Language-in-Education Policies in Australian Schools
—Implications of the Shift toward Asian Languages—

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1. Introduction

1) Background of the Study

According to a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation in 1998, the number of Japanese language learners in Australia is over 300,000, which ranks second in the world after Korea. There were 180,000 learners in 1993 and only 62,000 in 1990. Of the 300,000 learners, about 90% are studying at primary and secondary schools (The Japan Foundation Sydney Language Centre 1999). The sudden expansion of Japanese language learners in the late 80’s and early 90’s in Australia was often referred to as the “tsunami”. Japanese took the position French held as the most widely studied foreign language at the secondary and university level (Marriott, et al. 1994). This was a time when the Japanese economy was booming and Japanese investment and tourists flooded the country, whereas the Australian economy was in low gear. It is clear that government language policies, such as the “National Policy on Languages (NPL)” (Lo Bianco 1987) adopted by the Commonwealth Government and the “National Asian Languages/ Studies Strategy for Australian Schools (NALSAS)” presented in a report entitled Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future (Council of Australian Governments 1994), spurred the growth of Japanese language education by relating languages to economic importance. Even after the Japanese bubble economy burst and stayed low in the 90’s, the number of Japanese learners did not decrease dramatically, though some decline was experienced (The Japan Foundation Sydney Language Centre 1999). The NALSAS Report specified four priority languages of major economic importance, namely, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Indonesian, and Korean (hereafter called NALSAS languages), based on the trade importance to Australia and recommended that special funding be allocated for these languages. It strongly pushed language policy toward this shift toward Asian languages.

Each State and Territory government has developed its own policies according to the situation and motivation of each region. Queensland, where the presence of Japanese investment and tourists is strong, played a key role in the development of NALSAS (Djité 1994, p.38). Victoria has been leading the LOTE (Languages Other Than English) education at large, especially in relation to community languages (ibid, pp.31-33).

A thrust for Multiculturalism advocated in the early 70’s and supported in the 80’s, on the other hand, seemed to be losing its driving force in the 90’s under the prevailing rhetoric of economic rationalism, which has been also used for supporting studies of Asian languages of trade importance to Australia. There lies a question of what does Asia shift in language policies means for Multiculturalism. Are these contradictory or not?

The policy shift of weighing more on NALSAS languages for economic significance apparently affected

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the place of traditional major European languages in secondary education, like French and German, in such a conspicuous way as to influence the educational job market. The original intention of NPL to expand to all Asian, European and other Community Language learners at school has not yet been successfully achieved. There are various criticisms against the current change in government policies. We should carefully examine how the government top-down language policies affect schools and society at large, what are the needs from the bottom, and what course of educational development should be taken for the sake of the future of a diverse multicultural society with rich linguistic and cultural resources that can be an asset in the global society.

2）Scope of this Study and Research Question

This study examines the situation in schools and classrooms with regard to LOTE education. It asks the following questions: (i) what change is found in secondary schools under the influence of government policies in the 90's from the viewpoint of the shift toward Asian languages; (ii) why the change is happening; and (iii) what direction the policy should pursue to contribute to a multicultural society. Though these issues relate to English literacy, English as a Second Language, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and to higher education and primary education, they are not included in this study, as each presents different questions to be discussed separately. This Study, rather, analyzes overt policy influences and discusses covert influences and contextual change.

3）Methodology

Besides the quantitative data of language learning situations, we should also look at what is actually going on in schools under the influence of these policies. This study is based on classroom observations, on interviews with LOTE teachers in secondary schools and people working closely to the issue, and on studies of public documents and reviews. Four secondary schools were studied extensively, and two primary schools were visited in order to supplement the understanding of the general contextual situations.

The method of school-based observational analysis was taken in order to shed light on the underlying covert influence and subtle underpinning force over the government and school policies at the level of individual student, teacher and administrator. Research conducted by the Victorian Directorate of School Education in 1995, entitled Case Studies of LOTE Provision, delineates detailed description of fifty-five LOTE programs in primary and secondary schools nationwide, which is based on the interviews with relevant staff at these schools. It gives us deep insight into how each school developed its program and what kind of vision it had in mind. However, it does not fully examine subtle issues occurring in daily school life, since the interviews were conducted basically in a tailored format to maintain consistency. In an observational study it is not possible to generalize, and the observations are confined to a limited part of reality. And yet it gives us a chance to explore the hidden dimensions of classroom activities.

II. Recent Changes in Language Policies after 1987(1)

1）The Lo Bianco Report (1987)

The Lo Bianco Report (National Policy on Languages : NPL) became the first official national language policy in Australia, endorsed by Senate and Cabinet in 1987. The scope of the National Policy on Languages was aimed at:
Language-in-Education Policies in Australian Schools

—overcoming injustice, disadvantage and discrimination related to language,
—cultural and intellectual enrichment,
—integrating language teaching and learning with Australia’s external needs and priorities,
—providing clear expectations to the community about language in general and about language-in-education in particular, and
—support for component groups of Australian society (ethnic communities, the communication impaired, Aboriginal groups) for whom language issues are very important (Lo Bianco 1987, p.189)

It clarified the place of language in a multicultural society while proposing ‘nine languages of wider teaching’, namely, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian/Malay, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. This report was a culmination of the preceding policy-making efforts in the 70’s and the 80’s, and was implemented with Commonwealth funding, and the National Language and Literacy Institute was founded, which became a pivotal institution to realize the recommendations in the policy.

