes of domination but can become a means of emancipation and freedom. Language is a source of national identity.

The study of languages has revealed that they share universal features which make all humans similar to each other and distinct from other living things. Languages vary in ways which reveal some of the diversity and differences between human groups. Languages are the product of cultural, artistic, economic and intellectual endeavours as well as the tool of them. By revealing ways of being human, languages are a source of human identity.

The modern world is undergoing a profound and rapid revolution of technology affecting social relationships, cultural groupings, the structures of knowledge and, consequently, power and social participation. In a world which is becoming more dependent on language, its skilled and proficient use is a key factor in economic and social opportunities. Democratic societies have a major obligation to ensure their citizens attain the highest levels of skill in language to protect and promote the rights and enhance the opportunities of individuals and groups.

Language, therefore, impinges on all aspects of public and private life and pervades all aspects of society. Individual, ethnic, racial, and national identification and allegiances are often inextricably bound up with language. These identifications can shift over time. Language

itself also changes over time and is constantly modified by use. The task of developing explicit policy on language issues is, therefore, an exceedingly complex undertaking but, at the same time, an undertaking of the utmost importance.

Rationale

1. Language Policy Formulation in the Australian Context

The measures which have been adopted by Australian public authorities in response to pressing issues of language could be said to constitute Australia's language policy. Specific responses have been made to the needs and demands of the society and of particular component groups throughout the history of public policy development in this country. These measures, however, have not been guided by an overall, coherent and integrated policy. Nor could they become one since major gaps have been identified and the practices of less enlightened and less well-informed times prevail in many areas. The neglect of Australia's language resources has, as a consequence, become an issue of major national significance.

All societies undertake actions to manage and direct their language resources to particular ends. These actions, due to the pervasive nature of language, are not usually treated as language planning unless identifiable and urgent language-related problems require attention.

The term "language planning" here refers to the consciously and explicitly taken decisions about language issues. These may encompass highly technical areas such as the standardisation of languages and the development or reform of orthographies, as well as the more socio-political areas such as the allocation of status to particular languages or language varieties, the teaching of second languages and educational policies regarding linguistic minorities. Such questions inevitably involve the interests and values of different groups which are both linguistic and non-linguistic, social, economic

and cultural (Jernudd and Neustupny, 1986).

The primary purpose of Australia's languages policy is to make the nation's choices about language issues in as rational, comprehensive, just and balanced a way as possible. Language planning of this type requires the elaboration and declaration of principles which will guide the process of decision making and form the basis for the allocation of resources, accompanied by widespread consultative processes to gain acceptance for these principles. The choices which are promoted will then be principled, deliberate choices which are capable of justification. It follows that since these choices are made explicitly they are able to be modified and improved subsequently if evaluation and review procedures find this necessary. This is not possible when language policies are not developed explicitly.

The absence of explicit statements of the principles and choices does not mean that decisions affecting language do not occur. Rather, it results in implicit and undirected actions and usually ad hoc and unco-ordinated measures and may distort language development in society and its institutions. An explicit statement of the choices made and the principles underlying them can give order and coherence to the broad and otherwise unconnected issues of language in Australia. The Senate recognised this in its decision to address a reference to its Standing Committee on Education and the Arts on 25th May 1982 on the "Development and Implementation of a Co-ordinated Language Policy for Australia". The Senate's decision followed intense activity from professional and community groups advocating the development and implementation of a national policy on language. The Senate Standing Committee's report of October, 1984, assembled a large amount of data and considered in detail a wide range of relevant issues and recommended as its first recommendation:

"Language policies should be developed and co-ordinated at the national level on the basis of four guiding principles, namely:

- competence in English;
- maintenance and development of languages other than English;
- provision of services in languages other than English;
- opportunities for learning second languages."

Action to utilize and develop Australia's rich linguistic resources in the nation's best interests must start from a consideration of the linguistic diversity of Australia, the need for national unity, the external, economic and political needs of the nation, and the wishes and needs of Australia's citizens.

National language planning therefore involves co-ordinated effort at all levels, by responsible authorities, of intervention to:

- enable the nation to plan those aspects of its international, trade, economic and diplomatic relationships which relate to language in an objective and rational way;
- initiate action to alleviate and overcome problems, disabilities, inequality and discrimination which may be encountered because of language;
- enrich Australia's cultural, artistic and intellectual life;
- provide the component groups of Australia's population for whom language is a defining characteristic, or for whom a language other than English is an instrument of communication or a highly valued cultural possession with recognition and support;
- improve communication in written and spoken forms of language generally in society, but particularly in schooling;
- make clear the public expectations of language in all its manifestations to the community generally but particularly to school students, their families, teachers and education authorities, serving thereby as a constant reference point to all those involved in education;
- encourage and guide attempts to integrate technological changes with language use and learning. The form which this takes in the Australian context is the development of policy which is explicit and comprehensive.

Australia's history and geography have bequeathed the nation with a unique, complex and rich linguistic situation. This policy regards this as a resource which requires cultivation and development. The fundamental objective of language planning in Australia becomes, therefore, to ensure that Australia derives maximum benefit from its rich linguistic resources.

2. A National Policy

Australia is a federation and therefore a national policy involves the participation of the governments which comprise Australia.

Another important characteristic of a national policy on such a pervasive and important area as language would be the non-party political (non-partisan) nature of principles which underlie the policy. This would be a recognition that language is fundamental to all public and private life, and as such the principles which underlie the decisions made about languages should command a national consensus. This consensus is also a product of the extensive consultative process which accompanied the proposal, development, elaboration and preparation phases of the national policy and the non-partisan composition of the Senate's Standing Committee which addressed the issue.

