

MULTILINGUALISM IN AUSTRALIA

REFLECTIONS ON CURRENT AND FUTURE RESEARCH TRENDS

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This paper gives a critical overview of Australian research in the area of immigrant languages, arguing that this field of study is a significant component of the wider applied linguistics scene in Australia and has also contributed to enhancing the broad appreciation of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country. It shows that research into immigrant languages has drawn upon a range of paradigms and evaluates those that have been most productively used. The paper argues that new research developments are needed to take into account the changing linguistic landscape of Australia and the increased fluidity and mobility of current migration.

INTRODUCTION

Research into immigrant languages¹ in Australia started by following international trends but soon gave its own original contribution to the field. It commenced with the seminal work carried out by Michael Clyne (1967, 1972) on the Anglicisation of the speech of Germans, drawing on studies conducted mainly in the United States (e.g., by Haugen, 1953; cf. McNamara, 2001). From the 1970s, studies of immigrant languages flourished in the field of language maintenance and shift, following the work by Fishman and colleagues (Fishman, 1964). Again Michael Clyne and his associates have been at the forefront of research in this area; for example, through their detailed analyses of the language question used in the Census, which provided an excellent snapshot of the overall language ecology of the country. Since then, issues of maintenance of immigrant languages have been at the core of most research and have been investigated in a number of different perspectives. It is important to mention that in Australia also the fields of language policy and of language education have been informed by research related to immigrant languages (cf. the *National Policy on Languages*, Lo Bianco, 1987).

In the Australian context immigrant languages are overall in a vulnerable position.² In fact, although Australia has been celebrating its cultural and linguistic diversity since the 1970s, it remains a strongly Anglocentric country, where the dominance of English is largely unchallenged. As research has shown, immigrant minorities tend to abandon their languages relatively quickly, not only in the transition from the first generation to the second but also within the first generation. The maintenance and development of immigrant languages appears to be a fairly arduous task, partly as a consequence of lack

of institutional support. Furthermore, if we consider the broader social context, we notice that Australian society still shows a limited interest in languages and/or language study (cf. Liddicoat and Curnow, 2009), and that bilingual and/or multilingual skills are not yet fully recognised as valuable assets in the Australian society, particularly in the work environment.³

Most of these issues have been areas of research in Australian applied linguistics. More importantly, they have also been concerns that the immigrant communities themselves have identified as particularly relevant for their lives in Australia, and for which they have struggled since the 1970s, often setting up community based initiatives to address them (cf. Ozolins, 1993, pp. 118–121; pp. 123–127). With specific regard to language maintenance, for example, Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels (1995, p. 134) state that it is still largely financed by immigrant groups ‘who are in so doing offering an essential service to the nation’, even though some of its responsibility today has been taken over by the Australian government.⁴

In this paper, I critically evaluate the main paradigms that have been applied in the study of Australia’s immigrant languages, assess the overall contribution of such research⁵ and outline some possible new developments (cf. also Rubino, 2007).

THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AT THE MACRO LEVEL

Scholars interested in Australian multilingualism have been particularly fortunate in being able to avail themselves of a macro picture of the language demography of the country.⁶ This has been provided with unfailing regularity by the extensive analyses of Census data carried out by Clyne and associates (e.g., Clyne, 1982; Clyne, 1991; Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels, 1995; Clyne and Kipp, 1997, Clyne and Kipp, 2002; Kipp and Clyne, 2003; Clyne, Hajek and Kipp, 2008). Taking as a measure of language shift the proportion of speakers born in a particular country who declare to speak ‘English only’ at home, this research has identified the extent of language shift within each immigrant group, across groups and across Censuses. Furthermore, the cross-tabulation of the language data with socio-demographic variables has enlightened the dynamics of language shift.