2）Dawkins’ 1991 White Paper on language

In 1991, marking his participation in International Literacy Year, John Dawkins, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, presented a revised language policy as a White Paper on language, entitled Australia’s Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP). It clearly shifted toward more emphasis on English literacy for all Australian nationals and emphasis on languages other than English for economic and utilitarian purposes, while diminishing emphasis on the value of community language maintenance. It clearly aims at economic rationalism, giving limited attention to the needs of minority communities, or to the demands of Multiculturalism.

3）The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) initiative

In December 1992, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) discussed and noted: “the importance of the development of a comprehensive understanding of Asian languages and cultures through the Australian education system if Australia is to maximize its economic interests in the Asia-Pacific region and agreed that Asian language development is a matter of national importance, requiring urgent and high-level attention at a national level” (Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future, p.1). It commissioned a working group to prepare a report on a National Asian Languages and Cultures Strategy for Australian Schools. Kevin Rudd from Queensland led the Working Group and presented a report entitled Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future in February 1994.

This is not the first report to urge more study of Asian languages and cultures. The first wave started after World War II to cope with the threat from Asia and to contribute to poor Asian countries (Kamata 1995). As early as 1971, the Auchmuty Report, entitled Teaching of Asian Languages, pointed out the importance of Asian language teaching in schools and universities for the purpose of economic dealings with Asia, especially with Japan as a trade partner (Auchmuty 1971). This coincides with the time when Australia directed the White Australia Policy to Multiculturalism in 1972-73, and Britain joined the EC in 1973, which was considered to be a threat to Australia’s dependency on Britain. These explain the shift of Australia’s attention more to Asia than before. Since then, many government and non-government reports, such as the FitzGerald Report (1980) Asia in Australasia, emphasized the significance of Asian language and cultural study by linking them with economic expansion in the region.

Between the Lo Bianco report in 1987 and the NALSAS strategy in 1994, a number of government
reports were released regarding Asian languages and the related field of language education:

—*The Relationship between International Trade and Linguistic Competence* (Stanley, et al. 1990)

These reports were all geared toward relating language teaching to business. In addition to these, the Leal report (1991), *Widening our Horizons: Report of the Review of the Teaching of Modern Languages in Higher Education*, also confirmed that "in the area of business, finance and industry, there is an increasing need for employees to have greater cross-cultural understanding and language competence" (Leal 1991: Vol.1, p.15) and that "language training is an immediate economic necessity." (*ibid.*, p.17)

It is clear that they fortified the policy directions to emphasize the importance of Asian languages for the sake of economic rationalism. Based on these reports, the NALSAS Report recommends a very detailed strategy and funding necessary for a long-term perspective with specific quantitative targets to be achieved by schools nationwide. The goals of the strategy indicated in this report with regard to Asian languages and studies of Asia in schools are:

—that 15% of Year 12 (the final year of secondary school) students and 60% of Year 10 students will be studying a priority Asian language by 2006;
—that the highest priority languages are Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Indonesian and Korean;
—that schools aim for an average of approximately 2.5 hours instruction per week per class for each year of study for Years 3 to 10 and 3 hours in Years 11 to 12 (It is recommended that Year 3 should be an appropriate starting age.);
—that studies of Asia courses within the key learning area of the Study of Society and Environment will be provided to all students.

According to the NALSAS interim report in 1998, for the first four years of funding from 1994, the Commonwealth government provided A$74 million, which was matched by the Governments of States and Territories. And in the 1998-99 Budget the Commonwealth allocated further funding of A$42.6 million for the NALSAS strategy to the end of 1999 (NALSAS Taskforce 1998, p.2). In March 1996, the Howard Liberal-National government replaced Keating’s Labor government, and, in spite of some concerns about the change of attitude against Asia related policies, the funding of NALSAS related budget was not affected.

III. Quantitative Change in Learners of LOTE

The enrolment in Year 12 Languages in government schools, which was targeted to reach 25% of all the students by 2000 in ALLP (1991) was extended to 2006 because the target did not appear likely to be reached so soon according to the NALSAS Report 1994. The data in Table 1 indicates that the enrolment had only increased from 11.82% in 1990 to 14.45% in 1996, despite all the national and state/territorial government language policy initiatives, except for the four NALSAS Priority Languages, which gained 4,000 students. As for other languages, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Modern Greek are showing an increase, which are supported as Community Languages.

However, language learners at primary schools, in Table 2, shows a five-fold increase in NALSAS
Table 1 Year 12 Languages Enrolments: National Totals (Government Schools)

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<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
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<td>3809</td>
<td>4320</td>
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<td>5032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2027</td>
<td>2041</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>2198</td>
<td>2952</td>
<td>2469</td>
<td>2361</td>
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<td>Indonesian*</td>
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<td>1186</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>1207</td>
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<td>1568</td>
<td>1869</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>248</td>
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<td>Sub-Total</td>
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<td>6342</td>
<td>6856</td>
<td>7725</td>
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<td>9859</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
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<td>German</td>
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<td>2561</td>
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<td>Italian</td>
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<td>2369</td>
<td>2195</td>
<td>2125</td>
<td>2312</td>
<td>2227</td>
<td>2100</td>
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<td>Modern Greek</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>545</td>
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<td>636</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>968</td>
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<td>767</td>
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<td>Arabic</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>589</td>
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<td>Russian</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>131</td>
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<td>13198</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>88</td>
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<td>1499</td>
<td>1586</td>
<td>1842</td>
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<td>21347</td>
<td>22598</td>
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<td>24670</td>
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<td>Year 12 Enrolments</td>
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<td>186936</td>
<td>179863</td>
<td>172357</td>
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<td>Proportion Asian (%)</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>6.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion non-Asian</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>8.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion Language</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>14.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Includes Malaysian
(2) Other Asian languages include Bengali, Hindi, Khmer and Sinhara.


