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ABSTRACT

The social, political, and ideological underpinnings of recent policy initiatives relating to language and culture in Australian society, in particular, those of concern to ethnic minority groups, are examined in this paper. The development of a policy for immigrant ethnic minorities has always been quite distinct in comparison with the indigenous minority, the Aboriginal groups, who by virtue of their historical and political status in society made different claims and demands on the state regarding matters such as cultural maintenance and language policy. This paper seeks to accomplish three main objectives. The first is to develop an understanding of how language has become manifest as an issue of public policy through an historical overview of the development of social policy in relation to migrants and ethnic groups during the last four decades. The second objective is to expose to critical scrutiny the rationale and some of the hidden and often unstated assumptions that lay behind these policies. Thirdly, given the continuing dominance of language and culture in policy development, the paper attempts to present the case for a paradigm shift away from a preoccupation with culture towards one more attuned to the current social reality and emerging needs of Australian society. (DB)

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# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC POLICY:
## Some Critical Reflections

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION
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# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

# IN

# AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC POLICY

## Some Critical Reflections

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## Preface

An abbreviated version of this Paper was first presented as an invited Keynote Address to the First National Ethnic Health Conference held in Adelaide 10-13 May 1988.

Many of the ideas sketched in this Paper about issues of language and culture in public policy have evolved from my experience as Chairperson of the National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME) and in some ways may be regarded as a personal postscript to NACCME's Report entitled: *Education in and for a Multicultural Society: Issues and Strategies for Policy making*. The issues and concerns examined here, particularly those dealing with national language policy, still continue to remain live issues in the public policy arena. The bearing of language and culture in the context of the future development of 'Multicultural' social policies warrants in my view special attention. It is hoped that this Paper will contribute to the development of a more rational and critical understanding of these issues as a matter of public policy and national significance.

I am indebted to Matthew Sloan for his research assistance in the early stages of this Paper and also to Dr Anna Alderson of Curtin University for her painstaking editorial work on the final text. I owe a special word of thanks to Dr Barbara Falk of Melbourne University for her most perceptive and critical reading of the Paper and also to Dr David Trigger of the Department of Anthropology, UWA, for his helpful criticisms. Needless to say, they bear no responsibility for the views expressed.

I am also grateful, as always, to my Secretary, Marie Harris for not just her typing skill and expertise but wizardry in deciphering the written text and also to Pam Hayden for her assistance in bringing this out as a Departmental Occasional Paper publication.

Laksiri Jayasuriya
Perth, April 1988.

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## I. Introduction

Language and culture have been important issues in two major areas of Australian public policy. One of these concerns Aboriginal affairs policy, and pertains to social programmes and attitudes relating to the social and educational advancement of Aboriginal people. The other pertains to migrant and ethnic minorities, in particular ethnic affairs policy subsumed under the ideological rubric of multiculturalism. While at a level of conceptual analysis both areas of policy have much in common as facets of policies towards minority groups in Australia, separate consideration is warranted because of the different socio-political and historical circumstances surrounding the position of these distinctly different minority groups in society.

From the earliest days, group relations in Australian society have been dealt with separately in relation to Aboriginal groups as the indigenous people of this country, the original inhabitants who have been dispossessed as a minority and denied their rightful dues. It is the contention of this paper that from a policy perspective this distinction needs to be maintained for the forseeable future. At the same time we need to recognize the interface of policy overlap, as indeed the Lo Bianco Report on National Language Policy * (NLR) does rightly acknowledge. The main reason for maintaining this differentiation as far as policy development is concerned is that the nature and rationale of the claims made on the state by each of these minority groups are entirely different and therefore need to be dealt with quite separately. Nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of group rights, in particular, cultural rights and also in the scope and extent of demands on the allocation of public resources for the pursuit of valued economic and social goods. Ethnic groups too, as I shall argue later, have rightful claims based on minority status rather than as distinct cultural groups. The argument depends on scrutiny of language and culture in the analysis of the current and emerging public policies affecting ethnic minority groups.

This paper has three main objectives. The first is to develop an understanding of how language has become manifest as an issue of public policy through an historical overview of the development of social policy in relation to migrants and ethnic groups during the last four decades. The second objective is to develop a

* Hereafter referred to as the N.L.R. (National Language Report)

proper appreciation based on the foregoing analysis of some of the key concepts and issues, including unstated and often hidden assumptions, of social theory and policy. Thirdly, given the continuing dominance of language and culture in policy development, the paper will attempt to present the case for a paradigm shift away from a preoccupation with culture towards one more attuned to the current social reality and emerging needs of Australian society. It will be argued that issues of language and culture are better anchored within a philosophy of democratic pluralism and a framework of broad and larger social goals, while at the same time serving the particular needs of ethnic minority groups.

## II. Historical antecedents and emerging policies

Recruitment and settlement in the post World War II period has been influenced by language, even prior to the large scale immigration of the late 40s and 50s. The selection of migrants was strongly influenced by the language factor. It was assumed that proficiency in English language was the best guarantee that one would be integrated and 'succeed' as a migrant, that is, in becoming assimilated into the mores and institutions of the prevalent Anglo-Celtic society of Australia. Language was also used, negatively in implementing the racist White Australia policy of excluding potential settlers by means of the notorious dictation or language test. The key to this monocultural policy of anglo-conformism was the mastery of the English language. The Adult and Child Migrant Education Programmes (CMEP) developed thoughout the 60s and 70s emphasised the importance attached to English language in pre-recruitment and settlement procedures.

The Immigration (Education) Act of 1971, which was to become the backbone of subsequent Multicultural Education programmes, ushered in the CMEP and was basically an instrument of public policy aimed primarily at the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) to migrant children as well as adult migrants. This Act relating to language and culture initiated legislative provisions which were intended to cater for the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities. It was much later that other Commonwealth Acts, for example those relating to ethnic media, were introduced and paved the way for similar State-based Legislative instruments of

public policy, like those establishing Ethnic Affairs Commissions (EACs) and teaching of community languages.

The recent controversy over allocations of Commonwealth resources to the States for ESL teaching and the resulting public outcry - not merely from groups adversely affected - is indicative of the continuing importance attached to the learning of English language as a critical element in policies of migrant settlement. Support for these policies has come not only from the dominant groups of the host society who viewed them as the basis for guaranteeing the effectiveness of assimilationist policies but from migrants as well. The latter recognized that economic betterment and occupational mobility for themselves and their offspring had to be built on solid educational foundations which could not be acquired without a sound knowledge of spoken and written English.

The importance accorded to learning English language in migrant adaptation as an aspect of language policy is non-controversial and remains securely entrenched in public policy. The pre-eminent place given to English in matters of public policy and community affairs remains unchallenged, politically uncontested and eminently sensible. Disagreements only occur about strategies of policy implementation such as the principles and criteria of resource allocations for ESL, about educational issues relating to the place of ESL in the curriculum and the choice of teaching methodologies, and the amount and source of government funding.

The NLR confirms this primacy of English for all and is premised on the de facto recognition that English is the national language of Australia (p.10), performing a variety of functions - economic, social, cultural and political - in the public and private life of the Australian community. What is more the Report refers to 'the uniquely Australian varieties of English' and accords 'positive recognition' to the 'national character of Australian English' (p.10).

Curiously, however, the NLR, in giving strong support to English as the national language, argues against giving it legal status without providing any cogent supportive reasons. The only argument put forward is that to do so would be 'undesirable and inappropriate' (p.192). Furthermore, the Report, after its eloquent defence of the place of English in a range of public and private institutions extending from administration to trade and finances, fails to justify how

it deems that all aspects of language, be it English or any other language, are matters of private choice and granting legal status to any one language would create 'serious anomalies and inequities' (p.71).

The reluctance to acknowledge English as the **official** language appears to be based on the assumption that to do so may vitiate the de facto recognition of the multilingual nature of Australian society. If this is the case, the NLR's spirited defence of community languages or LOTE is surprisingly tilted towards a pedagogical rationale in preference to one couched in favour of defending linguistic pluralism per se or of vindicating the multilingual nature of a multicultural society. However, this uncertainty on the question of granting official language status to English (which the NLR inherits from its predecessor the Senate National Language Report) is only a relatively minor shortcoming in an eminently sensible, realistic and pragmatic Report worthy of the positive reception that it has enjoyed in all quarters.