On the broader level, for instance, recent analyses of Census data have highlighted the considerable changes that are currently taking place in the language demography of Australia—at least in the home environment—as a result of the ageing of the post World War II communities and new migration patterns. Languages such as Dutch, German, Hungarian, Italian and Greek, whose majority of speakers are in the higher age brackets, display accelerated rates of shift; on the contrary, there is an increase in the number of

speakers of languages such as Mandarin, Arabic and Vietnamese, of more recently formed communities and/or new migration waves, mainly from Asia and the Middle East. Thus, in terms of home language usage, the linguistic diversity of Australia is shifting away from the European languages of the post war period (Clyne and Kipp, 2002; Kipp and Clyne, 2003; Clyne, Hajek and Kipp, 2008).

Census data have also pointed to factors affecting language shift, operating at the group or at the individual level (Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels, 1995, p. 116). At the group level, relevant factors are e.g. the numerical size of the immigrant group in conjunction with its settlement patterns. Thus, higher rates of language maintenance occur (i) in those states where a group is numerically strongest but also there is less dispersion; (ii) in the urban rather than the rural setting (88% of LOTE speakers live in the capital cities); and (iii) in the local areas with high concentrations of speakers (Kipp and Clyne, 2003). This is the case, for example, of Vietnamese, Turkish or Khmer speakers in particular areas of some capital cities (Kipp and Clyne, 2003, p. 39). At the individual level, generation, age and gender are the major socio-demographic factors affecting language maintenance in the Australian context. In fact higher rates of language maintenance occur among (i) the first rather than the second generation; (ii) older people in the first generation (see however Clyne, 2005, pp. 79–80 for variation among different groups); and (iii) women more than men (but see Clyne, 2005, p. 79 for a different trend regarding some Asian groups). Marriage patterns also seem to have an effect, with children of endogamous marriages displaying higher language maintenance than children of exogamous marriages (cf. Clyne and Kipp, 2002; Kipp and Clyne, 2003; Clyne and Kipp, 2006, pp. 123–124).

A major contribution of this body of research is the fact that it has highlighted remarkable differences across immigrant groups in the rates of shift, both within the same generation and across generations. Indeed, Census data point to a sort of *scale* among all immigrant groups in Australia, with some groups adopting English as their home language much more quickly than others. For instance, high rates of shift are found amongst migrants born in the Netherlands or Germany, intermediate rates amongst those born in Poland and Italy, and low rates among those born in Hong Kong and Greece (Kipp and Clyne, 2003, p. 33). Although this paradigm has identified a number of relevant factors that contribute to language shift, it has also pointed to the *interaction* of different sets of factors as explanatory of such a process in the life of an individual or in an immigrant minority (Clyne, 2003, p. 69). For instance, geographical concentration may need to be viewed in interaction with other variables, as is the case with the Macedonian community (Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p. 116). This is also the case with other socio-demographic factors that in the Australian context have an ambivalent (cf. Kloss, 1966)

effect on language maintenance, such as length of residence, education and socio-economic status. As shift to English can occur also among recently arrived migrants, length of residence needs to be considered together with other variables, e.g., policies and attitudes of the host country (Pauwels, 1988a, p. 12; Clyne, 1991, p. 75).

As is clear, the value of such a wealth of linguistic data at the national level is undeniable. Nonetheless, the limitations of survey data, particularly regarding self-assessed language use, is an issue that needs to be considered (cf. Pauwels, 2004, p. 722). Another problem is the increasingly limited role of the current Census language question in capturing the use of immigrant languages by the second and third generations outside the home environment.

LANGUAGE USE IN THE COMMUNITY

Australian research has investigated patterns of language use in the immigrant communities through the so called sociology of language approach, and—to a lesser extent—the social network approach.

The sociology of language approach has been very productive in Australia since the 1980s. While acknowledging its limitations (e.g., Heller, 2007b, p. 11), the analysis of patterns of language use in the various domains (Fishman, 1964) has identified the situations where immigrant languages are mostly used, and the different ways in which the process of language maintenance occurs in the various migrant communities. Furthermore, compared with its original postulation, in Australia this approach has often been broadened through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies (e.g., Kouzmin, 1988; Doucet, 1991; Clyne and Kipp, 1999; Clyne and Kipp, 2006), thus making it a more effective tool to explore language use.