Languages, and a three-fold increase in other Priority Languages from 1991 to 1996/7 in the three States. It is possible to predict that future growth of primary school learners moving on to secondary schools, might be expected if educational conditions improve. Modern Greek, a strong Community Language, is in decline after 1994 at the primary level, whereas Italian, another Community Language, is increasing rapidly.

The increase of the number of four NALSAS Priority Languages in government schools from 1994 to 1997 are shown in Figure 1, showing the highest increase in the number of Indonesian learners. The number of students studying Chinese is not growing as fast, though the number of Chinese speaking immigrants is expanding rapidly. According to the data in Kipp and Clyne (1998), Cantonese (one of the major Chinese dialects) speakers numbered 202,270 in 1996 and Cantonese ranked as the third most...
Table 2  Language Study in Primary Schools (Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria) (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1996/7</th>
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<td><strong>NALSAS Languages</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>25110</td>
<td>59663</td>
<td>108848</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>8343</td>
<td>14066</td>
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<td>Indonesian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>416</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>39277</td>
<td>104760</td>
<td>202376</td>
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<td><strong>Priority Languages</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>42498</td>
<td>47618</td>
<td>150520</td>
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<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>12660</td>
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<td>French</td>
<td>13065</td>
<td>26412</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>3205</td>
<td>1790</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>1127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>77663</td>
<td>120727</td>
<td>234493</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(1) Does not include 1996/97 figures for Victorian Independent Schools; Victorian Catholic numbers only available for 1996/97. Data too fragmented to report in other States and Territories.
Source: Advancing Australia’s Languages: Overview Report, the Evaluation Team, The Australian National University, 1998

Figure 1  Total Student Enrolments: NALSAS Priority Languages (1994/97) (1)

(1) This represents government and Catholic school figures. Data is not available for independent schools.
widely used community language in Australia after Italian and Greek. Mandarin (the official language of People's Republic of China) was spoken at home by 91,911 Australians and is expected to rise to over 100,000 by 2001. Therefore, there will be a big human resource of Chinese speaking people if they maintain their language resources. Korean learners are still not many, compared to the other three NALSAS languages, though they are also growing in number. The NALSAS Taskforce (1998) describes that “Figures for 1997-98 indicate an increase of the order of 66% from 1994 figures, with more than 600,000 young Australians now learning an Asian language. This is approximately 20% of the current school-age population and almost 25% of the target population for the strategy (Years 3 to 10)” and predicts that “current performance suggests that the target of 60% of students in Years 3 to 10 studying one of the four priority languages by 2006 is achievable nationally, given continuation of the NALSAS strategy.” (NALSAS Taskforce 1998, p.6)

IV. Case Studies

1) Outline of the On-site Studies

The on-site case studies were conducted in secondary schools in the Sydney metropolitan area between November 1999 and March 2000. Four secondary schools, one government and three independent (private) schools, were visited. Altogether twenty-five classes were observed from Year 7 to 12, the equivalent of the first year of Junior High School to the last year of High School in Japan, and twelve LOTE teachers and one principal were interviewed. Besides these, two government primary schools which have a strong language program were also visited, twelve classes were observed, and seven teachers were interviewed there, in order to understand what the situation is at primary schools, which influences secondary education. Also, thirteen people who are closely working for LOTE teaching were interviewed to supplement the study, in addition to four in the NSW Department of Education and Training, one from the Association of Independent Schools, seven in university education, and two in the Japan Foundation Sydney Language Centre.

2) Limitations of the Study

Obviously diversity among the schools is a critical issue to consider. The LOTE teachings are different from school to school, depending on the school’s environment, the students’ ethnic background, the family’s socio-economic situation, school’s characteristics, and other people’s attitudes toward LOTE education, especially the principal’s and the school council’s. Schools willing to accept a researcher’s observation can be limited to the ones that have good student attitudes in class, a supportive atmosphere for LOTE in the school, and where the teachers are dedicated and confident. In this sense this study is limited in its scope. Also, as is often discussed, the observer’s existence in the class influences the teachers and classes. The response I got from interviews may involve some distortion in what the interviewee really thinks and may not reflect their deeper thoughts.

3) Overview of the Observation

The students of these schools mostly belong to middle to upper-middle class families. One school has nearly 50% students of Asian background, one school predominantly consists of students of Anglo backgrounds, and two other schools have students of different ethnic background. LOTE teaching in these schools is well supported by the school community and by the principal. The interviewed teachers
are very experienced with mostly 5-10 years of LOTE teaching. Four teachers teach two languages, and two teach music and language.

Class times are between 45-60 minutes. At one school, two classes are given in one consecutive session. The class size varies from the smallest of four in Year 12 to the largest of thirty for compulsory level classes. Classes meet about 2-4 hours per week for most of the higher level elective courses. Three out of four schools have a ‘taster’ course in Year 7 or 8, and then students choose one or two languages in the following year as a compulsory subject. After that, language becomes an elective subject.

(1) School A (Government) — Japanese and Italian are taught in this school. In Year 7 and Year 8 one of the two languages should be taken as a compulsory subject. From Year 9 it becomes an elective subject and the students can continue up to Year 12. One Australian teacher teaches both languages, and one casual (part-time) teacher teaches some Japanese classes. The school used to offer French and German programs, but they changed to Japanese and Italian in the early eighties when Japanese became very popular. The teacher feels that the interest in Japanese is not as strong as before.