## III. Linguistic pluralism in contemporary Australian society

Clearly, any language policy at state or national level has to cope with the issue of linguistic pluralism in Australian society. The NLR along with many other similar public documents contends that linguistically Australia should no longer be regarded as a relatively homogeneous society but be classified instead as a truly multilingual/plurilingual society i.e. a linguistically heterogeneous society. And, it is primarily in this context that issues of language and culture, especially the culture of migrant groups, have gained salience in Australian public policy in recent decades. Therefore, prior to considering the policy response to this issue, we should consider the evidence for the proposition that Australia is a multilingual society.

The demographic transformation of Australian society, over the last four decades following large scale migration in the post World War II period, is now well established. The increased intake of immigrants, frequently of non-British origin, during this period was drawn from varied social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Over 40% of these non-British migrants came from European countries mainly Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia. The cultural characteristics of these

source countries as well as the type of settlers drawn from these countries are markedly different from those of the more recent intakes of migrants from the Middle East, Lebanon and Turkey. The cultural and social variability has increased with the intakes of refugees from South East Asia, drawn mainly from Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, creating an extremely diverse and mixed society.

Over nearly four decades, Australia has become a polyethnic and culturally diverse society, a multicultural society in a descriptive, if not a normative sense. It is a society characterized not only by linguistic diversity but also by racial and cultural variations, especially religious and national differences. All of these are overlaid by socio-economic differences. The social and occupational distribution of most migrants is biased towards the lower end of the scale mainly due to labour market segmentation.

In portraying this complex social mix, the constituent elements have been variously described as immigrants, ethnic groups, ethnic minorities, new settlers, and multiculturals or perjoratively as Wogs, Reffos, Dagos, etc. However one term which has gained considerable currency as a shorthand way of identifying these groups and distinguishing them from the mainstream society is the term 'Non-English Speaking Background' (NESB). The term NESB, though in itself misleading (because there are many migrants from Asia and the Middle East who are primarily English speakers), highlights the importance attached to linguistic diversity in characterizing Australian ethnic minority communities.

Language more than any other element such as colour, religion or national origin is perceived as the most valid and salient boundary marker for identifying and classifying ethnic minority groups. In other words, language has become the basis of identifying ethnic communities. As a result the term multicultural has become synonymous with multilingual at a descriptive level and the terms language and culture are confounded, particularly when carried over into the prescriptive usage of the term multicultural as in social policies dealing with education. Therefore, we need to ask, to what extent is Australian society multilingual?.

Despite the imprecise nature of the statistics about language use (See Clyne 1986 for limitations inherent in using birthplace data to assess extent of language use)

regarding languages spoken in contemporary Australian society.* The Senate Report maintains that "about 17% of the Australian population aged 5 or over first spoke a language other than English". Likewise the NLR suggests that 15-20% of the Australian population daily use a language other than English (LOTE), also sometimes referred to as L1 or First/Home Language. This does not include dialects and varieties of non-standard English used in the Australian community. Most of these languages spoken in the Australian community (CLOTE is the abbreviation used for a Community Language other than English) are European languages - mainly Italian, Greek, Yugoslav languages (ie. Croat, Serbian, Macedonian etc.) and to a lesser extent German, Dutch, Polish and French. Of the non-European languages Arabic, Chinese (various dialects but chiefly Cantonese, Hakka, and Hokkien besides Standard Mandarin Chinese) and Vietnamese have become increasingly important in this extremely heterogeneous society. These are also now recognized as community languages, but have received much community demand, especially in Victoria, the State with the largest concentration of persons from NESB and the most aggressive in promoting multiculturalism as public policy.

This evidence in favour of the existence of language/speech communities appears prima facie to justify the claim that Australia, despite the continuing dominance of English which is still the first language for over 83% of the Australian population, is becoming more of a multi-lingual than a mono-lingual society. This claim should, however, be interpreted with some degree of caution.

According to McRae (1985) there are several criteria used to establish language power in comparing the linguistic diversity of states globally. Demographic strength is one key factor among others such as dispersion patterns, mobility, cultural outputs and so on. One influential view, following Banks and Textor (quoted by McRae 1986) draws 'a dividing line between linguistically homogeneous and heterogeneous policies at the point where 85% belong to the main language group'. On this criterion, despite poor language statistics, but taking into account Aboriginal language groups, Australia warrants classification at best as a 'weakly heterogeneous' polity in terms of linguistic diversity. An important factor to be

* Even the recent N.R.L. leans heavily on the ABS Language Survey of 1983 which incidently, equates language use with birth place data. The other major source of data is the Commonwealth of Department of Education Language Leraning Survey of 1983.

considered here is the extent of language shift among second/third generation Australians of ethnic origin.

The readiness with which immigrant communities, the children of immigrants and their offspring (i.e. second and third generation) are prepared to discontinue the use of community languages i.e. the home languages, dialects or language varieties of their parents and grandparents, would suggest that Australian multilingualism may be less pervasive and stable than is often claimed by those who demand that Australia should be formally recognized as a multilingual society. Several researchers in describing Australian language ecology, have commented on the low language maintenance rates (LM) among some immigrant groups.

As Clyne (1982), observes:

> in spite of the advantages of LM and the strong interest of many ethnic groups and families in developing and maintaining bilingualism, the rate of language shift (LS) is very high in the second generation, especially in families that are products of mixed marriages (p.140).

Besides intermarriage, the degree of similarity of the ethnic groups to the host society, appears to be an important factor in determining the extent of language drift across generations. Interestingly there is also, according to Clyne, regardless of specific factors determining LS, a consistent rank ordering of LM in ethnic groups. In this ordering the least amount of LS is with Greeks, followed by Italians, Yugoslav groups, Polish, German, Maltese and the most extreme LS being noticeable with the Dutch.

A variety of other factors can influence rates of LM or the extent of LS. Historical factors, public attitudes and political influences, especially the relative political power and influence of the group governed by its position in the hierarchy of minority groups, can have a profound impact on language ecology, especially in determining the importance of LM. The relative value and importance attached to a particular community language by mainstream society may change over time and lead to decreased LS.

A further explanation is provided by Smolicz (1980), a leading proponent of prescriptive multilingualism, who suggests that language may be more important for some cultures than others because of the centrality of language as a core value.

Thus, whereas Greek and Polish cultures are language-centred, Smolicz contends that, for Italians culture is more family-centred. With other groups the salient factor may be religion as is the case with Jewish identity. However, as Smolicz rightly observes, religion and language may be intertwined as is the case with Greek culture. In short, then, cultural maintenance need not necessarily be linked with language maintenance. As the NLR comments

> different groups use and value their language differently, depending on its centrality and salience in the groups cultural, national or ethnic identity (p.67).

What is being suggested is that the sense of 'ethnicity', or belonging to an ethnic group, and one's cultural identity may not necessarily be associated with language. Clyne (1986) too has pointed out that often the language/ethnicity nexus 'is very tenuous' (eg. the German-Australian speech community does not form a single ethnic group). Therefore, in unravelling the dynamics of the language/culture relationship and the associated language/ethnicity nexus, we need to briefly consider the meaning of two key concepts, 'culture' and 'ethnicity', which are of central importance in fashioning public policy.

## IV. The concepts of culture and ethnicity - definitions and interpretations

The concept of culture is a complex notion which has been used in a variety of ways. The problematic nature of the culture concept, is evident in the general unwillingness to define or give any specific meaning to the concept in formulating public policy dealing with migrants and ethnic minorities. Thus there is ambivalence implicit when we talk of culture/s of origin or culture/s of the host society. This exceptionally difficult and highly abstract notion is used loosely and in a simplistic way, as in Tylor's (1871) classic oft quoted definition of culture as

> that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (quoted in Cashmore, 1984).

This definition merely enumerates several constituent parts of culture such as the normative (values, norms), affective (sentiments, loyalties), cognitive (knowledge,

beliefs, etc), aesthetic (beautiful, pleasing, tasteful) and behavioural (customs, practices, rites etc) elements.

Other anthropological definitions refer to a configuration of characteristics such as one's heritage, or the totality of society's life. These short-hand descriptions fail to depict the essentially dynamic and evolving nature of culture.