Research has focused on the family for its fundamental role in language maintenance, and on the interlocutor as the variable that most impacts on language choice. Other variables taken into account—though to a much lesser extent—are the topic of the conversation and the place where it takes place. Patterns of language use are then cross-tabulated with socio-demographic information about the subjects (cf. also Pauwels, 2005).

A major finding emerging from studies conducted among a wide range of immigrant minorities (e.g., Swedish, Garner, 1988; Russian, Garner, 1988 and Kouzmin, 1988; Greek, Tamis, 1991; Dutch and German, Pauwels, 1986, Clyne 1991, Clyne and Pauwels, 1997; Italian, Bettoni and Rubino, 1996; Chinese, Wu, 1995, Clyne and Kipp, 1999; Vietnamese, Ninnes, 1996; Arabic and Spanish, Clyne and Kipp, 1999; Macedonian,

Filipino and Somali, Clyne and Kipp, 2006) is that the nuclear family is *not* necessarily the stronghold of language maintenance, as originally postulated (e.g., Fishman, 1964, p. 430). More important is instead the extended family, as the use of immigrant languages is highest with older relatives. Another important finding concerns the generation of the speaker vs. the generation of the interlocutor as the variables that exercise the greatest impact in selecting the language with various family members.

Language transmission within the family has also been studied through more qualitative methodologies, investigating for example the development of bilingualism in naturalistic situations according to the principle of *one person, one language* (e.g., Döpke, 1992). More recently, the range of factors influencing decisions—and opportunities—for family language transmission has been explored in depth through the case study approach (Lambert, 2008; Schüpbach, 2009).

So far less attention has been paid to other domains that can also be important in language maintenance. A few studies have dealt with friendship, noting that the regular contact with friends from the same immigrant community has an effect on language maintenance not only amongst the first generation (e.g., Pauwels, 1988b, p. 92; Pütz, 1991, p. 485; Bettoni and Rubino, 1996, p. 130), but also amongst the second. For instance, Winter and Pauwels (2005, 2006) show that German, Greek and Vietnamese second generation participants use the immigrant language in friendship contexts, however this is particularly noticeable in some subgroups, i.e., among German and Vietnamese women and among Greek men.

Some studies have explored the domain of transactions (e.g., cafés, restaurants or shops run by immigrants, clubs and associations) highlighting its important role in language maintenance particularly for the first generation (e.g. Wu, 1995, p. 115; Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 315). The church is another domain that can be fundamental to language maintenance, especially for the older generation (Woods, 2004, p. 159) and in the case of minorities following religious creeds that are different from the majority group (cf. the use of Russian and Greek in the Orthodox Churches, e.g., Garner, 1988; Kouzmin, 1988; Woods, 2004). On the other hand, the work domain appears to be one where English tends to prevail (Clyne, 1991, p. 139), as it often becomes the *official* language even in workplaces characterised by high numbers of workers from a single language background. Immigrant languages in the workplace are generally more common in informal interactions with co-workers (Clyne, 1991, p. 140; Bettoni and Rubino, 1996, p. 106).

An issue that is still under researched is the impact of the media and of the new technology on language maintenance. Reading the ethnic press and listening to radio

programs in the LOTE appear more widespread among the first generation (e.g., Bettoni and Rubino, 1996, p. 46; Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 296; Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p.48), whereas television programs and videos are quite popular across both generations, but in some minorities more so among the younger groups (e.g., among Arabic or Chinese speaking immigrants, Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 215; p. 296), depending upon availability. With regard to the new technology, some recent studies point to a widespread use of the Internet in the LOTE especially by younger generations, with positive results in both linguistic and cultural terms (cf. Fitzgerald and Debski, 2006, p. 9, regarding the Poles). Technology is also used by both generations as a way of accessing news in one's own language (e.g., among the Somali, Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p. 111) or of keeping in regular contact with relatives overseas (Lambert, 2008; Rubino, 2009). This small body of research highlights the potential in language maintenance of the new technology and the need to further develop this area of studies.

