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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

The word profile of a Global Online Course for English language teachers: A corpus-based research project

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Abstract

Providing useful reference materials for online course participants is an important aspect for online courses. To aid a course designed to provide professional development to English language teachers from around the world, this corpus-based study investigated the frequency and coverage of Academic Word List (Coxhead, 1998), General Service List (GSL) first 1000 words (1K), and GSL second 1000 words (2K) lists. Gathering course materials and participant discussion board posts into two corpora for this study, frequency and coverage of the three base lists were calculated using AntWordProfiler and AntConc, resulting in a coverage of 9.56 % for AWL words and over 80% coverage for the two GSL lists combined in the first corpus. The high percentage of off-list words (9.75%) in the first corpus and low percentage of AWL words in the second corpus (5.23%) motivated the creation of a new word list that contains the most frequently used words outside of the AWL, GSL 1K, and GSL 2K words from the first corpus to supplement future course participants with technical words that are required to successfully complete the course.

Keywords AWL; English teachers; learner corpus; off-list words; online teacher education

1. Introduction

As the popularity of English as a second, foreign, or additional language worldwide increases, the need for highly trained English language teachers, who are versed in connecting the latest practices to their classrooms, is of utmost importance to prepare learners for the future. The British Council (2013) estimates that there are 12 million English teachers worldwide, many of whom teach in their home countries. While English teachers have historically been limited to teacher education within their situated contexts, due to the vast improvements in internet capabilities worldwide, online teacher education programs can help connect teachers to quality instructional content, as well as to other teachers and trainers.

The Online Professional English Network (OPEN) offers virtual learning opportunities to foreign English language educators, professionals and learners worldwide. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, OPEN professional development opportunities are developed by U.S. academic institutions and experts in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). One of the virtual learning opportunities is the course *Using Educational Technology in the English Language Classroom*. Referred to as the Global Online Course (GOC) by the course developers, TAs, and course mentors, which inspired the names of these corpora, the course is an eight-week, eight-module teacher training course that focuses on integrating technology into each of the major areas that English teachers typically provide instruction (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, writing). Within this online course, the participants are English teachers in their situated contexts who are nominated to join the course by their local U.S. embassies in cooperation with FHI360, the organization that oversees this course.

Given that this course's potential to positively impact countless classrooms and learners, using a corpus-based approach to analyzing the course and making empirically-based recommendations for improving its content is most desired. Specifically, one area of improvement within the course concerns the glossary pages provided in each unit. While it is hoped that the glossaries provide scaffolding for course participants, who may be exposed to unfamiliar vocabulary words and technical English concepts, these lists have yet to be checked using corpus methods.

Moreover, as course participants are granted access to introductory course materials prior to the start of the course, participants could be provided with a list of key glossary terms of relevance to the whole course, which has the potential to improve their studies.

2. Literature review

There is a great wealth of vocabulary studies within corpus linguistics to provide insight and best practices for informing our work with the GOC. Specifically, research surrounding the General Service List (GSL), Academic Word Lists (AWL), and Off-List Words, will be discussed in the following section.

2.1. General Service List (GSL)

The General Service List (GSL) is a frequency-range-based word list, originally of approximately 2,000 headwords, that represents the most common words in the English language. This list provides learners and instructors alike with the most impactful words to study first, which can help them make the largest gains in comprehending the language. Originally published in a report called the *Interim report on vocabulary selection* (Faucett et al., 1936 as cited in Gilner, 2011) the list was later published as the General Service List (West 1953, as cited in Gilner, 2011). This list has since been updated as the New General Service List (NGSL) (Browne, et al., 2013) and the new-GSL (Brezina & Gablasova, 2013), each boasting additional coverage of the English language.

Corpus-based word lists have been developed for a wide range of subject areas and specific purposes, each returning meaningful results within their context. Whether GSL, NGSL, or new-GSL, researchers have used these word lists in multiple studies as an indicator of the prevalence of basic English words in a given corpus. GSL is often employed in tandem with the Academic Word List (AWL), which will be described in the next section. Despite the prevalent use of the GSL, Ward (2009) highlights issues with assuming low level learners know all of the GSL words. Moreover, issues concerning polysemy in GSL words have been noted as problematic for language learners (Clemmons, 2008).

2.2. Academic Word List (AWL)

Since its creation more than two decades ago, the AWL has been integral in areas of corpus research, providing guidelines for developing and evaluating corpora with the purpose of helping native and non-native learners learn crucial vocabulary for their studies. In this landmark study, Coxhead (2000) compiled the AWL based on different academic sources including academic articles, textbooks, course books, and laboratory manuals. These sources stem from 28 subject areas in four major disciplines: science, law, commerce, and arts. The total number of word families in the AWL is 570, each with different numbers of words. Word families had to be outside the GSL to be included. Some of these word families branch into more than 15 words, such as the word *analyze* while others have only one family member such as the word *job*.