As Raymond Williams (1983) notes, the history of the usage of the term reveals two distinct traditions. One refers to a range of meanings associated more closely with the common sense view of culture as a process or state of mind eg. cultivation of states of mind, intellectual activities and interests in the arts. The other, as with Tylor's definition, is more in line with anthropological and sociological usage and is used to "designate a whole and distinctive way of life" (Williams, 1983 p.11).

Broadly, within this latter tradition there are significant differences in nuances of meaning associated with the usage of the term in the scholarly literature. One dominant mode of thinking is evident in the influential writings of Herder, Dilthey and others who interpret culture, in idealist terms ie. as a system of ideas, meanings and understandings, including values. These theorists regard culture, in the sense of the 'informing spirit' (verstehen), as a whole diverse range of human and social activities manifest in such elements as language, artefacts and intellectual products. Language, in particular, becomes intimately linked with culture when used in this sense, especially by those who have followed in the footsteps of Herder.

By contrast, others in the scholarly approach to culture place the emphasis on **a whole social order**, wherein culture is seen as a product of social activities which provide a material basis for cultural activities. Reviewing these approaches, as they have evolved in the sociology of culture, Williams presents a composite viewpoint, a convergence between the idealist and materialist viewpoints, by stating that culture should be viewed as the

> 'signifying system' through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored (p.13).

The signifying system includes the anthropological 'distinctive whole way of life' notion as well as the common sense view of culture, referring to all forms of intellectual productions and artistic forms and practices, (including High and Folk

culture). Culture in this broader sense of a 'signifying system' is enmeshed in the total social order of social classes, groups and competing ideologies which are modified by and also modifies other elements in the social system. Jakubowicz (1984), paraphrasing Williams, observes that

> Culture contains often competing partial ideologies and world views, articulating the different interests and life experiences of groups. Thus the 'dominant culture' sustains these values and ways of life which benefit the dominant groups or classes in society, however much these may change or be resisted, or lead to negotiated resolutions (p.2).

In short, this point of view, which is also followed in the NACCME Report of 1987 on Multicultural Education, subsumes a structural view of culture and differs significantly from the rigid, static and unchanging view of culture presented in some anthropological writings or in social policy as consensual values.

The relevance of this discussion is to point out the inherent limitations of the conventional view of culture implicit in discussions of the relationship between language and culture. Since for our purposes a key cognate notion associated with the concept of culture is that of ethnicity - referring to ethnic groups, viewed as cultural groups - we need to see how the notion of ethnicity has been understood in Australian theorizing.

In the study of group relations, ethnicity, as an aspect of social identification, focuses on the processes of inclusion and exclusion enabling a recognition of who constitutes 'us' and 'them'. As Ballard (1986) puts it, ethnicity basically refers "to the classification and labelling of groups within society and primarily to the labelling of minorities by dominant groups who claim to speak for the interests of society as a whole" (p.129).

We find that the concept of ethnicity is defined in various ways depending on the relative importance attached to objective or subjective factors as bases for labelling groups or differentiating between groups . Objective definitions of ethnicity refer mainly to the shared possession of designated cultural characteristics such as a common race, religion, language, ancestry, national or geographic origin. The 'boundary markers', i.e. the physical or cultural attributes used in defining an ethnic group, vary from group to group and since these defining attributes may change, the nature of an ethnic group undergoes important changes over time.

As Bromley (1987) points out, in subjective definitions the accent is placed primarily on subjective factors such as group identification, solidarity, and a sense of peoplehood. According to these definitions, people must perceive themselves as belonging to a distinct ethnic group, be clearly recognized as a descent group, and what is more, be differentiated by others in terms of their distinct characteristics. In other words, individuals need to identify themselves and be identified as different by others (Isajiw, 1974 p.115). It is essentially a subjective process of status identification whose salience and worth varies from individual to individual (Jayasuriya, 1987b p.23).

There is sharp disagreement among theorists in their approach to the study of ethnicity, especially as regards the degree of importance to be attached to a particular attribute such as common descent or origin as opposed to shared characteristics or a consciousness of kind. Those highlighting 'common descent or origin' represent the ascriptive or primordialist approach. These theorists, for example Zanniecki and those influenced by him (eg. Smolicz and Zubrzycki in Australia) contend that these 'primordial' ties, allegiances and emotional identifications based on some particular attribute eg., kinship, religion or language, are rigid, pervasive and binding 'primordial' roots.

The opposing view (eg. Cohen, 1974, Gans, 1979) maintains that what really matters is how people define themselves as being distinct or separate, based on cultural or physical attributes. This characterization is flexible, adaptable and differs in content depending on the situation of the group at a given point of time. These theorists contend that the so-called 'primordial' roots are often mythical and at times mistakenly represent symbolic elements of ethnicity as genuine and authentic. Second and third generations of migrant origin, influenced by their particular social, political and economic circumstances manifest their ethnicity in a manner quite different from their parents or grandparents.

According to Gans (1979), second generation immigrants, (often ethnic marginals), manifest 'symbolic ethnicity' - i.e. a nostalgic allegiance to the old world cultural mores and practices without a real sense of ethnic identity or ethnic group membership. For this reason, it is suggested that 'ethnic identity' changes with the nature and form of the ethnic group and the sense of identity it prefers to express. A more sociological variant of this 'situational' approach emphasising the institutional nature of ethnicity views identity as being 'mobilized on the basis of

**interest** rather than **culture** (Ballard, p.131). This was also the viewpoint of Jean Martin (1978) when she described Australian ethnic groups primarily as 'interest groups' having claims on the State. Ethnicity, in short, becomes salient and politicized only when some interest or need eg. resources for access and equity, is denied.

This difference in conceptualization has a vital bearing on how we characterize the role of language and culture in ethnicity. Consequently, the language/ethnicity nexus takes on different meanings depending on whether one adopts a 'primordial' or 'situational' approach to ethnicity and has different policy implications. It is the 'primordialists' who stress the language/ethnicity nexus, which, as we noted earlier, has been questioned by Clyne. For example, according to Clyne (1986) since many German speakers in Australia are drawn from several ethnic or national groups, language in this instance does not necessarily signify a cultural or ethnic identity.

## V. Language in culture : the influence of Herder and Whorf on Australian theorizing

With this brief digression, clarifying how 'ethnicity' and 'culture' have been employed, we are now in a position to examine some of the issues implicit in exploring the language/culture relationship in public policy. A fruitful way of looking at this culture relationship in ethnic affairs policies is provided by Fishman (1987) who writes that

> there are 3 major ways in which language is related to culture: (1) language itself is a **part** of culture, (2) every language provides an **index** of the culture with which it is most intimately associated; (3) every language becomes **symbolic** of the culture with which it is most intimately associated (p.444)

According to Fishman 'the role of language as an index of culture is a by product of its role as a part of culture (p.444). Hence, Fishman's first two propositions may be considered as a single proposition. The third proposition - language as a symbol of culture - has in part been alluded to in the notion of Gans' 'symbolic ethnicity' as for example when language is used as a badge of identity by non speakers of the language or those who speak it sparingly.

Considering that 'most human behaviours are language embedded' (Fishman, 1985) it is a truism that language, in its oral or written form is a crucial component of any culture, cross-meshed with other parts of the 'culture'. In certain societies in which written and spoken languages are highly developed as the central mode of communication and organisation and artistic production language may, as Smolicz and others argue, become the core element of culture. According to Smolicz, because of this, language-centred cultural groups tend to decay rapidly whenever the language atrophies. Without necessarily subscribing to Smolicz's theory of core values, (see Clyne, 1986, for a sympathetic critique of this viewpoint) what this signifies is that language is not necessarily the only distinctive attribute of a cultural group as it is sometimes naively assumed. It is a 'cultural marker' but an element which is not equally important for all cultural groups.

Language maintenance may not be a necessary condition for cultural maintenance in all circumstances. Its significance even for language-centred cultures is limited and depends on whether one adopts a 'primordial' or a 'situational' approach to ethnicity. Fishman (1987) too, despite wanting to claim that language is a major part of culture, appears to recognize this when he points out that in situations of culture change involving language shift, 'a sense of cultural identity may, still persist, at a conscious or unconscious attitudinal level' (p.444). In other words, cultural and ethnic identity can be viewed more flexibly by adopting a 'situational' approach, ie. as the outcome of a variety of factors and not merely in terms of one or two immutable elements of culture such as language or, for that matter, any other cultural marker. It is only the more rigid 'primordialist' approach to culture and ethnicity, characteristic of the prevailing orthodoxy of linguistics and language related disciplines, such as the cultural anthropology of the US and the European cultural sciences, which commits one to an intimate, close and unalterable language/culture relationship, where the culture is dominated by the single element of language.