An extremely important domain is the school, which has been repeatedly identified as the site which promotes and accelerates language shift,⁷ except in the case of bilingual education. Provision of LOTE teaching throughout Australia has certainly increased in the past three decades (e.g., languages are now taught in primary schools), however the impact of schools on language maintenance overall appears to be quite limited (with some exceptions, see e.g. the good results in Arabic reported by Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 326). This is due, for instance, to the fact that the languages commonly taught at school often do not reflect the demography of Australia (cf. Clyne, Fernandez and Grey, 2004); or to the wide variation in opportunities for learning the various languages in the different states (cf. Liddicoat and Curnow, 2009).

While school programs which specifically aim at language maintenance are quite widespread throughout Australia, it is often the case that they do not work effectively towards the development of the linguistic skills that immigrant children bring to school because of organisational issues (e.g., pupils of different language abilities being taught together) or little recognition of the needs of immigrant pupils (Clyne et al., 1997). Better results could emerge from bilingual programs of the immersion type, i.e., where the LOTE is the language of instruction, however there are still very few of them.⁸ Furthermore, they are not specifically directed at LOTE speakers as they are generally attended by all the pupils of a particular school; in many of these programs LOTE speakers may represent only a small percentage (cf. Fernandez, 1996; Clyne et al., 1995). In any case, the impact of these programs on language maintenance is difficult to assess, given such issues as the very diverse levels of language competence displayed by immigrant children

(cf. Clyne et al., 1995, p. 62), but also the difficulties involved in the actual process of evaluation (Elder, 2005). In spite of these limitations, school programs can have positive effects for LOTE speakers, as they receive additional language input, develop their literacy skills in the LOTE, and foster positive attitudes towards their own language and background (cf. Fernandez, 1996, Clyne et al., 1997, Lotherington, 2001, Zheng, 2009). All this contributes to supporting the language maintenance effort of the pupils' families.

Language maintenance and development often take place more effectively in the after-hours schools run by immigrant organisations, particularly in the case of the smaller languages, and in the few bilingual schools/programs existing in the country, a number of which are also community based. Indeed, since the 1980s there has been a resurgence in the establishment of independent schools, such as Greek Orthodox, Greek Community or Islamic schools, however not all of them use the LOTE as the language of instruction (cf. Clyne, 2001, p. 73). Nonetheless, some of them, for instance amongst the Islamic schools, do appear to promote high usage of the Arabic language as a fundamental element of the curriculum as well as a means of interaction among the students (Hall, 1996). More research is certainly needed in this area (see e.g. Bradshaw, 2006 on a Greek Orthodox school).

The domain approach has also been useful in exploring the *linguistic* factors that most impact on language maintenance in the Australian context, particularly the premigration situations of diglossia that characterise some minority groups. For example, these studies have highlighted the different impact of diglossia on language maintenance across different communities; the distribution of the standard language vs. the dialect in the domains; and the overall stronger position of the standard language (cf. Bettoni and Rubino, 1996, p. 140; Pauwels, 1986; Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 132; Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p. 119), which can become a strong identity marker in the migration context (as in the case of Filipino, cf. Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p. 134, but not of Swiss German, cf. Schüpbach, 2008). Also pre-migration experience with language maintenance and situations of multilingualism (e.g., people coming from the multilingual context of Egypt, Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 38) seems to have a facilitating role for language maintenance. Literacy is another relevant linguistic factor that plays a twofold role, in that pre-migration literacy among the first generation and the development of literacy skills among the younger generations both facilitate language maintenance (Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 313; Clyne and Kipp, 2006, p. 126). The presence of a language in an educational institution also increases its chances of language maintenance, as in the case of Mandarin over Cantonese (Wu, 1995, p. 108).

As mentioned above, another paradigm that has been adopted in a small body of Australian research to investigate patterns of language use is the social network approach. The main tenet of this paradigm is that speakers' language use is influenced by the type of social network in which they move. Strong network ties are considered a 'norm maintenance mechanism', while weak ties are taken as a factor facilitating language change (see Milroy, 1987). Indeed, according to Pauwels (1997, p. 281), the higher use of the immigrant language among the Greek and Vietnamese first generation compared with the German can be explained in light of the fact that the former operate in more dense and multiplex networks of people from the same background. Likewise, type of network can also be a reason for the higher use of the immigrant language among the first generation compared with the second.