Stating clearly the principles and content of Australia's language policy enables a co-ordinated approach to be taken on questions of language. This approach recognises the respective roles of the various governments and other bodies involved in the national policy on languages. Furthermore, it permits co-ordination of effort of the various bodies responsible for the implementation of aspects of the policy. This is particularly important because since the Senate's report (and in at least one case before it) some states have developed

language policies in particular areas such as education.

The precise form which the policy takes is that of a framework of nationally shared and valued goals which will require further elaboration and detailed implementation at the appropriate levels.

Although seeking to reconcile widely divergent interests, language policies nevertheless aim at particular forms of social change and orientation and express particular values, in this case that language learning, maintenance and bilingualism are valuable and necessary to develop not only for the individuals concerned, but also for the benefit of Australia. Language policies, therefore, are not neutral statements but, rather, espouse particular values and goals.

In summary, then, a national languages policy involves a partnership between the States, Territories and Commonwealth of Australia working towards broadly shared common goals.

3. Principles Underlying Australia's National Languages Policy

This section sets out the general and specific principles upon which the languages policy is developed. These can be considered the philosophical framework which underpins the policy. These principles are also intended to be practical. It is important that they be made clear.

(a) General Principles:

- Language is dynamic and consequently is constantly evolving and changing. Whilst this needs to be acknowledged it is important to assert that simultaneously there is a need for standardising written and to a lesser extent, spoken, forms of language to enhance communication. A corollary of this is the importance of promoting formally correct use and of promoting greater language competence generally.
- Language is primarily an instrument of communication which is evolved socially. Language also serves a wide range of cultural, artistic, intellectual, personal and group identification, religious, economic and socio-political functions. All languages are theoretically capable of meeting their speakers' communicative needs and language itself is both an arbitrary and a conventionalised way of representing reality.
- Action taken as a result of the national languages policy will emphasise the need for social and national cohesion in Australia whilst simultaneously recognising the diversity of the society and the inherent benefits of this diversity. Australia has adopted policies of multiculturalism i.e. equity for all community groups and cultural diversity within national cohesion and unity.
- The language pluralism of Australia is regarded as a valuable national resource enhancing and enriching cultural and intellectual life and as a valuable economic resource in its potential for use in international trade.
- Because of its central importance in Australian life, specific planning, research and action is necessary to enhance the competence of Australians in English, to extend and improve the teaching of English both as a first and as a second language to children and adults, and to improve Australia's capacity to assist, primarily, the countries of the Asian/Pacific region with English language training. Moreover, it is recognised that there are many stable varieties of English. Some of these serve social and individual functions which are important to their speakers but are not the standardised forms which are valued publicly. It is important to accept this internal diversity of English whilst at the same time promoting standard Australian English for formal and public uses. It is important also to recognise the national character of English as it is used in Australia and its role as a unifying element in the society and a distinguishing feature of Australia among the

English-speaking nations.

- Aboriginal languages have an ancient history on this continent. Aboriginal languages are the product of the unique cultural, historical and environmental identification of the Aboriginal people. Aboriginal languages have been used to define and interpret the Australian landscape and environment and many of these languages remain viable forms of communication. In addition, they are repositories of cultural values, information on socio-cultural organisation and law.

As Australia approaches the bicentenary of European settlement, it becomes a national obligation of great importance to recognize, value and take action to enhance the survival of Aboriginal languages and promote an appreciation and an awareness of them among non-Aborigines. Aboriginal languages are also important in strictly linguistic terms in the insight they provide into the nature of human language in general.

- Australians speak a wide variety of other languages. These are usually labelled community languages and this term, for the sake of convenience, is retained in this policy. Community languages are used daily to fulfil a wide range of social, familial, cultural, economic and educational purposes. These languages are being developed and modified in the Australian context and remain the main vehicles of communication for large numbers of Australians and the first languages of many Australian children. Community languages are recognized and supported in the Australian languages policy.
- Australians also communicate in languages specially created to meet the needs of those disabled in some ways which impair their capacity to use and comprehend oral and/or written language. These language systems are recognised and supported in the Australian languages policy.
- Australia's geographical proximity in the Asian/Pacific/Indian Ocean region to

countries which use languages other than English carries specific implications for a national languages policy. Australia's involvement in world affairs also impacts on this policy. Australia's economic, trade, diplomatic, intellectual, cultural, political and security interests require that a large pool of Australians gain skilled and proficient knowledge of the languages of our region and world languages. For the sake of convenience, such languages are referred to as languages of geo-political significance to Australia.

- It is in Australia's national interests to develop the linguistic resources of its people and integrate these skills with other broad national goals.

(b) Specific Principles:

- The Australian policy on languages will be characterised by:
 - (i) explicitness and clarity (permitting appropriate action by all relevant bodies and enabling review and evaluation over time);
 - (ii) comprehensiveness (enabling all affected groups bodies, and languages to participate);
 - (iii) balance and economy (enabling competing interests and claims to be measured against the general needs of the nation and the effectiveness, cost and feasibility of proposed actions);
 - (iv) a co-ordinated and national approach (this will attempt to ensure that the various bodies associated with the enactment of the policy operate as far as possible with the same objectives, that there is no intrusion into the autonomous or particular responsibilities of State and Territory governments, and that as far as possible the roles of all groups are developed as a partnership);