The 'primordialist' tradition flows directly from the European scholarly tradition of German Romanticism and is most frequently associated with the work of Herder who identified linguistic groups with 'nations' and nationality with languages - a notion central to the theory of nationalism and the concept of the 'nation-state' rather than a common legal system and laws about citizenship. Looking specifically at the concept of language, as Smith (1981) points out, Herder's doctrine of language was developed out of the work of Hamann, who was in fact Herder's

teacher. For Hamann, language was not only a key to understanding groups but also individuals and their cultural and literary products. However, Herder went beyond this and maintained that language was the key to understanding, and argued that it was fundamental to social integration and a sense of community. It is no doubt a vital medium of communication, but communication itself was a central notion for Herder as it was the basis for understanding the collectivity, and the sense of group, of belonging to a community. Hence, his special emphasis on the spoken word and verbal communication. According to Herder, language manifests the collective experience of the group, and the authenticity of one's cultural tradition can be grouped and understood only through the 'authentic language' of the group.

Herder was a Romantic who extolled the virtues of intuitive personal experiences - the riches of the 'folk' - as the repository of humanity's great creative forces, and cherished ethnolinguistic diversity. As Fishman (1982) interprets, the latter has a distinguished ancestry going back to Hebreo-Greek scholars who were prone to see the world 'ethnocentrically, but, yet ethnopluralistically'. According to Fishman (1982), Herder conceived of the existing 'ethnolinguistic diversity as part and parcel of the fundamental nature of human society' (p.5). By contrast the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church adopted a theory of language and ethnicity which was more technocratic, universalistic and seeking not the presentation of diversity and pluralism but the benefits of a unified mankind and where possible a universal language. Clearly, the contemporary pressures towards cultural singularity, universalism and the opposite tendency towards diversity and particularism lie hidden in a rich and fascinating world of scholarship and inquiry embedded deep in the Western intellectual tradition. (See Novak (1978) for a valuable analysis of the relationship between cultural pluralism and the rise of the nation state.)

Through this analysis of the history of ideas and the sociology of knowledge we learn that these traditions still persist and appear in different guises. From a contemporary point of view, a significant, though highly controversial, contribution to the development of the language/culture relationship has come from the work of the American linguist, Benjamin Lee Whorf. Whorf, along with Edward Sapir, the American anthropologist, is responsible for two hypotheses, viz, linguistic relativity, and linguistic determinism, known more simply as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. As the validity of these propositions has an important bearing on the

language/culture relationship, it is worthwhile briefly considering the current status of these propositions.

A key question posed by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is as to what is primary - language or conceptual thought? On this issue, Whorf's hypothesis, relating to linguistic determinism points out that language causes differences in cognition and in its extreme form this states one can think only in terms of the categories one's language allows one to think in. In other words, this is the view that all of our cognitive activities are language and culture dependent. Yule (1985) reviewing the evidence on this hypothesis rightly points out that this strong version of the hypothesis is clearly false as:

> 'it fails' to take into account the fact that users of a language do not inherit a fixed set of patterns to use. They inherit the ability to manipulate and create with a language, in order to express their perceptions (p.197).

The weaker version of this hypothesis simply recognizes that language and thought are interdependent and language is conceived of as a regular part of the process of thinking. In short, language is a mould that shapes our thought, not a way of packaging or expressing thought.

The relativity hypothesis states that the world is differently conceived by different language communities. This view finds partial support from the substantial evidence to indicate that linguistic variation is closely linked to the existence of different cultures. There is no doubt that 'world views' of different groups of people are often reflected in their grammatical language systems. But the existence of 'cultural correlates of some linguistic features' alone does not allow us to determine whether culture influences language or vice versa.

The relativity hypothesis has also been assailed by linguists such as Chomsky who have drawn attention to the existence of language universals eg. the fact that all languages have common properties such as noun-like and verb-like components, and also importantly the theory of generative grammar. In similar vein, emphasising language universals Chomsky and others contend that while what is learned is language specific, how language is learned is universal.

The American linguist Niyekawa-Howard (1972) in an excellent review of this evidence argues that 'the linguistic relativity hypothesis is frequently misunderstood

to be a question of the relationship between language and culture' (p.2). What the hypothesis emphasises, she suggests, is the influence of language on perception and thought. In a limited way it is readily acknowledged that language does influence the way we cognize and respond to the environment but this in no way inhibits us completely in thinking and acting across cultures.

We have by no means heard the last of Whorfianism in linguistic and language-related disciplines. Indeed, there is, according to Fishman, currently something of a revival of Whorfianism. But, clearly, there is at present no theoretical or empirical justification for postulating a causal relationship between language and culture as is often argued, explicitly or implicitly, by zealous advocates of language maintenance programmes. The assumption being that in a different language and culture environment the absence of, or deficiency in, one's home language, or mother tongues, impedes one's cognitive and social functioning. For our purposes what is critical is the need to disentangle the language-cognition relationship from the language-culture relation.

Despite this critical assessment of a part of Whorf's work, we should acknowledge some of its positive achievements. For example, Whorf's theorizing has inspired the pioneering work of the sociolinguist Bernstein who applauds Whorf for alerting him to "the selective effect of culture (acting through its patterning of social relationships) upon the **patterning** of grammar together with the pattern's semantic and thus cognitive significance" (1972) p.224). Whatever the status of Bernstein's own claims (see Stubbs, 1983, for a good critique based on the work of the American linguist Labov) about language disadvantage in relation to social class and on British working class speech codes, his work revives the Whorfian view that language is not merely a tool for social communication but also a tool for thought.

The work of sociolinguists like Bernstein in the UK and Labov in the United States, highlights the socio-cultural functions of language as a communicative tool; but surprisingly this work has had little theoretical or policy impact in the Australian scene. Australian applied linguistic research is poorly developed as yet and tends to be excessively concerned with issues of linguistic pluralism and justifying the need to sustain linguistic diversity through bilingual programmes and language teaching for cultural maintenance. Consequently, the complex social and cultural relationships between language (English as well as CLOTEs) in

its standard form as well as language varieties, and social class, ethnicity, educational performance and achievement remain relatively unexplored.

As a result, in Australia the public policy implications of the structural and social dimensions of language use remain neglected by proponents of multicultural social policies and a national language policy. Whereas, by contrast these very issues, that is, the social consequences of linguistic diversity, have been most influential at a policy level in the USA and UK, stressing the implication of language deficit and linguistic disadvantage for social policy, especially in education.

More generally, it is evident that Herder's Romanticism continues to influence contemporary social theory and scholarship in many Western countries and has led to important public policy initiatives through the influential scholarly work of people like Whorf. Whorf remains an 'unabashed Herderian' (Fishman, 1982) on the grounds that like Herder he has placed a great deal of emphasis on the value and significance of linguistic diversity and 'believes that the world's little languages and peoples are a treasure trove of wisdom and refinement' (p.9). In short, according to Fishman, Whorf's forgotten hypothesis about valuing ethnolinguistic diversity and declaiming the push for monolingual unity, places him in the lineal descent of Herder and the German romantics. It is this tradition which has been most influential in Australian theorizing about language and culture.

Whatever the systematic shortcomings, theoretical and empirical, of these ambitious, highly speculative and sometimes fanciful propositions about the language/culture nexus, Australian multiculturalism in its 'culturalist' manifestations has sought to incorporate many of the facets of 'unabashed Herderian' Romanticism. Consequently it abounds in excessive, unrealistic and unsubstantiated claims for the virtues of linguistic pluralism and multilingualism in public policy, particularly in education.