The Australian studies confirm the importance of including social networks amongst the relevant factors in exploring the process of language maintenance (Kipp, 2004, 2008) and the overall validity of the network approach. Nonetheless they have also exposed some of its limitations. For example, Winter and Pauwels (2006) note that it is not just the presence of bilinguals in one's network that can account for language maintenance and/or use of the immigrant language, but other crucial and more subtle elements, such as the performance of particular identities (e.g., masculinity). This would explain why, for instance, second generation Greek men use the immigrant language more than German and Vietnamese men. Thus, in order to increase its explanatory power, the construct of network needs to be refined along the lines of more fruitful notions, such as the 'community of practice' (Pauwels, 1997, p. 283).

THE STRUCTURAL APPROACH

Australian research has been very fertile and very innovative in the study of the structural changes that immigrant languages undergo as a result of the pressure from English. Most notably, it has identified previously unnoticed phenomena of language contact (e.g., *triggering*, Clyne, 1967, p. 84); has expanded the scope of particular notions (e.g., *transference* at different linguistic levels,⁹ cf. Clyne, 1972, chap. 5; Clyne, 2003, pp. 76–79); and has identified systematic correspondences between language contact phenomena and speakers' demographic and sociological variables (e.g., speaker's generation and age of migration with patterns of transference in the immigrant language, cf. Clyne, 1972; Bettoni, 1981; Tamis, 1991).

Several studies have shown trends common to different languages in the way structural changes take place under the impact of the majority language. Furthermore, such

changes are related to typological distance between languages (cf. Clyne, 1991, chap. 4; Clyne, 2003, chap. 4). For instance, analyses of transference patterns have identified the lexicon as the area most affected by English, particularly when immigrants need to express concepts specific to the Australian context (e.g., ‘bush’, ‘fence’, ‘farm’ and ‘boss’). Furthermore, new words are created by combining English lexical morphemes with grammatical morphemes from immigrant languages: e.g., *flataki* (‘little flat’) from the English ‘flat’ and the Greek diminutive suffix *-aki* (Tamis, 1991, p. 256); *farmerieren* (‘to farm’) from the English ‘farm’ and the German verb ending *-ieren* (Clyne, 1991, p. 163). While nouns and discourse markers are the items most commonly transferred, verbs are the most highly integrated class of transfers across several languages. Different languages tend to follow similar rules in grammatical integration, for example in assigning gender to English nouns. Overall, these structural changes result in a process of convergence (Clyne, 2003, p. 79), whereby languages become more similar to each other, partly through the process of transference.

Studies in this paradigm have kept the phenomenon of transference distinct from switching between languages. In line with international research, it has been shown that code switching between English and the immigrant language is quite common, and can be motivated by linguistic (e.g., lack of language competence) or sociolinguistic reasons, such as changes in the context of situation (e.g., a different interlocutor), or by discourse reasons (e.g., to introduce a quotation). Among the second generation dominant in English, code switching into the LOTE can be used as identity marker, for example in talking to other people from the same ethnic background (Tsokalidou, 1994; Winter and Pauwels, 2000; Rubino, 2006) and with a symbolic, rather than a communicative, function (e.g., Rubino, 2000; see also Pauwels, 1988a, p.12). Furthermore, recent work on tonal languages (e.g., Vietnamese and Mandarin) has identified triggering at the syntactic and especially tonal levels (e.g., Ho-Dac, 2003, chap. 4) as a process that facilitates code switching. Interesting insights have also emerged from some pioneering work which shows that trilingual speakers tend to mark clearer boundaries between the languages than bilinguals, possibly as a result of their higher meta-linguistic awareness (see Clyne and Cassia, 1999; Clyne, 2003, p. 239).

Within this paradigm, Australian research has also dealt with the issue of language attrition, focusing on attrition in LOTEs among the first and the second generation (e.g., Bettoni, 1990; Bettoni, 1991b; de Bot and Clyne, 1994; Waas, 1996; Yagmur, 1997; Caruso, 2004), and only to a lesser extent on attrition in English as a second language among older immigrants (e.g., Clyne, 1977). Special attention has been paid to the lexicon,

as the language level where attrition first manifests itself (e.g. de Bot and Clyne, 1994; Yagmur, 1997, p. 78).