- (v) that due weight be allocated to the maintenance and enhancement of standards of excellence in language education (ensuring quality) and to overcoming disadvantages, social inequalities and discrimination (redressing inequalities).
- The policy will be expressed in broad terms overall, thereby ensuring its applicability across Australia to accommodate the different systems, structures and processes which operate in the various parts of the nation and the differences in linguistic demography which characterise different States and Territories.
- Access to services and information by Australians who do not speak English or who are disabled in ways which involve language ought to be provided in appropriate ways which maximize the rights and opportunities of these people.
- Bilingualism will be promoted as a positive value to individuals and society. It will be advocated that children who are potentially bilingual ought to be assisted by schools to develop this potential. Schools should be encouraged and assisted to make concerted efforts to foster the bilingualism of their pupils during normal schooling arrangements preferably, or in concert with community organisations or by other arrangements where this is not possible.
- No Australian resident ought to be denied access to medical and health assistance, or equal, appropriate and fair treatment by the law including representation and other rights commonly associated with equality or deriving from citizenship, because of language disabilities, or lack of adequate, or any, competence in English. It is on the basis of these principles that the Australian languages policy is developed.

4. Australia's People And Our Languages

(a) Introduction

Australia's 16 million people daily use a wide variety of languages...

This contemporary linguistic diversity is not a recent development. Traditional Aboriginal and Islander society was multilingual with between 200 and 250 distinct languages, representing approximately 600 dialects spoken at the time of European settlement. Most individuals and groups were multilingual.

In the late eighteenth century English was introduced to Australia. The diverse origins of the British settlers and the spread of both regional and social dialects among them, as well as the later inflow of non-English speakers from Europe, Asia and the Pacific, all affected the evolution of English in the colonies of the Great South Land. From the mid nineteenth century, large sections of the population used a non-Aboriginal language other than English for virtually all their social, familial, economic and educational purposes. English controlled the linguistic domains of major power and served as the language used by non-English-speaking groups to communicate with each other.

Between the 1914-1918 war and World War II a trend towards English monolingualism began and was actively promoted by Government intervention restricting and even suppressing the use of other languages. There was active and deliberate opposition to Aboriginal languages, and many became extinct.

The post-World War II migration program dramatically reversed the trend towards monolingualism and greatly diversified the number of languages spoken in Australia. Although policies of linguistic assimilation were initially adopted these were not accompanied with intervention to assist newly-arrived children and adults to learn English.

These policies eventually gave way to the provision of assistance to learners of English and in recent years, to more positive recognition of the value of their first languages.

Whilst recognising the importance of competence in English for all, there are persuasive reasons for the linguistic diversity of Australia to influence language education and services. There are powerful reasons for Australians to become fluent in the other languages of our nation, as well as the languages of our region and the world.

This general overview will briefly describe the complexity and diversity of the linguistic situation of Australia which of necessity is a basis on which to build the policy on languages.

(b) English

Although English is the de facto national language of Australia its status as such has never been declared explicitly. It is the first and usually the only language of about 83% of the population as well as being the language of the major and powerful institutions of the society.

English is also a major world language - pre-eminent in the field of science, technology and commerce. It is the official and co-official language of more countries than any other language. These factors combine to lend particular needs, demands, possibilities and responsibilities in relation to English in Australia and to Australia as a predominantly English-speaking nation in a multilingual, predominantly non-English-speaking, region of the world. These facts also have a significant impact on choices made about languages additional to English in education.

The English used in Australia has been modified by its speakers/writers to adapt it to the new demands and needs of its environment. These Australian contexts of use for the English language as well as the other language backgrounds of the users of English in Australia have led to the evolution of uniquely Australian varieties of English. The national character of

Australian English is accorded positive recognition in this policy.

(c) Aboriginal Languages

Aboriginal languages are in an endangered state. The number of living languages has declined dramatically. Only fifty are considered viable. The rate of extinction is about one distinct language per year. It was calculated in 1971 that 114 languages were spoken by fewer than ten people, with a further forty-five being spoken by between ten and one hundred people. (Source: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies)

The Australian languages are a distinct family among the languages of the world and exhibit some features of grammar and usage which are rare. Some of the languages of the Torres Strait Islands are related to Aboriginal languages, while others are related to the Papuan languages.

In societies with oral language traditions the languages provide an irreplaceable repository of experience, history, mythology, spiritual belief, law and socio-cultural organisation and values. This derives from the very nature of language itself, the major mediator between experience and thought and culture. The Aboriginal interpretation of Australia - its landscape, environment and the experiences of its inhabitants - is among the most ancient of any in the world. Being unique to this continent these languages are an important and irreplaceable source of self-knowledge for Australia and of inestimable value to Aborigines and their prospects of cultural survival. In addition Aboriginal languages, including Creoles and Pidgins used by Aborigines, are important means of communication between individuals and groups, and of education and socialisation of young children.

(d) Community Languages*

(* Names of languages in this report are those that have been used by authorities supplying data. They are not necessarily the names preferred by users of those languages.)

Australia's multilingualism includes a large number of non-Aboriginal languages other than English, of European, Asian, Pacific and other origins. Some of these languages are spoken by large numbers of speakers, usually concentrated geographically in urban areas with a long history of presence in Australia. Others have equally long histories in Australia and large numbers of speakers, but are used by geographically dispersed communities. Others are spoken by small and recently arrived communities or by small but long established communities.

There are no simple ways of categorising Australia's multilingualism. The important aspect to recognize is that between 15% and 20% of Australians daily use a language other than English and that for a significant further percentage there is some cultural, emotional or other form of identification and attachment to such a language. Many thousands of Australian school children begin school each year speaking only such a language or speaking a variety of such a language. Many other children come from homes where a community language or a non-standard variety, a dialect, or a variety or dialect heavily influenced by English is spoken.