## VI. Language and ethnicity in the ideology of multiculturalism

Language and culture entered the Australian political arena of ethnic relations for the first time in the mid-70s with the Ethnic Rights movement which presaged the early manifestations of cultural pluralism, and the ideology of what came to be

known as 'multiculturalism'. In this early phase of multiculturalism, ethnic mobilization was directed primarily towards the amelioration of linguistic/cultural disadvantages suffered by immigrants and their offspring. Multicultural social policies were premised on the demand for equal opportunity especially educational opportunities and were based on the demands by migrants for their 'rights' as citizens, for better access to resources, equity and justice in all aspects of social and economic life. The assertion of ethnic rights by a disaffected/disadvantaged minority utilized the cultural forms of ethnicity, in particular, language and identity, as a means of mobilizing ethnic groups. By demanding the teaching of migrant and ethnic languages (see 1975 Report on Teaching of Migrant Languages) as a matter of right at public expense, these groups were seeking what they regarded as 'rights as a minority' not necessarily as 'cultural rights' as in the later demands for cultural maintenance through language rights. It was a search for empowerment through language.

In this early phase of multiculturalism, characteristic of the Whitlam-Grassby era, it was widely accepted that ethnic groups and organisations were legitimate buffer zones providing, among other things, 'psychic shelter' to migrants and their families as they learned to adapt to a new environment. This tentative groping towards cultural pluralism played an important part in fashioning ethnic group relations away from conventional assimilationist social policies and monoculturalism. Thus, as we shall see later ethnic languages became a key element in the mobilization of ethnic groups, who were seeking liberation from the effects of the crippling dominance of assimilationist orthodoxy. It was a part of the struggle of these groups for ethnic rights.

However, with the advent of the Fraser Government in the mid-70s there was a marked and noticeable shift in policies on migrant settlement and ethnic affairs. There were many factors influencing a change in approach to multiculturalism from the Whitlam era but, a key factor was the sensitivity of policy makers to the fear of creating ethnic enclaves or ghettos. By encouraging inter-dependent ethnic groups and cognate 'structures' as a part of public policy, the dominant groups considered that cohesion and stability of society would be threatened and lessen their own influence and control of power structures. The 'culturalist' interpretation of multiculturalism which evolved in the Fraser era was a response to these several concerns and represents a construction of race and ethnic relations in a manner which is less threatening to the dominant groups of society and concurrently

accommodating at a superficial level the needs and concerns of these groups.(See Castles (1987) for an exposition of the view that the construct of ethnicity may be viewed as a mode of interpreting social reality).

Among other features such as the emphasis on social cohesion a key tenet of this 'culturalist' approach to multiculturalism is that by maintaining and promoting ethnicity and cultural identity, society safeguards the self-esteem and self-respect of the culturally different. It is the latter which provides these newcomers with the emotional security and self-confidence to participate fully and strive for a better life in society. Underlying this belief was the assumption (See Smolicz 1986) that a secure sense of identity and self-esteem was a pre-condition for achieving equality of opportunity in a plural society, though not necessarily equality of outcomes (See Jayasuriya 1987).

The 'culturalist' approach to multiculturalism exemplified in the Galbally Report of 1978, maintained that it was the **right** of every person to maintain his or her culture (see p.4 of Galbally Report) and identified the pursuit of cultural diversity as a desirable goal of public policy. This vaguely stated policy of 'cultural rights' was most vividly reflected in the multicultural education policies and programmes that evolved from the Galbally Report, all of which stressed linguistic/cultural aspects to the exclusion of other aspects of migrant children's educational performance and achievements.

What is most interesting and equally perplexing in this approach is the way in which the doctrine of Rights, quite distinct from the earlier ethnic rights movement, has been invoked in some quarters to defend the claim of language and/or culture rights either for individuals or groups. Although some theorists such as Smolicz have invoked the notion of language rights, it has nevertheless been eschewed by most policy documents (a notable exception is the SA Language Policy Report, 1983) at national and State levels. This avoidance of the term 'rights' reflects the difficulty of substantiating this complex notion and the uncertainty surrounding its validity as a socio-legal concept. Lyndall Prott for one, while not denying the concept of 'Cultural Rights', as it has evolved in legal circles from its usage in various International Conventions (see Prott (1985) for an extended discussion), referring to the vagueness and confused nature of current formulations, describes it as 'a rather hazy category'.

In the light of this cautious attitude among jurists towards 'cultural rights', Michael Clyne (1986) for one has argued that multiculturalism 'affords legitimation and rights to all languages used in Australia ..... as a part of an international human rights movements' (p.15), rather than in terms of the so-called 'Third Generation' Rights, the rubric under which 'Cultural Rights' have been considered. But as Prott points out, quoting the work of Brownlie, the inclusion of language rights under classical human rights formulations have so far not been entirely successful.

Crittenden (1982) on the other hand takes objection to the 'rights' concept when applied to language rights on more practical grounds. He takes Smolicz to task on the grounds of wanting to suggest that persons of mixed ethnic origins should also have a **right** to learn a native language. In this context, he asks, 'what sense can be made of the claim that for a person who came to Australia from, say, Italy in 1855, Italian is still his native language and as such has a **right** (my emphasis) to learn it' (p.67).

Those who make this claim of rights in terms of language and also for culture rarely clarify in what sense they are using the term, the nature and the type of 'right' that is being claimed. We need first to be able to distinguish between individual and group rights or collective rights. The notion of 'collective rights' cannot make sense unless the boundaries of these groups can be legally defined. This is extremely difficult and complex where, as in Australia, there are no corresponding or overlapping territorial boundaries.

But more importantly, as B. Falk (1984) puts it, it is necessary to determine whether the demands made are on the grounds of one's ethnicity in terms of a right **sans phrase** (a right which is unqualified - a moral right) or as a **prima facie** right, i.e., one which when denied or obstructed has to be weighed against other considerations. In the light of the technical difficulties and complexity of the notion of **rights** as applied to such things as 'language rights' one can only suspend judgement on the validity and logical status of such propositions. Within a doctrine of democratic pluralism, based on a conception of justifiable pluralism, (see NACCME Report of 1987 for a brief outline of this rationale) all that the State can reasonably assert is the **guarantee** that it will not interfere in the legitimate cultural activities of these groups including the pursuit of a chosen language.

Other than the question of individual 'cultural' rights (not group rights), the importance attached to language and culture in this approach to multiculturalism is steeped in the communitarian philosophy of Herder's romanticism, mixed with the ideology of self-help, and the political philosophy of individualism. In policy terms this approach and philosophy was crystalized in the multicultural education policies of the late 70s and 80s. (See NACCME Report of 1987 and the Cahill Report of 1984 for a history and critique of these policies). Multicultural education policies, originating from the Galbally Report of 1978, served to strengthen this ideology and was embodied in the teaching of CLOTE. In the end they served to confirm the view that multicultural education was snynonymous with multilingual education and directed primarily towards cultural and linguistic maintenance.

## VII. Centrality of language issues in multicultural education :- the role of 'community languages'

Alcorso and Cope (1986) in their succinct survey and review of multicultural education policies at the State level summarize the main arguments for the teaching of CLs in both day and ethnic schools in terms of three closely related rationales. These are that "community languages are viewed as a means of fostering cultural pluralism; for maintaining ethnic languages and cultures, and for enhancing the sense of cultural and linguistic worth of community members" (p.15). Besides these there are four other areas, not related to maintenance or difference, but linked to access and equity issues. These are: "the value of Community Languages as a means of gaining employment, as an intellectual skill of general educational value, as a specific strategy in the cognitive development of students of NESB and as part of transitional bilingualism" (p.16). But these concerns were quite secondary to the cultural rationale, based on the need for cultural (which in effect meant linguistic) maintenance.

This general orientation to language and culture in education is eminently functional, stressing its day to day use in communication, social interaction and communal life - the life of the community (hence the preference for the term 'community languages' instead of the terms 'migrant' or 'ethnic languages') as the basis for language and cultural maintenance. This in many ways, as Fishman (1977)

comments, reflects "the touching belief of many ..... linguistic minorities that bilingual education will save their language".

But, on this issue of bilingual education for maintenance, others like Horvath (1980) point out that, if the education system were to produce genuine bilinguals (ie., those who can use the language in all social settings) one of the languages must give way because "no country needs two languages for the same set of circumstances" (Horvath, 1980). If this occurs, according to linguists there is an absence of 'diglossic compartmentalisation' which in turn is inimical to language survival. 'Diglossia' refers to a functional separation in the use of a language situation where there are markedly different language varieties, eg. High and Low varieties coexisting and serving different social functions. Without this kind of diglossia or social separation, it is suggested that language drift cannot be stemmed.