He thinks Year 8 is the most difficult to teach, since it inevitably becomes mixed level classes of those who start in Year 8 and those who have started in Year 7. Being a compulsory subject, the classes tend to get very noisy, with some students who are not interested in studying the subject. This year, Year 9-10 have one combined class of two different levels because of the shortage of students’ enrolment. He finds that these students are highly motivated and the class is very interesting to teach. Four students visited their Japanese sister school last year and had a very good experience.

He feels that the students in Italian classes in Year 7-8 seem to be more relaxed compared to those in Japanese. Because of the comparative closeness to English language their guess work functions better in Italian. Probably because of this belief, he uses more Italian in the beginners classes than Japanese, as an instructional language, even though he feels more confident in Japanese. He started to study Japanese in secondary school, and lived in Japan for a year. He also studied Italian because it is often required to teach two languages.

(2) School B (Independent) — In this school five languages are taught, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese and Latin. For Year 7 a ‘taster’ course of French, German and Indonesian, is offered to study one language each term to try all three in a year. In Year 8 everyone must choose one or two languages, and after that, languages become elective subjects through Year 12. Some students who studied Indonesian at the attached primary school can take the Year 8 course at Year 7. Japanese, which started only recently, begins at Year 11. Latin is offered for only selected top students, starting in Year 8 and going until Year 12. Latin seems to be given a special academic status in the school.

One Australian teacher teaches Indonesian and Japanese. Her major language is Indonesian, and she studied Japanese after she became a LOTE teacher, as it widens opportunities to find a job. When she was studying Japanese, she didn’t like it very much. After she became involved in teaching, she had an opportunity to take students to Japan to visit their sister school and began to like Japan and Japanese. She organizes her class activities so that the language learning process would contain cultural learning.

The school has a native speaker of Japanese as a casual assistant teacher, who helps the oral practice and other teaching activities and functions as a cultural informant as well. Most of the students studying Japanese are of Asian background. This is more so in Japanese classes than in Indonesian classes. Some of the Asian students are seen to be relatively shy compared to non-Asian students.

(3) School C (Independent) — Five languages are taught in this school — French, German, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Latin. Japanese started in the late 80’s because of the request by many parents.
It attracted many students in the beginning, and after a few years the enrolment decreased, though it still is large. Japanese are taught from primary school starting in Year 5. In Year 7 the students study four languages 1.15h/wk. In Year 8 the students must choose one or two languages. From Year 9 on, they become elective subjects. As for Japanese there are native and non-native teachers. The teachers are organized to teach different classes so that the students meet both native and non-native Japanese teachers. Many students from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea take Japanese.

(4) School D (Catholic) —- Three languages are taught in this school — French, German and Japanese. In Year 7 all the students learn three languages over four quarters, 2.5 h/wk. For higher levels, 4-5 h/wk are allocated. They have two Japanese teachers, one native Japanese and one Australian teacher, who used to teach German and French and who now teaches German and Japanese. The number of students who take Japanese is now increasing. In all three languages Year 12 has a small number of students, ranging from four to seven. In Years 11-12, most of the teachers often refer to HSC (Higher School Certificate) matriculation exams during the classes, so that students understand what to prepare.

In the higher level classes students are expected to prepare for class quite extensively in each language. Some students do not prepare well at home for the class study. Most of the classes comprise activities of four (oral/aural, reading/writing) skills, with different focus depending on the type of the class. A computer room is used once a week for personal grammar practice during class, using an interactive multimedia program.

4 ) Analysis Based on the Observations and Interviews
Class activities for culture related learning

Some classes are conducted mainly for language learning alone, and others incorporate language and cultural aspects to various degrees. Some of the teachers often talked about the cultural and social issues of the country of the target language in the process of learning the language, sometimes referring to their own experience in the country.

A particular activity conducted in an Indonesian class was one of the rare examples of gearing toward intercultural communication, using a simulation method of shopping in Indonesia. After the close explanation of cultural context of the country’s shopping activities, the teacher acted as an Indonesian vender and each student tried to bargain the price to buy with paper money. When a student’s speech was considered to be rude for the Indonesian cultural norm, the teacher, playing the role of an angry seller, clearly and effectively demonstrated that her communication style was not appropriate in that setting. In this type of activity students are expected to understand the importance of being aware of different communication styles and to learn how to interact with people with different cultural values while practicing the language in a semi-real life situation.

Class environment

Some schools are forced to have mixed level classes because of students with previous study, or inclusion of background speakers whose home language is the target language to some extent. Teachers face difficulties arising from mixing very different type of students in one class.

Because of the introduction of mandatory learning by government LOTE policy, the classes given as a compulsory subjects have a different atmosphere from elective classes. Class size is larger, and some of the students tend to be less focused and obstrusive because of their lack of interest.

On the other hand, some elective classes are very small, and the students have an intimate rapport.
with each other and with the teachers, as some of them have had a long relationship through the language classes over several years. This may be contributing to the continuation of the study.

Some schools have separate language classrooms, and they are filled with diverse cultural artifacts of mixed countries. These classes give students constant exposure to a different cultural atmosphere.

School environment
In some regions in NSW, such as Metropolitan East and Metropolitan West, the ratio of students of Non-English Speaking Background is over forty percent (NSW Department of School Education 1992, p.8). School administrators face the problem of selecting a language to be taught when they introduce a new language program, considering support of students and parents, on top of the availability of teachers, as each school is striving for getting more students. If the school has one major community of a certain language and ethnic background, the language used in the community becomes an important criteria for the choice, if the majority of parents so desire. If there is more than one language widely used in the community, there can be conflicting opinions among the parents. In order to avoid a conflict, there are cases where Japanese gets chosen as a neutral language. It is not a community language in most areas, and there is good rationale for its choice as an economic language that the parents of ethnic minorities and the school find easier to agree on.