Community languages are adapted to their new environment, although unlike Aboriginal languages, they are not unique to it. These languages have been modified to express the new experiences of their speakers and, as such, have evolved features such as pronunciations, new words, metaphors and intonations which mark them as truly Australian.

The communication disabled, particularly deaf people, have evolved languages which are stable and share many of the characteristics of community languages. Australian Sign Language is the language of over 7,000 deaf people and is used by thousands of others who, however, are not dependent on it.

The linguistic diversity of Australia has social, cultural and economic potential to offer this country. Most non-English-speaking communities in Australia wish to maintain and develop their languages in the Australian context

whilst acquiring and using English too, and there are important emotional, cultural, intercultural social and educational reasons why this is desirable for Australia.

(e) Other Languages for, and of, Australians

Apart from mother tongue learning in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community languages which is justified on educational, psychological, familial, and social grounds and the universal learning of English which is justified on social, national, educational and economic grounds, Australians need, learn and know other languages as well.

Individuals have always pursued studies in a wide range of languages for communicative purposes, for cultural, literary and artistic purposes and also for more strictly academic purposes. These endeavours are an essential characteristic of a diverse and relatively highly educated society and such studies are supported for their contribution to intellectual and cultural life generally. It is possible, however, to identify a range of languages which, nationally, Australia ought to promote. It is useful to categorise these languages as geo-political languages.

Since Australia is predominantly an English-speaking country, the choice of second languages can be greater for Australian students than it may be in many other countries. This is due to the great demand which exists for English worldwide. Australia's geography necessitates a policy of language teaching choices which gives prominence to important languages of our region as second languages.

Australia's role as a member state of a large number of international organizations necessitates a policy of language teaching choices which includes important languages used in world forums or which are spoken by people in many countries. Languages of geographical and global significance must feature prominently among the languages acquired by Australians, whether these are their first languages (eg Chinese Australians studying Chinese), their second languages (eg English

speakers learning Chinese) or third languages (eg bilingual Australians of Warlpiri and English or Greek and English background studying Chinese).

It is in Australia's interest to develop high levels of competence in languages of geo-political significance. Many such languages overlap with community languages and therefore there are many young Australians whose potential bilingualism ought to be fostered in their interest and in the nation's interest.

5. Languages: Learning; Maintenance; Attrition; Death:

The facts and figures which attest to the justification for policy formulation and the urgency of principled action on language issues.

There are a wide range of language problems confronting Australia. These can be overcome by concerted action, guided by explicit and consensually-based policy directions. These problems are domestic and external.

- Domestically there are limitations to the educational, social and economic opportunities of large numbers of Australians which derive exclusively, or substantially, from questions of language (invariably being lack of proficiency in English). In addition, many component groups of Australian society depend on a language (or a language variety) with which they identify, to promote, even in some cases to ensure, their cultural survival as distinct groups.
- Externally there are political, economic and diplomatic constraints on Australia which can be confronted by improving and extending language teaching and maintenance efforts, consonant with broader national, economic and political goals.

In addition to the necessity for developing principled action to address domestic and external problems associated with or derived from language, Australia stands to gain in both

practical and less tangible ways by addressing language questions positively. The fullest development of our cultural, intellectual and economic potential can be realized by overcoming the past neglect of Australia's linguistic resources.

Summary and Recommendations

The National Policy on Languages is contained in a report which is divided as follows:

- Part one is a rationale for having a national policy on language issues.
- Part two is the policy itself, containing recommendations for implementation.
- Part three consists of the contributions of the States and Territories.
- Part four is the bibliography.

Rationale

First, the activity of language policy formulation in the Australian context is discussed. Such an activity is known as language planning when explicit statements and programs are made and enacted to respond to urgent problems of a linguistic nature. Choices and priorities need to be made and set since language pervades all of public and private life. The context means that the federal nature of Australia, consisting of at least eight governments, influences the type of language planning possible in Australia. Therefore it is necessary that broad statements with clear principles be enunciated so that the language problems which face the country as a whole can be tackled at the various relevant levels by the appropriate authorities.

These principles are that the nature of language as dynamic and arbitrary needs to be acknowledged, as does the need to enhance levels of competence and standardization to achieve better communication. The different languages spoken in Australia are recognised. Other principles relate to the need for a balanced, comprehensive and just approach to language issues.

The language problems which the policy must address are:

- the overcoming of injustices, disadvantages and discrimination related to language;
- the enrichment of cultural and intellectual life in Australia;
- the integration of language teaching/learning with Australia's external (economic and political) needs and priorities;
- the provision of clear expectations to the community about language in general and about language in education in particular;
- support for the component groups of Australian society (ethnic communities, the deaf and Aboriginal groups), for whom language issues are very important, with recognition and encouragement, and guidance in attempts to link technology and language use and learning.

Following this introductory section which outlines the principles and approaches of the policy, there is a descriptive section on Australia's linguistic demography. Briefly, this refers to English as it is spoken in Australia, the situation of Aboriginal languages, the widespread linguistic diversity of Australia due to the post-war immigration program and the languages which Australians have traditionally studied.

The next section is primarily statistical. Bringing together both domestic and external needs, this part of the rationale puts together data on the language problems which confront Australia. These are the problems which need a coherent overall policy so that they can be tackled adequately.

Briefly summarised they are as follows:

English:

- Inadequate past attempts to tackle adult illiteracy levels;
- Persistently high levels of inability to use/comprehend English among recent and

long-standing immigrants;

- Deficiencies in English as a Second Language for children.