Community languages for language maintenance, that is, as a means of providing an authentic experience of a culture, cannot by itself lead to the desired outcome unless there are strong social and political supports (eg., public approval, adequate resources etc.,) within the wider society. Indeed, the LS we noted earlier, despite the several attempts at enhancing community language teaching in Australia, is indicative of the real difficulties inherent in sustaining an effective programme of community language teaching with the avowed objective of language and cultural maintenance.

It is crucial in developing a policy that proposals for furthering language learning, ie., LOTE, should be clear and precise in their stated curriculum objectives with a view to developing teaching methodologies to accord with these objectives. Thus for example, it is important to know the rationale of a language policy whether the teaching programme is intended to provide linguistic fluency, promote social interaction, enhance cultural awareness, promote inter-cultural understanding or provide cultural self respect and dignity.

In this context Ozolins (1986), has performed a valuable task by documenting the diffused and sometimes confused nature of the language policy rationales that have been recently developed at a State level. He shows, for example, that in Victoria, the policy places emphasis on mother tongue maintenance and language development programmes for students from NES backgrounds, whereas in SA, the

central aim of language learning is more general, more of a linguistic nature and is clearly not based upon the kinds of concerns for linguistic diversity apparent in the policy instruments of other States such as social interaction and development of the countries's language resources (cf. for example, the policy documents of States such as Queensland and Victoria with South Australia to observe the different philosophies).

Likewise, it is instructive to note that the rationale for second language teaching advocated in the NLR, while recognizing the objectives of language maintenance, does not give it high priority. It makes only a somewhat muted and relatively weak case for these objectives. The absence in the NLR of any informed discussion of maintenance bilingual teaching suggests, that what is, as in the Kaldor Report (1979), favoured, at least, by implication is transitional bilingualism for which there is good pedagogical justification. The latter is well documented in the literature and it is recognized for sound educational reasons that the home language or mother tongue provides the most effective basis for the introduction of a second language such as English.

That the NLR does not put forward a sustained argument in favour of language and cultural maintenance in relation to ethnic minorities becomes all the more significant when one compares it with the principles for a national language policy enunciated in the earlier Senate Report, where one of the four fundamental principles specifically relates to cultural maintenance through language acquisition. Furthermore, the NLR very correctly makes no reference whatever to language as a cultural right. This is all the more significant, because as Andreoni (1986) points out, the impetus for the National Language policy debate came from the multicultural lobby and it was "centred on establishing the nexus between multicultural policy and teaching and maintenance of LOTE" (p.8) i.e. community languages.

The NLR approach to LOTE appears to be more in accord with the SA approach to language policy which, as we have noted, presents a 'scientific rationale' for school level language teaching and highlights the cognitive and linguistic benefits of language learning. Incidentally, this is also basically the stance adopted by the NACCME Report of 1987 where it argues strongly that language is only **one** key element of multicultural education and defends its inclusion primarily but not exclusively on pedagogical grounds. The NACCME Report recognizes explicitly

that language, containing symbolic and instrumental communicative aspects, in relation to the broad-ranging goals of second language learning, is to be justified primarily "on the general cognitive and linguistic arguments...which derive their justification from the general purposes of schooling" (p.29).

Both the NACCME Report and the NLR, acknowledge and emphasise that there are considerable political, economic and utilitarian benefits, as well as social benefits, for language learners from ethnic minorities. Indeed, as Quinn (1987) has argued, the time is ripe "to play down the 'community' part of the community language programme because as he observes, community language programmes should transcend the local community" and be capable of presenting "an authentic experience of cultural reality" (p.94). The cogent arguments put forward in the NLR for what are termed "languages of wider teaching" acknowledges the fact that community languages overlap with LOTE which are important for wider national reasons. With this move away from community languages as such in formal education, the NLR has rightly signalled a new direction for public policy away from the predominantly 'culturalis' orientation of multicultural social policies.

Similarly, the NACCME Report of 1987, has also advocated a broader view of multicultural education in an effort to avoid the narrow perspective of the earlier decades which have tended erroneously to equate multiculturalism with multilingualism, and thereby subscribing to a limited view of multicultural education as cultural maintenance. NACCME's approach described as'equitable multiculturalism', incorporates, within a rationale of 'justifiable pluralism', the legitimate and desirable 'cultural' elements such as the need for greater cultural awareness and understanding, equity and identity, and locates language learning within this framework. Briefly, this viewpoint attempts to conceptualize multicultural education within a philosophy of democratic pluralism rather than narrowly as a form of cultural pluralism per se.

## VIII. Towards a new pluralism :- an alternative policy framework for language and culture

The dominance of language in policy is due, as we have shown, in a large measure to the ideology and particular socio-political approach adopted in Australian public

policy in dealing with migrant adaptation. Policies promoting languages other than English (LOTE) and the culture of migrants and ethnic minority groups, formed part of the philosophy of multiculturalism as cultural pluralism. It employed the notion of ethnicity as an organisational strategy for policy development. Culturalist multiculturalism, which developed in the Fraser era, pursued a doctrine of cultural pluralism wherein the **expressive** aspects of ethnicity, such as language and the need for identity were given priority in policy development. This orientation to policy, concentrating on the 'private domain' has tended to neglect the **instrumental** aspects of ethnicity belonging to the public domain, such as striving for better opportunities in a competitive environment and access to resources.

This model of multiculturalism and the social policies based on it have proved eminently functional and attractive to first generation migrant settlers. Above all, it enabled new settlers of non-British origin and ethnic groups in general, to retain the essentials of their cultural baggage in the dominant environment of an 'anglo-fragment' society and culture [the term anglo-fragment is adapted from Hartz to characterize Australian society (see Jayasuriya, 1987b)]. In this process of accommodation the dominant group has made peripheral concessions to ethnic minority groups such as the support for ethnic media and the establishment of ethnic schools, noteworthy in themselves, but of marginal importance to their long term well being. These groups as Castles (1987) and others point out (see Jakubowicz & Castles (1987)) continue to be adversely affected in terms of their 'life chances' and effective participation in the wider society. Smolicz (1986) in an attempt to counter this criticism submits the novel but most unlikely view that cultural maintenance is part of what (ethnic) groups regard as enhancing children's 'life chances'.

In reality, the 'life style' approach to multiculturalism, as evident in policies promoting linguistic pluralism, meant that new groups in society could be expected to pursue their cultural interests safely without recognizing the need for them to participate effectively in the public arena and thereby enabling them to challenge existing social and political interests.

This liberal ethnic identity model of multiculturalism has also served the interests of the dominant groups well because this policy strategy provided them with an effective means of social and political control, regulation, and above all, the continued maintenance of their hegemony and power. Thus, the 'definers' of

policy, the 'policy makers', recognised the problem of migrants - their inequalities and disadvantaged status- were expressed largely in terms of cultural dissonance and communication difficulties. In the light of this view they were able to evolve policies of social intervention characteristic of a 'blaming the victim' ideology and could resort to a philosophy of individualism, voluntarism and self help as the basis for developing a new policy of migrant settlement.

This mode of thinking was consistent with the political philosophy of conservative liberalism characteristic of the Fraser,era. Multiculturalism became a means for the recognition of the private interests of individuals rather than a means of incorporating ethnic groups into the public sphere. Issues such as culture and language were seen primarily, though not exclusively, as a means of enhancing the capacity of individuals to pursue their private 'life styles'.

However, what this style of multiculturalism highlighted was the classic 'dilemma or paradox of pluralism' viz., the need "to reconcile the rightful concerns of cultural diversity and identity with the socially legitimate desires and claims to achieve equality" (Jayasuriya, 1987a). Stated differently, this dilemma hides the tension or competing pressures existing between the expressive and instrumental dimensions of ethnicity, the former characteristic of the 'primordialists' view of ethnicity and the latter with the 'situational' approach. The Galbally Report's approach to these twin demands for equality and identity, as remarked earlier, was tilted in favour of satisfying identity needs and demands and soft pedalled the striving for equality, access and equity.