One teacher at an Anglo dominant school mentioned that after some years of teaching Japanese, he felt a positive change in the attitude of parents toward Asia, which was once very negative. The impetus of introducing Japanese was just economic interest, but over the course of time, some of the teachers and community became more interested in the culture of Japan as a result.

Many schools have an overseas sister school where the target language is spoken. Some have an active exchange program for students, which enable students and teachers to have a real life experience and face to face personal contacts. Some teachers also organize short country visits for the language learners, which stimulates students' motivation for continuing the language studies.

The attitude of the school principal and other teachers has a critical influence on language teaching. A supportive school environment makes the language teachers feel more comfortable and confident, which might influence the student attitudes and perception of language study. Some teachers commented that language studies are not highly valued in the schools or by the students and parents, which is considered to be a cause of no growth in the numbers of enrolment in the elective courses in secondary schools.

It is also not financially easy for a school to allocate money to hire a needed LOTE teacher, under the influence of strict budget cuts in recent years by State/Territory governments, even with some special funding support backed by the government language policies. The language classes for elective subjects has a small number of students in one class, often 5-10 in Year 12. It is not economical to offer a language class to five students. In some cases the classes are forced to combine two different levels, because they could not get enough money and students to offer separate classes for year 11 and year 12. Some students utilise Open High School and other educational systems outside of the class to fulfill a requirement for matriculation exams.

Teacher attitudes
The availability of good LOTE teachers is the key issue to be considered in any school. The teachers interviewed in this study are mostly very confident and competent teachers, but this is not always the
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case in many schools, and the generally low quality of teachers is considered to be a critical issue in LOTE development. (Australian Language and Literacy Council 1996, Nicholas, et al. 1993) In one school, there used to be a German teacher who was unwillingly teaching Japanese because of the demand by the school, and student enrolment dropped dramatically. After the teacher was replaced by a new teacher, Japanese regained in popularity thanks to the dedication of the teacher. There was also a case where a part time teacher had to teach Japanese with a very limited knowledge though her major language for teaching was Chinese, because she could not find a teaching position in Chinese. She tried to concentrate on more cultural content with less language learning.

In some cases the decrease of enrolment in European languages and the increase of Japanese enrolment seem to be causing a subtle conflict. Teachers put more effort in improving their teaching, choosing more appropriate textbooks and changing the class activities so that more students would be attracted. Some teachers also become more involved in bringing students to the target country to attract student interest. There are also cases of cooperation among the different language teachers by sharing the ideas and materials which can be used in any language teachings with some modification.

Year 12 classes

Year 12 enrolment is used for the evaluation of the attainment of language policy target, and it is also used as a basis for Commonwealth Funding for Priority Language studies (Dawkins 1991, p.17). It usually has the least number of students, as many give up their language studies before they reach Year 12. Therefore the classes are usually quite small. The studies in Year 11 and 12 are basically targeted for matriculation exams for higher education, such as HSC in NSW. Therefore teachers focus on the preparation for exams, so that students would get ready for what to study. It is often said that students are reluctant to take languages in Years 11-12 because they consider languages are not advantageous to get a good grade and require continuous study, not necessarily because of losing interest or difficulties (2).

V. Implications of the Shift toward Asian Languages

1) Emphasis on Economic Rationalism

The rhetoric about the economic importance of languages was initially used as a strong incentive for the Commonwealth government to take an initiative in promoting LOTE studies, while economic rationalism has been also used later to shift the policy emphasis to English literacy initiatives for all Australians, with less attention to overall LOTE education. The emphasis on economic reasons to study languages has received criticism by many researchers. In its review of Commonwealth School Language Programme in 1998 ("Advancing Australia's Languages: Overview Report") the Evaluation Team stresses the elimination of economic priorities as one of their major recommendations, insisting on the equal importance of the educational value of language learning:

It is recommended that the Commonwealth move away from emphasizing economic priorities to a policy which also values the study of languages for social and educational reasons. Programme decisions about which languages should receive more funding should be made by key stakeholders, freeing up national policy to emphasize the wider value of language skills. (p. vi.)

In his report on LOTE evaluation, Djité (1994) also strongly argues against the emphasis on business
and trade as the purpose of LOTE teaching. He criticized the narrative of Asian languages as economic language from two perspectives: (i) the issue of proficiency; and (ii) the notion of ‘balance’ in the provision of LOTE. Firstly, one cannot expect most of the school graduates with LOTE study at schools can use their language proficiency for business purposes. Even after studying three years in universities, not all students of Japanese become as fluent as they should to be employable for practical language use. (Marriott, et al. 1994) The White Paper by DEET (Dawkins 1991) also acknowledges that:

Widespread language learning by new learner in schools on its own can not achieve the advanced proficiency levels required for Australia’s international language needs. It is essential to encourage some students to continue studying languages to advanced skills. (p.77)

Secondly, as for the issue of “balance”, a competitive atmosphere between the growing Asian languages and traditional European languages becomes a concern as to negative effect of the policy, though the situation in the past of neglecting Asian languages had to be changed to keep balance. The prevailing rhetoric of ‘economic language’ might direct for student interest away from traditional European languages and some community languages which do not have an image of direct economic relevance. It could cause imbalanced development of Australian language resources, marginalizing many other culturally important languages.

2) An Analysis of the Increase in Japanese Learners

In many cases parent perception of language learning tends to be more pragmatic, thus job oriented, than the students themselves, and their expectation influences the school’s and student’s choice of language. But it may not be a major reason for students to study a language. According to Marriott, et al. (1994), the majority of student motivation for continuing Japanese is more strongly affected by future career prospects, but cultural interest is also strong. 53.4% of the Japanese learners—versus 47.2% for the average of nine key language data—indicated the fact that they “liked studying about the culture and society of the country” influenced their continuation of the study of the language (pp.86-88).