With the popularity and respect of the AWL, some criticism has been placed on its reliability and validity. One of the major critiques underscores the focus of the AWL on particular fields, and subsequently, on how the list does not cover the full range of academic disciplines (e.g., Chen & Ge, 2007; Hyland & Tse, 2007). As a result, additional studies have emerged with the aim of filling the gap between different academic fields and their word coverage lists (e.g., Lei & Liu, 2016; Ward, 2009; Yang, 2015).

In order to better understand how research studies have contributed to the bridge between what words learners empirically need to know for their specific disciplines and what learning materials are available to them, a methodical search for empirical articles that included written corpora and incorporated the AWL were evaluated for appropriateness based on the selection criteria. Coverage and frequency analysis are the main research methods used in the selected articles with frequency analysis used to identify the most common word families in the selected corpora. Through frequency analysis, it is possible to evaluate the coverage of a corpus, with the aim of providing pedagogical implications.

Corpus studies showed a range of approaches in assessing the presence and accuracy of the AWL using frequency analysis. While some studies claim the AWL lacks representation of the most frequent words in all the academic fields (Chen & Ge, 2007), others trust the reliability of the AWL and look for ways to teach the AWL words more effectively (e.g., Li & Qian, 2010). Frequency thresholds for the inclusion of words vary greatly in studies, from that of 13.31 times per million words (Bi, 2020) to 28.57 times per million words (Lei & Liu, 2016). While most studies exclude high frequency words, a tendency among AWL studies, Lei & Liu (2016) chose to include them in their study when they convey special meaning in a particular context. Based on their results, the authors advocate that this approach is more impactful than the commonly accepted, exclude-the-high-frequency-words approach. Moreover, when AWL is tested in new contexts, such as Pathan et al.'s (2018) study on Ph.D. theses in Pakistan, the percentage of the coverage of the AWL is similar to what Coxhead (2000) generally proposed.

2.3. Off-list words

Off-list words are specialized vocabulary words that are commonly used in a "particular topic, field or discipline" (Nation, 2001, p. 198). Also referred to using other terms such as *technical vocabulary*, the prevalence of these words will vary by discipline and can cover up to 5% of a given text (Hyland & Tse, 2007). As such, these words can be highly beneficial for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instructors and learners in order to pinpoint vocabulary needed for a given discipline. Some studies have found a relatively

high percentage of off-list words, with implications for teaching these words (e.g., Gustafsson & Malmström, 2013). To determine a field's off-list words, after creating a discipline-specific corpus, researchers remove words from the GSL and AWL, or lists of their own devising, to arrive at the off-list words.

Studies that look specifically at off-word lists tend to employ the GSL and AWL to remove both high frequency words and general academic words to arrive at the specialized words that the given field uses. Several example studies have employed such methods to investigate target language content. In a 2019 study of specialized vocabulary in Thai food menus, Low used corpus methods to compare its GSL, AWL, and off-word lists, drawing upon specific AWL and off-word lists words that would be useful for Thai chefs. To compare the frequency of academic vocabulary in abstracts written by experts, as compared with Chinese undergraduates, Wang (2014) found statistically significant differences in the 1K and Off-list vocabulary usage, drawing pedagogical implications from the results. Beyond looking at expert text, corpus studies have used off-list words to primarily investigate student vocabulary knowledge. Silva et al.'s (2018) study investigated the vocabulary used by Brazilian students in their written assignments, and how it compared and differed to other corpora. Through this analysis, including the students' use of off-list words, the researchers arrived at some pedagogical implications, especially considering different word usage between life sciences and physical sciences and the explicit teaching of lexical bundles used in these disciplines.

2.4. Research questions

As the course contains both expert writing in terms of its course content and student writing from student discussion boards and other deliverables, there are ample resources to investigate the frequency of AWL and off-word lists among the course materials, glossary pages, and student writing to help us with our goals of improving the course's glossary pages. Therefore, the following research questions have been developed:

1. How does the frequency of the AWL words compare across the course instructional materials and participant writing?
2. What is the alignment between the module glossaries and the AWL wordlist? What is the alignment with off-list words?
3. What are the words that GOC course participants need to know in order to successfully interact with the course materials?