Languages Other Than English:

- Very few English-speaking Australians acquire second languages;
- Declining numbers of schools and students teach/learn second languages;
- Only a tiny proportion of students study a language of Australia's major trading partners;
- Only 14.6% of boys study a second language, whereas 20% of girls do so;
- Smaller schools, rural schools and schools with low numbers of non-English-speaking background students are much less likely to be teaching second languages;
- Almost half of all Australian students NEVER study a second language for any period of time at all;
- HSC levels of study for second languages have declined to about 12% compared to over 40% over two decades ago;
- The tertiary sector greatly over-emphasises literature as distinct from practical communication skills. The language student numbers at tertiary level are very low;
- The after-hours/insertion modes enroll very large numbers of students in language classes; these have greatly increased in recent years;
- Research shows that there are substantial levels of movement away from the use of languages other than English by the second generation in immigrant families, although strong attachments remain to the language their families use and with which they identify;

- In the case of Aboriginal languages such shift often signifies the death of the languages. Currently about one language per year becomes extinct. Only a small number of Aboriginal languages remains viable. Aboriginal communities sometimes identify with a creole as a marker of Aboriginality but the cultural significance of traditional languages is very strong.

Tourism

- Tourism is a major potential revenue-generating source for Australia. International visitors from Germany and Japan are among the "above-average" expenditure groups, and the Japanese are the most promising future source country. Interpreting/translating services need to be brought into line with such needs.

Interpreting And Translating

- Significant unmet needs exist for ethnic minorities, especially in situations of stress (for example, medical and legal situations) where otherwise adequate English levels have been found to be inadequate. The great bulk of the post-war migration group now finds itself as an aging population, frequently reverting to the use of the first language only. Similarly there are unmet needs for the deaf, for Aborigines and also for servicing the tourist industry.

Data are also provided about the media, both print and electronic and public libraries in relation to languages.

The section entitled "Dimensions and Justifications for Second Language Learning" discusses four major social goals connected with language teaching and learning which justify major efforts to improve Australia's present situation.

- Enrichment: cultural and intellectual
- Economic: vocations and foreign trade

- Equality: social justice and overcoming disadvantages
- External: Australia's role in the region and the world

Enrichment: is the traditional justification for teaching second languages. Essentially the arguments which have been put in the past are still valid, but the cultural and intellectual reasons are now both more immediate (because of immigration, greater travel and advances in communications technology in particular) and better researched. The evidence for the intellectual benefits for children from bilingualism is strong. However sound educational programs where two languages concerned are highly valued are needed to produce such benefits. Culture and language are very closely connected with languages revealing much about the cultures which produce and sustain them. Such benefits and values apply to any language and to all children. Most education systems in the world give a prominent place to language learning. Australian children would be disadvantaged by a monolingual education, especially when the domestic potential for encountering and using second languages is so great.

Economics: this section contains many quotes to show that other major English-speaking countries recognize that depending only on English in the world of business can be a major disadvantage. Australia's trade is mostly conducted with non-English-speaking countries, particularly Asian countries. The link between economics, trade and languages is not a simple and direct one, since languages are not only useful in negotiations - sometimes indispensable to avoid dependence - but also in getting to know markets, predicting demand for goods and services, ways of marketing and so on. Other economic dimensions of languages are Australia's role as an education provider for the region and the use of languages as an ancillary skill in servicing the multilingual community which is present day Australia.

Equality: this section deals with the

correlation between social inequalities and language. These relate to the employment and occupational disadvantages of limited-English-speaking Australians and the educational problems which correlate with level of English. In addition, non-standard and dialect forms of English speech are stigmatized and denigrated and so are other languages, particularly Aboriginal languages. Deafness and other communication disabilities also produce disadvantages in the information-dependent society towards which present-day Australia is evolving.

The final dimension is the external one. This deals with Australia's role in the Asian-Pacific region of the world particularly, but with the rest of the world more generally.

The last part of the rationale deals with four areas of concern to planning. Firstly, an attempt is made to show that the "needs" of the nation and the community are "inter-dependent" rather than conflicting. Secondly, the standing of English as a major world language is addressed in both economic terms and in terms of population projections which show a range of other languages growing at a much faster rate, in first language terms, than English. Thirdly, the prospects for maintenance or loss of minority languages are considered. A brief concluding sub-section mentions the need for co-ordination of effort on language planning work in Australia.

Policy

The policy contained in the report is discussed under the headings:

- the status of languages
- the teaching and learning of languages
- language services
- Advisory Council

Some sections contain case studies which illuminate the discussion and help to increase

the practical orientation of the document overall.

Section A deals with the status of languages in Australia. It begins by stating that legislative action on this matter is undesirable and inappropriate. Although English is Australia's de facto official language, it has no legal status. The policy asserts that English is the national language of Australia, that Australian English is the uniquely Australian way of using English which ought to be used with confidence here and overseas, and that the social dialects of English in Australia serve valuable group identity functions for their speakers. Education must aim to enable such speakers to add standard English to the forms of language they speak and know or else they will inevitably be subjected to social and economic penalties in this society. The need for public authorities to use plain English, to reject sexist and racist language and, also, to continue the practice of using Aboriginal place names are all mentioned.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages, as well as creoles and pidgins used by them, are acknowledged to be legitimate forms of communication, appropriate for communicating information about government services and programs. In addition, the very poor level of awareness of such languages and their stigmatization and denigration by non-Aborigines is deplored. Other questions relating to their status are considered.

Other languages used in the community by ethnic communities and by the deaf are similarly recognised and discussed.