Judging from the findings in case studies and interviews, students are very interested in Japanese modern culture. It used to be traditional culture that attracted students to the study of Japanese before the 80’s. It started to change in the 80’s when the Japanese economy boost and Japanese investors and tourists flooded Australia, which spurred the use of “economic language”. At the same time Japanese modern pop culture has been influencing younger learner motivation, especially by the world-wide presence of animations on TV and in movies, TV games, as well as popular food culture and high-tech products. Affective motives created by teachers and personal contact with Japanese in and outside of the country are also considered to be a strong motivation for continuing the language (Ibid, pp.88-89).

According to the aforementioned survey by Marriott, et al., 10.4% of students are first generation migrants from Chinese speaking regions (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia) (p.83). Also about 40% of enrolments in Japanese courses at the larger Australian universities come from students of non-English speaking background, and many of these are Asian students (Stockwin 1997, p.3) Chinese and Korean background students consider Japanese an easier subject as well as feeling closer to the culture than European languages. Some first generation Asian students face a handicap in schools because of the use of English and different learning style from what they were accustomed to in their countries (Matsuda 2000, pp.59-60). They may feel more at ease in Asian language classes like Japanese, in which
Chinese students feel an advantage in learning Chinese characters used in Japanese and Koreans in learning grammar, which is close to their own.

Japanese pop music is also gaining surprising popularity in other Asian regions such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. It was reported that the top hit chart of pop music albums in Singapore was dominated from the first to the fourth place by Japanese musicians in April, 2000 (3). This trend affects the Chinese background students in Australia who have a means to stay acquainted with the culture of their home country. In the neighborhoods of Chinese communities, video/CD shops carry many Japanese videos and CDs. It may not become a strong enough incentive for continuing the language study to endure a great amount of effort for many years. It can be, however, a driving force to make them interested in the language and culture. It is also important to consider the consequence of the phenomena that Asian background students are growing in number among Japanese learners.

3) Multiculturalism
Language policies and Multiculturalism

In the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia, produced by Office of Multicultural Affairs, three fundamental dimensions of multicultural policy were stated. These were:

(i) cultural identity: the right of all Australians, with carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion,

(ii) social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender, or place of birth,

(iii) economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background (p.vii).

In 1995 the National Multicultural Advisory Council published a report entitled Multicultural Australia: the Next Steps, Towards and Beyond 2000, Vol. 1-2, as an update of the National Agenda, and reaffirmed the ongoing policy framework. Although it also encompasses some language issues, English literacy for immigrants was referred to more than LOTE. No special reference to the importance of neighboring countries in Asia nor Asian languages was made, except for the support of COAG initiatives for NALSAS.

The momentum toward multiculturalism in the 70's was created not only by domestic concern for incoming immigrants, but also the change in international geopolitical and economic relations with Asia and other regions. In this sense, an underlying subject of advocacy for Multiculturalism in Australia should inherently include strong emphasis on relations with Asian nations, whether or not it is recognized overtly by the public at large.

The trend of moving away from Multiculturalism in the 90's was clearly represented in the government language policy documents in the move toward English literacy for both Australian and immigrants for the sake of economic efficiency. Along with this economic rationalism the shift toward Asian languages has been strengthened. In a report already issued in 1987 the nine languages of wider teaching were specified, referring to Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, (not Cantonese which is more widely spoken by the Chinese community in Australia), and Indonesian/ Malay. It was notable for its use of economic and geopolitical rhetoric. In order for this Report to be approved by the Senate as a national policy, it was necessary to make this policy document a national economic agenda, rather than a pure educational agenda which should be in the hands of State and Territory governments (4). For the national government it might have been convenient to bring attention to English literacy and Asian literacy for the purpose of economic efficiency, than to the more difficult issues related to cultural identity and social justice.
which require delicate attention to various multicultural communities for allocation of money and social services. The direction of the shift to Asian languages is supported by both Liberal and Labor parties, and it gives a progressive image to a certain group of young middle class supporters. It also sends a favorable image to neighboring Asian trade partners. It is interesting to note that the Howard government has been giving continued support to funding for the National Asian Languages / Studies Strategy for Australian Schools (NALSAS), in contrast to his former stance against the increase of Asian immigrants as the head of the Opposition, the Liberal Party, before he came into power as Prime Minister in 1996. Howard is generally portrayed by the media as a conservative and as an opponent of Multiculturalism. Sentiment toward Asia, though, is still a controversial issue in both public and private spheres, which contain racial prejudice. Recent criticism and debate brought about by Pauline Hanson in 1996 symbolized the existing anti-Asian feelings in the Australian community. She formed One Nation Party, which was considered to be an advocate of racist policies. These two political figures did not directly contribute to a change in government language policy, but they indicate that there is a consistent undercurrent of anti-Asian sentiment that needs to be recognized.

For the maintenance of the NESB (Non English Speaking Background) students' home languages

One of the aims of LOTE policies is to maintain and develop background students' languages as “resources” in the multicultural Australia. If the student’s family speaks Japanese at home and he/she wants to study the language for maintenance and further fluency, for example, it may not be efficient for them to take Japanese at primary or secondary school together with other novice students. However, there are various meanings attached to the LOTE classes at school, depending on each student, the status of the language in society, the culture of the language, and other factors. One mother of a Japanese student related that her daughter enjoyed the Japanese class she was taking, as she understood everything and felt at ease, whereas in other classes she felt nervous because she did not understand all that the teachers said and because she was not really accustomed to academic English or to the different learning style in an Australian school. She also goes to an after school program to complement the learning of Japanese for maintenance purposes, as she does not learn much from the school classes. Some Vietnamese students began to have an interest in their own family language stimulated by the school language class. There are also cases where students of target language background do not like to stand out in the language class, for fear of being the target of bullying.