THE ROLE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Since the early 1980s, Australian research has given ample scope to the study of the impact of socio-cultural factors on language maintenance, in particular through the humanistic approach of the *core values* adopted by Smolicz and his research associates. According to this paradigm, each immigrant group has particular cultural values that are considered fundamental to its existence as a group.

According to Smolicz (1981), a first element that can explain the different rates of language shift of the various minorities is the *cultural distance* between the core values of the majority and of the minority groups. Indeed, in the Australian context very low rates of shift are displayed by speakers who are culturally very distant from the Anglo-Celtic majority group, such as those from predominantly Islamic or Eastern Orthodox cultures (Greek, Lebanese, Macedonian, Turkish) or from Asian cultures (e.g., Hindus, Kipp and Clyne, 2003, p. 39), while the highest rates of shift occur among speakers from northern, central and western Europe. Among the cultural variables an important role is played by religion as an element defining higher or lower distance from the majority group (cf. Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 330, regarding Muslim Arabic speakers vs. Arabic speakers who are Copts or Maronite).

With specific regard to language, its role is considered of central importance to the value system of some immigrant groups, and of peripheral importance to the system of others, which would explain their higher rate of shift. This theory has been tested empirically on a number of immigrant groups (e.g., Poles, Greeks, Latvians, Chinese), working in the main with second generation participants and using a combination of qualitative and questionnaire data. For example, for the Italians, the family rather than the language seems to be a core value (but see Smolicz, Secombe and Hudson, 2001, p. 164, where the role of dialect is acknowledged as integral to the southern Italian family), thus differing from other groups, such as the Greeks, the Polish or the Chinese, where language seems to play a much more crucial role (Smolicz, 1981, p. 76).

Both factors, cultural distance and language as core value, can certainly contribute to explain the different linguistic outcomes of some immigrant groups in Australia. Nonetheless, it must be noted that these notions need to be viewed in a more dynamic perspective. Indeed, perceptions of cultural distance and values held by a minority are not static but can vary over time or across generations (Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels, 1995,

p. 129; Clyne and Kipp, 2006, pp. 120–121). Furthermore, the core value theory cannot explain the possible discrepancy between language use and language attitudes (Clyne, 1991, pp. 91–105; Clyne and Pauwels, 1997, p. 39; Clyne, 2003, pp. 64–66); nor can it account for multiple group membership or for the fact that in some instances there is not a total coincidence between an immigrant group and a LOTE, as in the case of pluricentric languages. Some of this criticism is addressed in Smolicz, Secombe, and Hudson (2001).

THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Studies on the factors associated with language maintenance have been conducted also in the socio-psychological perspective, focusing in particular on the areas of language attitudes and the ethno-linguistic vitality of immigrant communities.

The attitudes that speakers hold towards the language varieties that they use have long been recognised as a crucial variable in the process of language maintenance (e.g., Kloss, 1966), with negative attitudes being acknowledged as a powerful factor in hindering language maintenance. Australian research has explored language attitudes within one group as well as across different groups (e.g., Callan and Gallois, 1982, on Greeks and Italians) using a range of different methodologies.

Studies have identified overall puristic attitudes held by migrants towards the varieties that are spoken in the communities (e.g., Bettoni and Gibbons, 1988; Pauwels, 1991; Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 251). On the other hand, the attitudes held by the majority group towards the immigrant minority have been confirmed to act as an ambivalent factor (see Kloss, 1966) with regard to language maintenance. For example, while discrimination against Arabs and Muslims results in the promotion of their language and culture, in the case of the Chinese it encourages stronger efforts to integrate quickly into the mainstream, often causing the loss of the LOTE (Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 325).

Language maintenance has also been studied in light of the ethno-linguistic vitality theory (e.g., Giles, Rosenthal and Young, 1985), which puts forth that speakers and/or communities with perceptions of high ethno-linguistic vitality are more likely to maintain their languages than those with perceptions of low ethno-linguistic vitality.