English For All

1. English Language and Learning Project (ELLP)

That the Commonwealth Schools Commission establish an in-service education, professional development and materials development program combining the Early Literacy In-service Course and the Basic Learning in Primary Schools Program. This is to be offered to

teachers from the infants to junior secondary school levels inclusive. That prominence be given to dialect and second language aspects of English learning as well as stress on functional development in English.

Although the majority of the targeted teachers for participation in this course ought to be English teachers, specific attention ought to be given to the active recruitment of subject teachers so that a focus is allocated to different curriculum areas over time. For example, for 1988, science and mathematics teachers, including advisory and subject association representatives, ought to be encouraged to participate. This project is to be subject to continuing monitoring and evaluation.

2. The establishment of a key centre of applied English language research and teaching. This ought to be canvassed by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission in its forthcoming triennial report and is to follow the issuing of invitations to tertiary institutions for proposals. The centre is to be expressly concerned with ESL for children and adults as well as other English language development issues. It is probable that a consortium within one city would be required, capitalizing on the different strengths in existing institutions.

3. The establishment of a standing committee on English and Learning of the Advisory Committee on the Australian Languages Policy (ACALP).

A key and urgent role of the standing committee is to develop and disseminate national guidelines on language in teacher education for discussion and, ultimately, for implementation by teacher education authorities.

4. That ESL for children be recognised as an integral part of all English language development.

The New Arrivals component of the Commonwealth English as a Second Language

Program ought to be expanded so that eligible students are able to participate for up to 12 months in intensive English. This participation ought to consist of two types of experience: intensive learning of English in language centres and intensive learning of English in schools. The time allocated to each is to be determined at local levels according to the needs of the students. Such students ought to be offered a broad curriculum and this will necessitate some instruction in the mother tongue where this is possible to arrange.

The General Support element ought to be expanded and reconceptualised as a professional development program. Whilst continuing primarily to employ specialist ESL teachers, a significant emphasis is to be placed on the extension of their role as resource personnel, in team teaching, curriculum and materials development work with generalist and other subject teachers. This will require attention to specialist and generalist ESL teacher training, in accordance with the recommendations of the 1984 "National Follow-up Conference on TESOL Teacher Education". A major focus of this program is to be English for Academic Purposes for senior secondary ESL students and the stimulation of language across the curriculum approaches, as well as the integration of new arrivals, subsequent to their participation in intensive English, into regular schools.

5. That the Commonwealth Schools Commission finalise the development of the index of needs for funding allocation, evaluation and accountability purposes, as well as for curriculum planning purposes as recommended by Campbell and McMeniman (1985). An express focus of this is to describe attainable objectives for ESL under different conditions and programs.

6. That the ESL program for children develop triennial plans and issue these for discussion and comment in each year of their implementation.

7. Adult ESL Learning

- (a) The development of an index of needs for funding allocation, evaluation, accountability and curriculum planning purposes is required for adult ESL learners, both immigrant and Aboriginal.
- (b) This policy strongly endorses the implementation of the recommendations of the review of the Adult Migrant Education Program (Campbell 1985).
- (c) There is a need for greater co-ordination of all programs for adult ESL learners at the Commonwealth level.
- (d) There is a need to integrate adult ESL learning with the range of pre-vocational, vocational and recreational course offerings of the TAFE sector and the course offerings of other adult education providers.
- (e) The ACALP is to convene a TESL standing committee whose purpose it will be to bring together at a national level ESL providers both for children and adults so that maximum information exchange and co-ordination of effort and planning is undertaken. This is particularly important at the marginal levels of responsibility of different programs, for example, school ESL and the Adult Migrant Education Program, TAFE advanced English and the Adult Migrant Education Program.

8. Teacher Education

In its next triennial report, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission should stimulate teacher training institutions to address the content of language in education programs, ensuring that all pre-service and in-service education and training includes components on

language and learning, ESL and bilingualism. The national guidelines on language in education which were mentioned in 3. above are to form a basis for language education expectations in teacher preparation courses. Funds are to be allocated to stimulate specific initiatives in this area.

9. An independent expert panel should be established to review the accredited schools for EFL in Australia and Australian offshore offerings in EFL and supplement the present peer review available to accrediting authorities. The panel is to operate to maintain standards in EFL by advising relevant Commonwealth Departments. Australia should assist English language development in the region in the ways it is presently doing but needs to increase targeted aid, such as the provision of aid to provincial advisers/consultants who assist teachers in the region, by providing programs which link them with their peers in Australia.

10. Adult Literacy

It is proposed that a concerted and well-planned campaign be implemented during 1988 to attempt to improve levels of adult literacy.

Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Languages

11. A program of support for Aboriginal languages is proposed with a more specifically educational focus. This will consist of a three-year National Aboriginal Languages Project (NALP) to be managed within the Commonwealth Education Portfolio.

The NALP is to be seen as an educational program with the purposes of providing supplementary funding to initiatives in Aboriginal language education to State/Territory and non government education authorities or school communities for projects.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission is to be requested to develop the specific guidelines, evaluation and other measures to enable the NALP to become operational efficiently.

The NALP ought to be responsible for the disbursement of the following amounts:

1987-88	\$1.0m
1988-89	\$2.5m
1989-90	\$2.5m

through the Aboriginal Education Unit.

12. The Advisory Council on an Australian Languages Policy (ACALP) ought to constitute a standing committee to be serviced by the Aboriginal Education Unit. The standing committee is to be responsible for advising on the operation of the NALP, and for the facilitation and integration of developments in the Aboriginal languages area generally.