For maintenance purposes, Ethnic Schools, or Community Language Schools\(^{(5)}\) have been widely utilised. Support to these schools, such as Saturday Schools, After Schools, and, Insertion Classes, has been given and they have been developing in its scale and quality of language education, although struggling for more financial support. The NPL ('87) and ALLP ('91) made recommendations to enhance the community language schools, which had not been highly valued or recognized as part of important educational system by general public and government authorities. In 1994 Community Language Schools in New South Wales offered 66 languages other than English in over 500 schools to more than 42,000 students throughout NSW. There are over 2,500 teachers, the great majority of whom are native speakers. And the majority of these teachers offer their services on a voluntary basis or receive a minimal allowance to cover expenses. (Ball 1995, p.7). Diversity of immigrant ethnic background is the largest in NSW, with more Asian background people living than in the other States / Territories. They have been taking advantage of the Community Language Schools for their language maintenance. Chinese especially has strong community support. These schools are receiving more recognition than before, so that now ethnic

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background students study for maintenance of their mother tongue and family cultural heritage, but other students study at these schools for second language acquisition (Evaluation Team 1998, pp.4-5). Recently some alignment to the mainstream school system to cater for preparation for Year 12 exams has begun. However, lack of funding, space, and well trained teachers with appropriate qualification make it hard to give full recognition to these schools. Their development heavily relies on the ethnic communities’ voluntary commitment.

Language education for pragmatic and social purposes

Language education was given in the past not so much for pragmatic purposes, but for intellectual, cognitive training of educational importance and as the basis for many fields of advanced study. Nowadays the criteria for language learning is more utilitarian, and communicative competence in the real world is highly valued. Asian languages, such as Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian, do not carry the image of traditional European elite intellectualism like Latin and French, but they may add different challenges to the educational training and cognitive development for English only students, as the languages are very different from Western European languages. At the same time it seems only right to bring peoples’ attention to language education from a different standpoint than traditional European languages, contributing to see the practical side of languages spoken in the global community.

On the other hand, it can also detract from the effort to enhance social justice and recognition of different cultural identities of various minority groups living in Australia, which have social and personal value of their own. Being a school subject connotes social recognition of values of the language. It is expected to provide students of minority background with a chance to grow self-esteem through the learning of their home language taught at school. In this sense more variety of community Asian languages, such as Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Filipino, should be introduced, if social purpose is to be highly considered.

VI. A Future Perspective in Language Teaching for Multicultural Society

1) Enhancing Intercultural Language Education

The purposes of language education can be identified in the following four areas: (i) communicative competence; (ii) intellectual / cognitive development; (iii) cultural learning; and (iv) intercultural communicative competence. The first is the criteria for most discussions over the evaluation of language policies based on. The second point has also been well discussed to support the importance of any language study at school. The third area entails the learning of the target culture as an accumulation of knowledge and is highly recognized in most of the language policy documents. The fourth area encompasses intercultural communication competence, which needs to be explored more to be incorporated in language teaching. It is not enough to learn about the cultural knowledge to avoid miscommunication with people with different cultural backgrounds. The ways of interacting with people who have different cultural values, ways of speaking, and communication styles, when making a contact, negotiating, or getting something done for a certain purpose in the target language, are all necessary skills that should be mastered together with linguistic competency. It is also important to acquire a cultural sensitivity and flexibility toward accepting different cultures and behaviours. Not only learning about culture but learning the way of communication in a multicultural society through language learning should be given more attention in language education. It can be incorporated in the language learning process from the
beginning stage, though it can also be pursued as a separate course of learning for general socializing skills in a multicultural society (Crozet and Liddicoat 1999). The example of the shopping activity in Indonesian class shown above in iv. 4) encompasses the area of intercultural communicative competence, involving learning at both an attitudinal and cognitive level, and focusing on interaction between people who have different cultural values and norms, through the language learning activity. Teacher training should be given in this area, and more teaching materials should be developed with this area in mind.

Language learning by itself does not enhance intercultural awareness and a flexible attitude toward different cultures. Based on their research conducted on the cross-cultural attitudinal change of language learners, Ingram and O’Neill (1999) state the importance of language teaching for cross-cultural attitude as follows:

Language teaching, language learning and bilingualism do not inevitably produce more positive cross-cultural attitudes or else wars would not take place in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere and elections would not be won and lost on immigration and racial issues in countries like Australia. If an education system wishes to ensure that the unique advantages of language teaching in fostering more positive cross-cultural attitudes conducive to life in multicultural societies and conducive to a successful life as a citizen of the global society are realized, then it must ensure that language teachers understand how their teaching activities can best be structured to have a positive effect on their students’ cross-cultural attitudes (pp. 29-30).