Studies using the Subjective Vitality Questionnaire (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal, 1981) have been conducted into a number of immigrant languages, but their findings are sometimes contradictory. For example, comparing the perceptions of Greek-Australians vs. Anglo-Australians, Giles, Rosenthal, and Young (1985) report that overall the Anglo raters tend to accentuate the differences between the two groups (e.g., in terms of

social status) and the Greek raters to moderate them. The discrepancy is particularly evident with specific regard to the language items of the questionnaire, with Greek-Australian subjects giving higher ratings to the vitality of the Greek language in Australia in terms of status of the language and its presence in the media. Although this finding can contribute to explain the high rates of language maintenance displayed by the Greeks, in Gibbons and Ashcroft (1995) Greek-Australian and Italo-Australian school students, in spite of the more rapid shift to English among the latter, hold similar perceptions of language vitality. On the contrary, Yagmur (2004) reports low ethno-linguistic vitality among Turkish immigrants in Sydney in spite of their high rates of language maintenance. Some studies even suggest that subjective ethno-linguistic vitality can have little relationship with language use, which can be better predicted by other variables such as ethno-linguistic identification (Hogg and Rigoli, 1996).

More recently, Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) have investigated the maintenance of Spanish among a group of teenagers in Sydney not only taking into account attitudes and beliefs, but also using language tests to assess the participants' actual language ability. In this way they have been able to demonstrate that positive beliefs about bilingualism, as well as the determination to resist the pressure of the host language, correlate with high proficiency levels in both languages, English and Spanish.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As shown by the discussion above, research on immigrant languages has made a significant contribution to applied linguistics at the theoretical level at both the national and international levels. Furthermore, on the practical level it has helped to enhance the broad appreciation of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia and has informed to varying extents both language and social policies.

At the theoretical level, Australian research has contributed to a better understanding of the language dynamics that take place in the contact between majority and minority languages in contexts of migration. More specifically, Australian work has contributed to defining and refining paradigms in a number of areas, most notably, the descriptions of the speech repertoires of immigrant communities; models of language maintenance and shift; and the analysis of language contact phenomena.

At the practical level, applied linguists have contributed to claiming a legitimate place for immigrant languages in Australian society through their advocacy work and the deep political engagement of much of their research, committed to the maintenance and devel-

opment of immigrant languages (cf. Bettoni, 1991a). In particular, the findings from research have contributed to re-evaluate multilingualism and dispel prejudices about such phenomena as transference and code switching, too often viewed as *deviant* language behaviour. Furthermore, they have highlighted elements that play a crucial role in supporting efforts directed at language maintenance, such as the development of literacy; the importance not only of the family but also of other domains for LOTE use; the visibility of LOTE in the broader society (e.g., through the media) and particularly in education to raise their status; and the role of bilingual education.

Several scholars have also engaged in intense and continuous lobbying with the governments to achieve policies directed towards the recognition and the better utilisation of immigrant languages in all sectors of the broad Australian society, for example in the workplace but also in the area of education, in order to push federal and state authorities to formulate education policies that recognise the place of LOTE in the curriculum. A number of scholars have also offered practical help to immigrant communities in their efforts towards language maintenance and/or language revitalisation (see e.g. the work done by the *Language and Society Centre* at Monash University). It must also be mentioned that a great deal of the work done around immigrant languages has been directed not just narrowly at their maintenance and development among their speakers but also more broadly at the promotion of learning a second language for everybody, as articulated by the *National Language Policy*. Hence, while it has maintained and enhanced Australia's original multilingualism, at the same time this work has contributed to the enrichment of the cultural and linguistic experiences of all Australians.