Interestingly, Skutnabb-Kangas (1987), discussing the position of ethnic minorities and migrants in the European scene, has made reference to this Australian interpretation and observed that a comparable situation has prevailed in Germany. Quoting the work of Borsutzky et al, Skutnabb-Kangas observes that:

> a **social** subgroup in the labor market, the migrant workers, were scientifically produced as an "ethnic minority" and "their difficulties were not interpreted in terms of the restricted access to economic, political and social life opportunities; instead, the lack of integration was overwhelmingly attributed to religious, cultural, linguistic and regional characteristics (p.3)

Thus, the 'deficits' in Germany observed among working class migrants, as in Australia, were also mainly cultural and not social or economic. But she warns that

"a focus on the expressive dimension of ethnicity does not exclude a recognition of the importance of political, economic and social rights" (p.15). Perhaps, the more important and valid observation Skutnabb-Kangas makes is that:

> The balance in how much to focus on, respectively, the expressive and the instrumental dimensions of ethnicity, should rightfully be decided by each minority itself separately in each country and in each historical situation. It is important to determine in which phase each country is in attributing different reasons for the problems faced by migrants.

In similar vein it has been suggested (see Jayasuriya 1987), this 'ethnic identity model' of multiculturalism of the 70s and 80s may have outlived its functional utility as an effective means of dealing with ethnic affairs and ethnic relations. This success story may have come to the end of the road, and we may be entering a period of confusion, uncertainty and drift, as the old multiculturalism proves to be irrelevant and ineffective in the current social and political climate. The functional value of this earlier version of multiculturalism, essentially a conservative first generation strategy, has little appeal for present day ethnic minorities with new needs and different clients or actors, such as the ethnic youth, militant women workers, and also unemployed labour force. And, to these landmarks in the social science must be added the recent changes in the pattern of immigration introducing race, colour and also religion. In fact, religious differences too now appear significant as, for example with the Islamic groups and may serve to rekindle a religious factor in Australian ethnic relations which has been dormant since the days of Irish-Catholics Protestant conflicts and also to a lesser extent anti-Jewish religious sentiment before the 1850s. These new elements in ethnic relations are critically important for the future development of ethnic affairs policy.

Furthermore, the new non-Caucasian ethnic minorities (mainly 'Asian' migrant groups) do not attach the same importance to language as the earlier European migrant groups, have done. Clearly, it is groups such as the Poles, Greeks and the captive nations of the Baltic States who have been in the forefront of the language lobby in Australia in demanding language rights. Other European groups have given only moderate or lukewarm support to such language demands. In general, 'Asian' groups, the new 'visible minorities', (to use an apt Canadian expression), as in Canada, regard their 'ethnicity' in more instrumental than expressive terms, giving priority to redress for example from the blatant discrimination to which they are exposed in the labour market. If Canadian experience is any guide, these

groups are more likely to be in the forefront demanding social and political rights rather than cultural rights - a trend evident in the emphasis given to affirmative action programmes for visible minorities. In brief, the old model of multiculturalism which has evolved through the 70s and 80s as a guiding principle of social policy, confronts a very different social and political reality from what existed when it first came into vogue.

It is in this context that the continued persistence of this conventional model of multiculturalism, despite sharp criticism of its philosophy and practice (see the Cass Report (1983) on AIMA, the 'flagship' of Fraser/Galbally multiculturalism) that is most perplexing and baffling. As I have argued elsewhere (see Jayasuriya, 1987a), the Jupp Report, intended to supersede the Galbally Report, does little to address the issues of social justice and equity. Instead Jupp, employing the Galbally language and idiom, espouses 'equality of opportunity', using the rhetoric of 'access and equity'. Except for the rhetoric the dominant thrust of policy remains relatively unchanged in the Hawke era.

The time is ripe for a paradigm shift to an alternative model of multiculturalism consonant with a philosophy of democratic pluralism and based on a conception of ethnic groups as minority interest groups, stressing the instrumental rather than expressive needs of ethnicity. The concept of **minority group rights** which Castles (1987b) and Jayasuriya (1987a) have presented quite independently of each other, is a more realistic and functional approach to policy formation, especially in the context of a faltering economy where ethnic minorities share a disproportionate burden of the inequalities arising from structural adjustment of the economy. It is also more suited to cater for the new needs of ethnic minorities in a changing society such as the aspirations for social betterment of second and third generation Australians of ethnic origin and the adaptation of non-Caucasian settlers. What is more, it provides an ethnic affairs policy perspective more consonant with a social justice strategy for social policy development as is being actively canvassed by various groups in contemporary Australian society.

Conceptually, this model emphasises the importance of extending the membership of the political community to minority groups. Such a perspective places a strong emphasis on strategies of equality and justice (not just access and equity) for achieving effective participation. Therefore, by contrast to the liberal model, greater importance is attached to the public needs of ethnic groups.

Within this new perspective, from a public policy point of view, it is necessary to acknowledge what Macrae (1985) refers to as 'the double role of language in modern societies, as an instrument of communication and as a symbol of group identity' (p.22). In adopting a minority group rights model, it is important to make a clear distinction between language, as a vehicle of cultural expression, including its role in cultural maintenance and its use as a means of communication at the instrumental level, facilitating greater social participation and access to resources.

The latter is characteristic of the communication strategy in service delivery where language-based policies are developed for improving access through such measures as the use of bilingual professionals, interpreters, and by matching clients and workers according to language. This strategy is worthwhile and may be pursued as a means of guaranteeing access and relevance of services to ethnic minorities, but should be viewed as being complementary, not as an alternative to other policy options. It is an option ideally suited to deal with the problems of initial migrant settlement and with first generation settlers but less effective with more settled groups especially second/third generations fluent speakers of English, who may still wish to assert their ethnicity in their own way.

The critical and difficult issue is for service providers to make the modes of practice, their rationale and concepts, acceptable to clients from diverse groups in terms of their cultural orientations. This is especially important for service providers in the helping professions. The recent work in cross-cultural psychology and transcultural psychiatry has shown the extent to which clinical practice is impregnated with western cultural values and normative assumptions. (See Jayasuriya, 1986 for a discussion of this issue in relation to mental health services).

In the context of this Paper, what is important to recognize is that the necessary 'cultural' critique of theories and practice cannot be provided merely by learning the language of clients. As Kalantzis and Cope (1986) argue, "propositions about learning culture-through-language are unproven", and there is no evidence that the necessary changes in thinking and attitudes in professionals and service-providers can be achieved through learning a LOTE. Similarly, there is no evidence that other social attitudinal changes such as a reduction of prejudices, discrimination and racism can be achieved through language learning.

Despite this, public policy persists in claiming broad-ranging outcomes for language learning and a considerable amount of public money continues to be invested in diverse programmes of language learning. The most recent example of a public policy initiative based on this kind of thinking is the push for 'Asian Studies' based primarily on the study of Asian languages. As I (see Jayasuriya 1986) have argued elsewhere this approach

> needs to be interpreted with caution as these 'skills' relevant to business and industry are often restricted to language skills ..... language competence is valuable only if it also includes 'cultural' skills, especially those relevant to trans-cultural communication. Language competence and mastery, however desirable in its own right, is in itself no guarantee of cultural competence (p.6).

In general, Australian multicultural social policies because of their preoccupaton with a communications strategy, based largely on language learning, have overlooked the reality, dynamism, and force of cultural factors in effective policy implementation. The barriers to access and service delivery in all areas of public policy, remain poorly understood because of this refusal to consider cultural influences independently of language. Perhaps, at a policy level, a notable exception to this was the successful implementation a few years ago of Galbally 14 Programmes, directed at developing cultural awareness and sensitization programmes for professionals and others working with clients from ethnic minority groups.

In fact, the more general point to be made is not that language should be discarded, but that it be seen as a 'public need' of minority groups for membership in the political community rather than as a 'set of rights' to function more effectively in the private arena. There is no question of the importance of language and equally, of a national language policy, but the critical question is to determine how best it can be grounded in public policy.

As a rule, the taken-for-granted assumption that language related provisions will invariably and inevitably provide cultural knowledge, which has led to the neglect of cross cultural training for service providers except through language training. The flawed premise on which this policy rationale has evolved is that communicative competence in an ethnic language, i.e., LOTE, or an Asian language automatically confers 'cultural competence' in the ethnic minority culture. It needs to be recognized that cultural skills training can lead to an

understanding of 'cultural codes' implicit in social behaviour, without necessarily being linked to language training programmes.