2) Exploration of Teaching Innovation by Cooperation of Different Language Teachers

Diversity and the spread of language programs in Australia is a remarkable change brought by the challenging language policies in the recent years. In 1998 in NSW, 38 languages were taught in government primary and secondary schools. All government secondary schools offered a language program and approximately 60% of government primary schools offer language programs(6). In some schools multiple language courses are offered, sometimes up to four or five. As a result different LOTE teachers often share a staff room and share some information about their teaching. In one primary school observed, five LOTE teachers share a room, exchange their teaching materials, modify them to suit the target language and culture, and create new ideas about teaching methods. These interactions between different language teachers, either Asian or European, as well as teachers teaching two languages, may create interesting ideas to blend approaches taken by different languages, if teachers are willing to share innovative ideas and construct cooperative work settings. Language teaching material has its own character and reflects the culture of the language. Japanese textbooks are very different from both Italian and Indonesian textbooks. Teachers who are exposed to diverse language materials are unconsciously learning cultural diversity and different ways of teaching. It is presumed that the teachers’ experience of learning plural languages and cultures would influence their teaching and classroom activities.

3) Enforcement of Collaborative Researches by Different Language Teachers

We can also identify a positive influence of the national language policies in the national collaborative researches on LOTE education. Some research has been conducted crossing the boundary of each language. Recent development in the use of new technologies makes it easier and more important to find cooperative approaches to different languages. If research is encouraged to encompass a range of different
languages, it may create more efficient ways of producing teaching materials and technological development for multi-media and distance education, with highly concentrated allocation of human resources and funding.

VII. Conclusion

This paper examined the Australian language-in-education policies, from a top-down look at government initiatives and a bottom-up perspective based on school observation, considering external contextual change. The former is overtly delineated by economic rationale. The latter is superficially influenced by top-down policy incentives but is affected by more culturally inclined motives and technical issues, such as organizing classes and curricula, teacher supply, and matriculation exams. New dimensions for the future development were also presented which can be seen in the schools where different language teachers meet and work to cope with the new multilingual situation at school.

The implications of the shift toward Asian languages for Australian language policies were discussed from three related aspects: economic rationalism, increase of Japanese learners, and multiculturalism. In order to see the better side of this shift, intercultural communicative competence needs to be incorporated into any framework of language learning, especially in Asian language classes, where a sensitive attitude to different cultures and races could be learned through language study in a natural way, if it is carefully planned.

It is also important to pay careful attention to adverse effects caused by the ongoing policy changes. It may produce more students who do not feel comfortable with different languages and cultures because of unwilling exposure to LOTE programs. It may cause disparity in the way languages considered important for purposes of trade and others significant for cultural, educational, or community reasons. Whether or not the shift toward Asian languages contributes to or contradicts a multicultural society is not yet clear, since it heavily relies on how the teaching will develop in the future for students to learn the language and cultural diversity in a very positive way. The support of the policies should be given a long term commitment that allow people to have a productive engagement with teaching and research and to see the outcome of new teachers who grow up in an age of innovative language education.

Notes
(1) The policy making processes of NPL '87 and ALLP '91 were discussed more in detail in Matsuda (1994).
(2) Marriott, et al. (1994) also clarifies this point.
(3) Asahi News Paper, July 9, 2000
(4) A comment given in an interview with Dr. R. Baldauf, University of Sydney.
(5) The name was changed from "Ethnic Schools" to "Community Language Schools" in NSW.
(6) Data from New South Wales Department of Education and Training.

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学校教育現場から見たオーストラリアの言語政策
——アジア言語重視政策の意義——

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オーストラリアの学校教育において、LOTE（Languages Other Than English：英語以外の言語）教育は、国家レベルの言語政策によって推進されてきている。特に、近年、オーストラリアにとっての経済的重要性の側面からの明確なアジア言語教育重視政策が打ち出されてきている。その一方、特に、貿易面で重要な地位にある国の言語である日本語、中国語、インドネシア語、韓国・朝鮮語のうちを広く学習されるべき最優先言語として指定し、予算面での重点的支援を行うこととしている。

本稿では、このようなアジア言語重視政策の影響とその意義について、中等教育におけるLOTEの授業観察と言語教師の面接調査の結果をもとに、言語教育政策についての実状を探り、現場での問題を掘り起こし、その背景となる意識や原因について考察し、さらに、今後の進展に対する方向性を提示している。

まず、アジア言語重視政策の影響とその意義を、(1)言語教育と経済的合理性との連結、(2)日本語学習者の急増、(3)多文化主義との関わり、の3点から分析している。経済的合理性の観点からは、実態としてはその直接的な成果については疑問がある。政府の公的言説としてはそのような観点からの政策であっても、日本語学習者の実態から見て、その現実は、必ずしも、経済的な意義を結びつくるものだけではなく、日本の現代大衆文化等に対する関心によるものや個人の私的レベルのつながり等に動機づけられるものとなっている。また、近隣地域として重要な関係を持つアジアに意識的に近づこうとしなければならないという意味は、オーストラリアの多文化主義の幅のある、政治・経済的側面からの課題と矛盾するものではない。しかし、これほ、もう一方の多文化主義の重要課題である、コミュニティの多様な言語や文化的維持や社会的公正が保たれることなどの側面を保証していく政策を対面的に弱めっていく結果ともなっている。そこで、もし、アジア言語教育を通じて、これまでの潜在的に行われるアジア移民に対する否定的な意識を変化を与えることができれば、それは、その他の多くの地域からの移民に対する意識をも変革していくような力ともなりうる。この目的のためには、アジア言語教育に限らず、いかなる言語についても、その教育過程において、異文化の人々とのコミュニケーションに必要な技能や意識の変革を促す教育プログラムを取り込んでいかなければならないことを指摘している。

さらに、学校内での多言語教育状況が顕著になってきていることから、異なる言語教師間の間で、互いに協力し、アイデアを交換しながら、多様な教材や教授法を生み出していいくという創造的なプラスの側面も出てきていることを指摘し、このような新たな言語教育の進展の萌芽を発展させていくことを提言している。

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