The composition of the standing committee ought to be devised by the National Aboriginal Education Committee, comprise a majority of Aboriginal people, and be chaired by an Aboriginal person with professional, preferably linguistic, training. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, the Aboriginal Languages Association, the NT Department of Education, the School of Australian Linguistics and Batchelor College ought to be represented on it. Torres Strait Islander representation is to be provided directly by educational advisory groups of the Torres Strait Islanders.

Other functions of the Committee shall be:

- to convene an annual workshop of Aboriginal language speakers, teachers and linguists involved in practical work relating to the recording and maintenance of Aboriginal languages;
- to identify and encourage relevant linguistic and/or educational research of a practical value for bi-lingual educational programs;
- to encourage and assist Aboriginal people concerned with language in the attainment of formal linguistic skills;

- to advise researchers and funding agencies of research priorities with regard to Aboriginal languages, including salvage and maintenance work;
- to monitor and advise on the provision of language services for Aboriginal clients;
- to represent the language interests of all Aboriginal people.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee should be a member of the ACALP.

13. The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission ought to provide the appropriate funding for the establishment of a key centre of language teaching and research on Aboriginal languages. The base for such a centre ought to be the Batchelor College, Northern Territory, though it may operate a split campus arrangement with the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs. The operation of this centre is to be negotiated with appropriate bodies. The centre is to be a national centre. An immediate priority for its work is to accelerate the training of Aboriginal bilingual teachers in remote areas, as well as on campus and to address bilingual education needs generally in its programs.

14. As part of the development of a language awareness program for junior secondary school level, the Curriculum Development Council ought to include Aboriginal language issues, including socio-linguistic and cultural questions, in a coherent course, using existing materials. This ought to be promoted widely and energetically among all language teachers and State/Territory government and non-government curriculum authorities.

A Language Other Than English For All

15. The Commonwealth Schools Commission ought to establish an Australian Second Language Learning Program. The ASLLP shall operate two funding schemes.

- (1) A contractual/agreement scheme directly with education authorities (70% of the funds).
- (2) A submission-based scheme (30% of the funds).

The following arrangements with regard to the contractual/agreement scheme are desirable:

During early third term of 1987 (and subsequent years) a meeting of one representative from each education authority with appropriate CSC/Commonwealth Education/CDC officials take place. Each authority is to propose a small number of key initiatives.

Desirably, these are to be presented as inter-systemic State or Territory proposals.

The contractual/agreement scheme will involve three-year projects which the State/Territory or particular authority would propose.

The contract/agreement would involve:

- partial matching of funds in increasing proportions over time such that carriage of the project would be an authority responsibility at the termination of the period for which the contract/agreement is made, usually three years;
- the dissemination of detailed information on the progress, findings and outcomes of the initiatives at annual meetings convened under the auspices of the ASLLP;
- the carriage of projects on behalf of the nation such that major curriculum or materials development projects would be disseminated and shared widely on production.

It is important that the ASLLP be devised in such a way that only programs and initiatives which stress excellence are supported.

Each State/Territory should be supported for initiatives to which an undertaking is made for continuity and levels of matched funding. A maximum of three projects/programs per State/Territory seems desirable.

ASLLP funds

1987-88: \$7.5m

1988-89: \$7.5m

1989-90: \$7.5m

The submissions-based scheme would comprise 30% of the funds of the ASLLP. These would be advertised publicly. Grants ought to be made on an annual non-renewable basis to support innovative or high quality projects in language education in States or Territories.

16. ACALP is to convene a Languages other than English Standing Committee.

This Standing Committee of the ACALP is to convene an assessment panel along with representatives of the Commonwealth Schools Commission, to assess the proposals and recommend projects for funding.

17. Key Centres of Teaching and Research into Language

During the next triennium of funding the CTEC ought to provide additional tagged funds for the establishment of key centres of research, teaching and information on language. These are to deal with the following areas:

- (a) Aboriginal languages and Bilingual education.
- (b) An Institute of Community Languages.
- (c) An applied English Centre.
- (d) One Centre whose responsibilities it will be to provide intensive, continuation and refresher language training for the Australian

representatives overseas.

- (e) The establishment of a national clearing house on language teaching, research and information, assessing curriculum data bases.
- (f) A centre offering a program of education for the deaf at tertiary level, using sign language, particularly in courses for professional training in education.
- (g) Specific tagged funding to tertiary institutions which undertake to offer or extend present provisions in teaching the Asian languages in the category of languages of wider learning, offering practical language education and the possibility of combined specializations in economically related areas.

The ACALP is to be requested to consider further the establishment of these centres and report to the Commonwealth Government following its Winter 1987 meeting with a more definite listing and detail.

18. The Australian Bicentennial Authority has decided to endow a broadly-based foundation with multicultural aims. Such a foundation could contribute significantly to the objectives of this policy, particularly if it were to specify that its aims and objectives could be achieved through languages. It is recommended that the ACALP address the potential role of such a foundation for languages in Australia. It is desirable that the government make a financial contribution of approximately \$1.0m to the foundation on condition that it be entitled the Bicentennial Languages Foundation and that it operate to the advantage of Australia's linguistic resources and their interconnection with cultural diversity and pluralism. The ACALP ought to address this question at its first meeting.

19. Teacher Development

In its next triennial report, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission should stimulate teacher training institutions to address the teacher education proposals outlined in "Teacher Education, Recruitment and Employment", for teachers of languages other than English.

Funds are to be allocated to stimulate specific initiatives in this area.

20. The Commonwealth Schools Commission ought to elaborate the proposals made on "ethnic schools" under the section "Choosing the Languages", renaming them Part-Time Community Language Schools and, in consultation with the standing committee of ACALP, make financial and administrative recommendations to the government as soon as possible.