Current research is certainly expanding the range of immigrant languages investigated by focusing increasingly on the more recently formed minorities, such as the Vietnamese (Ninnes, 1996; Pham, 1998; Ho-Dac, 2003); the Cambodian (Smolicz and Secombe, 2003); the Filipino and the Somali (Clyne and Kipp, 2006). Studies are also continuing on the smaller communities, such as the Danes (Søndergaard and Norrby, 2006), and on the languages of long established communities that are considered of lesser status, for example the Macedonians (Clyne and Kipp, 2006), the Turks (Yagmur, 1997, 2004) or the Maltese (Borland, 2005, 2006). Nonetheless, new areas of studies need to be strengthened or opened up in order to take into account the changing linguistic landscape of Australia and the transformations in the migration process itself.

Today, as a result of globalisation, both long established and newly formed migrant communities are characterised by much higher mobility and fluidity compared with the past, leading to increased diversification both within and across communities. As a result, some research paradigms that have been developed to investigate language issues in more

permanent and insulated immigration contexts need to be reassessed and could usefully draw more upon migration studies in other social sciences, such as sociology and anthropology. For example, a factor such as dispersal of communities might not impact on language shift to the same extent given the increased contact with the countries of origin and more opportunities for communication. By the same token, future research on language use could fruitfully focus on the impact of new sites and technology (e.g., Internet, mobile phones) on language maintenance. This can be particularly relevant more broadly for adolescents (Pauwels, 2005, p. 129), but also for the younger generations of the post war migrant communities, who frequently tend to use the immigrant language much more outside the immediate Australian context, in their contacts with the parents' countries of origin. This would also require a reconsideration of the Census language question, as so much of language usage occurs outside the home.

Furthermore, given the increasing proportion of second and third migrant generations in the Australian population, research needs to engage more with the complex issues of transnational identities and a view of bilingualism/multilingualism as social practice, with fluid boundaries between language varieties (cf. Heller, 2007a). Thus, while research on the younger generations so far has focused on the variables that favour language maintenance (e.g., Kipp, 2004; Lambert, 2008), for the future it could fruitfully expand in the direction of more interactionist, interpretative and also critical approaches (Heller, 2007b, p. 11). These studies would account for the globalised and transnational dimension in which these immigrant youth move daily, and shed light on the way they play with their multiple identities and language varieties, including mixed varieties, across different sites inside and outside their immigrant group, as well as across immigrant groups (e.g., Hinnenkamp, 2003; Giampapa, 2007; Jørgensen, 2008).

With regard to the educational sector, while research has been conducted in a wide range of contexts of LOTE teaching, more studies are needed particularly in the independent schools established by some communities which operate by clustering students of the same background. This would be useful to assess the outcomes of different educational models (cf. Clyne et al., 1995, p. 162), the success of language revitalization efforts and processes of identity formation.

Finally, in order to push forward Australian multilingualism and to resist the still widespread 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne, 2005), research will also need to look beyond the boundaries of the immigrant communities themselves to explore the investment in immigrant languages by Australians of different backgrounds and its impact in their identity and everyday life.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The term immigrant languages and LOTEs (Languages Other than English) are used interchangeably.
- ² Even more vulnerable are of course Australian indigenous languages.
- ³ For example, recently Clyne and Kipp (2006, p. 8) have noted how ‘immigration policy is swinging away from non-English speaking countries’.
- ⁴ Cf. Cenoz and Gorter (2008, p. 5), who also say that ‘Minority languages have traditionally been the concern of minority language speakers themselves and to a large extent ignored by speakers of majority languages’.
- ⁵ Due to space constraints, in this paper only published research has been discussed.
- ⁶ According to the 2006 Census, between 350 and 400 languages are currently spoken in Australia; of these, about 155 are indigenous languages (Clyne, Hajek and Kipp, 2008, p. 1).
- ⁷ Clyne and Kipp (2006, p. 32) have recently confirmed this across three generations even in the case of a well maintained language like Macedonian, with grandchildren addressing grandparents in English upon entry to school.
- ⁸ Gibbons (1997, p. 210) reports that in Australia less than 1% of children receives bilingual education in spite of the fact that at least 15% of them speak a LOTE at home when they start school. It is likely that this still largely reflects the current situation.
- ⁹ Transference is defined as ‘the process of bringing over any items, features or rules from one language to another, and for the results of this process’ (Clyne, 1991, p. 160).

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