Overall, the chief concern of democratic pluralism should be to ensure and safeguard the right of minority groups to maintain their language and culture in special circumstances with a view to assisting these groups to utilize their language and culture for achieving individual as well as broader social goals. In the secular and plural democratic society, language like religion, especially in its distinctly cultural functions must be located strictly in the private domain.

Language and culture enters into the political agenda of public policy only when it serves the larger public interest and promotes national goals. The grounds for this public/private differentiation depends greatly on the historical origin of, and political status accorded to, minority groups in the 'civil society'; and this of course will vary from society to society. Australia largely because it lacks ethnic minority groups bounded by territorially localized groups, as say as in Canada and some other European countries, has no reason to give political status to language groups or speech communities, and confer linguistic rights.

Besides the official endorsement, support and development of English as the 'national language', along the lines of the NLR, the critical language policy issues relate to those languages in the Australian community which have been labelled CLOTE. It is suggested that the development of CLOTE should be more narrowly circumscribed than is advocated in some quarters, on the grounds of linguistic/cultural pluralism. Teaching of these languages should properly be enclosed within the boundaries of broad-based goals such as the ones advocated in the NLR relating to the pursuit of national interest and responsiveness to social needs, (eg., need for bilingual professionals, training and interpreters, and the needs of business and industry etc.). We need pedagogically defensible policies that can build on our sizeable linguistic capital and enhance our capability to deliver relevant services while at the same time providing for the general cultural betterment and enrichment of Australian society.

The essence of this new policy perspective must be to clearly draw limits on the role of the state vis-a-vis the language and culture of the diverse groups that constitute society. It is recognized that in societies like Australia which loosely subscribe to a notion of democratic pluralism, state and public policy has a role to

poplay primarily in the public domain. It achieves this by acknowledging the diversity, denoting the nature and extent of ethnic differentiation permitted, and enabling individuals to function fully and effectively as citizens without being subject to disadvantages or discrimination that may be regarded as being due to racial, ethnic or cultural factors.

More specifically, as far as language is concerned it must be recognized that in a multicultural society, language is located within the structures of society, its cultures and social systems. Indeed, as Kalantzis and Cope (1986),very correctly point out, even as a "communicative tool, language is relatively neutral, and open to enormous variations in register, semantic range and socio-linguistic function, depending for example, on socio-economic context" (p.20).

Furthermore, since language is also socially symbolic, being related to one's ethnicity and social class position, people have attitudes towards different varieties of language and dialects. Crystal (1987) correctly points out that

> probably the most distinctive feature of ethnicity in immigrant group is not their mother tongue (which may rarely be heard outside the home) but the foreign accent and dialect that characterizes their use of the majority language (p.34).

Thus, we come to have new varieties of the majority language such as English accents and dialects associated with speakers from India, the West Indies or Puerto Rico. In these instances some language varieties are favoured and labelled as 'good', 'correct' and 'pleasing'. These attitudinal connotations arising from the social and cultural context within which language use occurs may have adverse effects on some language speakers*.

For this reason alone, a major public policy objective should be to develop a greater degree of individual and social tolerance of linguistic diversity. This requires major attitudinal changes and also the cultivation of a language climate and atmosphere within which there is the greater recognition and acceptance of dialect and accent differences in the public domain such as in the media and social interactions. Thus, it should be a formal, if not, legal requirement that all cultural and linguistic groups as in the USA, and UK, are properly represented in the

* In a notable judicial decision in the U.S.A. - the Ann Arbor Judgement of 1977 - public recognition was given to ethnic linguistic diversity when BEV (Black English Vernacular) was seen as a barrier to equal education opportunity.

visual media, not just in the SBS. In brief, a major public policy task must be to eliminate or mitigate the socio-linguistic barriers to the proper, fair and effective use of language in a culturally diverse society.

The Lo Bianco Report on Language Policy, despite some important reservations with respect to specific recommendations (eg. a compulsory year of language learning), appears headed in the direction of the desirable paradigm shift in policy I have advocated. If this Report is handled with mature political judgement and discretion and not embroiled in the politics of language and ethnicity, it could prove to be a valuable document for the future development of democratic pluralism in Australian society as envisaged in the NACCME Report of 1987 through its pivotal concept of 'equitable multiculturalism'.

However, there are grounds for considerable disquiet as regards some aspects of the strategy being currently pursued. A major move has been the disestablishment of NACCME, and the decision to subsume multicultural education within the mandate of the new structure created to oversee the implementation of the Language Policy, viz., AACLAME. By this inexplicable, flawed policy decision we may have again erred wittingly or unwittingly, by equating multicultural education with language education. This certainly is not the tenor of the Lo Bianco Report which also acknowledges that multicultural issues form only a part of national language policy objectives. As the foundation Chair of NACCME, I would strongly urge, considering the sort of arguments advanced in this Paper, that this decision be reconsidered as a matter of priority, not just in the interests of multicultural education, but also of national language policy development.

## IX. Conclusion

In conclusion, this Paper has endeavoured to examine the social, political and ideological underpinnings of recent policy initiatives relating to language and culture in Australian society, in particular, those of concern to ethnic minority groups. The discussion has been confined to the non indigeneous minority groups, i.e., the immigrant ethnic minorities, on the grounds that bases of policy development for these groups have always been quite distinct in comparison with the indigneous minority, the Aboriginal groups, who by virtue of their historical

and political status in society make different claims and demands on the State regarding matters such as cultural maintenance and language policy.

The pre-eminent place accorded to English in the development of a national language policy is acknowledged as being proper and reasonable. What has, however, been problematic in public policy has been the development of languages other than English in the increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse society that has arisen following large scale immigration from non-British countries in the post-World War II period. As a result, Australia is being classified by some as a multilingual society though strictly speaking there still exists considerable linguistic homogeneity. Whatever stance one takes on the nature and extent of linguistic diversity existing in Australian society, language and culture have become public issues, whose policy implications have recently aroused considerable controversy. The place that should be accorded to language and culture in Australian public policy and how best the language and cultural needs of these new groups can be dealt with in the public domain still remains unresolved.

In an attempt to understand some of the confusions and uncertainty surrounding language and culture within the context of public policy, this paper set itself a three-fold task. A first objective was to identify the nature and extent of the diversity as regards language and culture and recognize the major social and political influences that have determined the directions taken by Australian public policy in support of linguistic and cultural pluralism. Secondly, an important task has been to expose to critical scrutiny the rationale and some of the hidden and often unstated assumptions which lay behind these policies. These refer in particular to the impact on public policy of the implicit,if not explicit,definitions and conceptualizations of ethnicity and culture that are evident in the Australian theorizing. These assumptions have been borrowed from one influential tradition of learning and scholarship, viz., German Romanticism, whose universal relevance and significance can be disputed on a variety of grounds. Thirdly, we have endeavoured to show that language and culture in public policy are politically contested issues, deeply entrenched in different ideologies which in turn lead to distinct policies and programs. Mainstream policies, I have suggested have centred around a liberal ideology of migrant settlement and have been developed narrowly within a framework of 'cultural pluralism'. This approach to policy has afforded a pre-eminent place in policy development to such issues as culture and language

maintenance, which involve concerns belonging more to the private rather than the public domain.

Finally, the paper attempts to assess initiatives relating to language and culture by examining the framework of policy in which they have been developed. The overriding impression obtained from an analysis of the policy ethos of multicultural social policies, is that this orientation is outmoded, irrelevant and unsuited to new needs and emerging societal demands. Despite the fact that this 'culturalist' orientation to multicultural social policy originated and developed within a philosophy of conservative liberalism, the Labor Government of the late 80s has done little, except of a cosmetic nature, to alter the thrust of these earlier policies.

In the search for a new public policy strategy, a paradigm shift is advocated, moving away from an 'ethnic identity' model to a 'minority group rights' model of multiculturalism. It is a perspective, which endeavours to locate these policies within the context of a 'democratic pluralism', serving the public rather than the private interests. This policy shift, demands a reconceptualization of the role of language and culture in public policy, as it relates to ethnic minority groups, and the removal of the institutional and attitudinal constraints of the current policy orthodoxy.

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