21. The Curriculum Development Council is requested to address the matters referred to it, specifically the expansion of the ALL Project, the year 12 assessment project and the development of guidelines and models for language awareness programs at junior secondary level as described under the section entitled "Choosing the Languages" and elsewhere in the report.

22. The Australian Education Council ought specifically to advocate the development of models for offering wider numbers of languages as well as the promotion of the benefit and desirability of a language other than English for all Australian students.

23. Interpreting and Translating

Interpreting and translating ought to be regarded as an aspect of service provision in Australia rather than a welfarist program for the disadvantaged. To this end the continued professionalization of the field is urgently required. It is important that this extend to the development of control of entry mechanisms and registration of interpreters/translators so

that professional, accredited personnel only are used.

24. As far as the conduct of business in the region is concerned, there is a major need for the training of high level Interpreters/Translators in Indonesian/Malay, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese in specialised, technical fields. Training centres need to be concentrated so that a spread of languages across Australia can be assured.

25. Special attention needs to be paid to developing training in Aboriginal languages and for the deaf. The creation of the key centres for teaching, information and research on language in each of these two areas offers the potential for these needs to be addressed. NAATI and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission are requested to collaborate on the establishment of such training at the proposed centres.

26. It is desirable that the government provide additional funds to NAATI to meet pre-specified plans in particular areas of need.

27. Languages, the Media and Modern Technology

In unplanned ways the media impacts on informal learning of languages, especially English. It is important that the ACALP, in pursuing its work of attending to the implementation of this policy, pay systematic attention to the possibilities which modern technologies offer for planned language education, specifically:

- (i) the opportunity for creative use of technology for language maintenance, extension and learning in a wide range of languages.
- (ii) the provision of appropriate information to the "information poor".

28. Libraries

That libraries, guided by the National and State libraries, and in consultation with all relevant

user groups, develop a 5-year plan to:

- increase stocks of materials in languages other than English, to provide both for advanced learners of those languages as well as the community of readers of those languages in Australia.
- to increase holdings suitable for learners of both English and other languages.
- to continue to diversify materials stocked, through the provision of talking books, et cetera, to maximise access to libraries for the illiterate and the print-handicapped.

This plan is to explore the potential of libraries to offer assistance to business personnel by providing specialist literature, information and exhibitions on Asian languages, business, culture and trade, in conjunction with Australian trade personnel and offices overseas.

A staged program permitting sources to be established and secured and consisting of \$1.0m in each of three years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 ought to be provided for this purpose. This program may be seen as a once-only initiative to accompany the national languages policy.

29. Language Testing

A language testing unit is proposed. Its purpose is to concentrate expertise in the development of Australian tests of language for academic, occupational and other purposes. In addition to designing tests the Unit would co-ordinate marking, publishing and disseminating information to prospective candidates and the provision of "follow-up" advice. The Unit ought to form part of the Commonwealth Education Portfolio initially but operate under the auspices of the ACALP. It would ultimately be located within the national key centre of applied English.

A fee comparable to the fee levied on candidates of the TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language of Princeton University) for foreign

students wishing to study in the USA ought to be levied.

In the medium term the Unit would seem to have the potential to be substantially, possibly fully, self-supporting.

Its establishment cost would be approximately \$250,000 per annum. With approximately 10,000 tests per annum a \$50 levy per test would recoup initial costs.

30. Advisory Council on Australia's Languages Policy

An Advisory Council on Australia's Languages Policy is proposed as the structure for ensuring that the diverse elements of language considered in this policy are co-ordinated and integrated.

The Advisory Council on Australia's Languages Policy ought to have four standing committees and temporary task force committees and Associated Centres. The temporary committees should be allocated special tasks whose completion will constitute the termination of the committee. On the establishment, in time, of the proposed key centres on language, teaching and research, they should be designated Associated Centres, charged with the implementation of key aspects of the policy and granted membership of ACALP when they are fully operational.

Standing Committees

- English and learning
- Aboriginal and Islander languages
- Languages other than English
- Language services and the communication disabled

Temporary Committees

- Adult literacy action - 1988 campaign
- Teaching English as a second language -

coordinating committee

(3) The overseeing of the programs recommended under English for All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, and A Language other than English for All, through their specially-constituted Standing Committees.

The terms of reference for ACALP shall be:

- To convene a Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter meeting each year
- To provide advice to government on the implementation and further development of the national policy on languages
- To ensure the coherence of the work of the standing committees and temporary committees
- To provide a forum for discussion of language issues
- To keep abreast of international developments on language issues
- To issue a newsletter subsequent to each meeting
- To produce an annual report for all its operations, including the standing committees, for presentation to Parliament
- To co-ordinate national activities on language issues.

(4) The ACALP is to encourage all State/Territory Governments and all Commonwealth Departments to address the application of the principles espoused in this policy in their programs and practices.

(5) The convening of a committee to co-ordinate ESL activities at the national level.

(6) The identification of gaps and needed improvements in the national languages policy and proposed actions in such areas.

(7) The question of the role and directions of the Bicentennial Foundation as described under II-B.

(8) The desirability of the establishment of a National Advisory Committee of the Deaf and the role and composition of such a body.

During 1987/1988 the ACALP shall specifically address the following questions as well:

(9) The standardisation of Australian English and the adequacy of current activities in this field.

(1) The detailed elaboration of the proposal for key centres of language teaching and research.

(2) The development of the plan of implementation of the Adult Literacy Action 1988 campaign for which the ACALP shall constitute a temporary committee.

It is recommended that \$5m be made available in 1987/88 for this campaign which is to be implemented on the expert advice and guidance of adult literacy groups.