3. Methods

This study adopted a corpus-based research approach to evaluate the frequency and coverage of AWL, GSL 1K and GSL 2K words in a specialized online teacher education course for English language teachers from around the world, with the aim of improving the course materials. Two corpora, which were built from the GOC course and participant writings, will be discussed in the following section.

3.1. Data collection

To answer the proposed research questions, two corpora were constructed based on the course. The first corpus, named CyGOC, contains all the course content that learners encountered in the course, including the course syllabus, module content, and video transcripts. The rationale for including all of the course contents in CyGOC is to represent all of the materials that learners may encounter in this course. As such, the corpus includes 12 journal articles that were included in the course as reading assignments and were included in the downloadable packets for participants with lower bandwidth or who prefer their materials in PDF format. The references, appendices, tables, figures, notes, endnotes and footnotes of these articles were removed as part of the corpus cleaning process. CyGOC contains a total of 148,043 words.

The second corpus created for this study, named CyDis, concerns the discussion board posts that participants complete on a weekly basis for the course. The course iteration that participant data came from was the Fall 2020 iteration, which had a total of six sections of approximately 24 students per class. Of these participants, 49 enrolled in the Fall 2020 iteration agreed to make their data available for research purposes by signing a consent form which was provided within the Canvas modules. CyDis totals 77,370 words, which encompasses 179 text files of learners' discussion posts and 329 text files of replies from Module 2 through Module 5. The reasoning for selecting this period of the course for CyDis is due to practical reasons; since Module 1's discussion board posts are more introductory in nature, during the first week participants become acclimated to the posting practices and grading procedures of the course. On the other hand, discussion posts in the later units may decline as participants prioritize completing their final project, which is worth considerably more points than the discussion posts. CyDis is used to sample the writing of a particular group of learners - English language teachers from around the world who are selected to enroll in the GOC.

3.2. Data analysis and processing

Creating the CyGOC and the CyDis resulted in 620 files: 112 text files for the former and 508 text files for the latter. In order to answer the research questions, two computer software programs were utilized. To calculate coverage of the AWL and GSL lists, AntWordProfiler (Anthony, 2009) was used. AntConc (Anthony, 2014) was utilized to calculate the word frequency for the ten AWL sublists. It should be noted here that AntWordProfiler has the target lists AWL, GSL 1K, GSL 2K already built into the software, however, AntWordProfiler does not offer separate searches for the ten AWL sublists. As a workaround, ten

text files that contain one AWL sublist per text file were created and then uploaded to AntConc to acquire the word frequencies for the AWL sublists in each corpus. Running the AntWordProfiler on the corpora generated output on the overall coverage of the three lists: AWL, GSL 1K, GSL 2K and off-list words, as well the number of tokens identified from each list. All outputs were saved as .txt files and were exported to Excel as delimited files to facilitate the data analysis.

4. Results

The current study focused on the frequency and the coverage of the academic words in a GOC, which is provided for English language teachers from around the world with varying English proficiency. This section presents the results in detail along with relevant data displays and tables according to the research questions. This section will also discuss the findings in relation to previous studies in the literature.

RQ 1. The frequency of the AWL words and the off-lists words across the course instructional materials and participant writing

4.1. CyGOC coverage

CyGOC, which was created from the course content, has a total number of 148,043 words. Table 1 below displays the number of tokens across the three base lists: AWL, GSL 1K, GSL 2K, as well as the off-list words for the course modules, assigned readings, and video transcripts. From Table 1, it is seen that the course readings have the largest number of AWL tokens while the introductory texts, which could be referred to as Module 0 content, have the lowest number. This result might not be surprising considering the course readings are research articles; since AWL is an *academic word list*, it is fitting that the AWL words occur more frequently in more academic texts.

Table 1. Number of tokens for CyGOC across the modules

	AWL	GSL 1K	GSL 2K	Off-list	Total
Introductory texts	207	1,322	69	231	1,829
Module 1	273	2,022	111	308	2,736
Module 2	335	2,670	325	425	3,665
Module 3	471	3,725	331	509	5,036
Module 4	354	2,269	139	309	3,071
Module 5	557	3,369	248	386	4,560
Module 6	236	1,608	123	247	2,214
Module 7	272	2,206	188	365	3,031
Module 8	436	2,749	157	363	3,705
Readings	7,500	45,858	2,912	6,799	63,069
Video Transcripts	3,173	41,466	2,747	4,147	51,533
CyGOC Overall	14,151	112,057	7,403	14,432	148,043

After the number of tokens were acquired per list, the coverage was investigated. It is worth highlighting here that the readings and video transcripts were separated from their respective modules during the analysis to account for register differences. Table 2 shows the overall coverage of the base lists and the off-list words in the CyGOC corpus.

Table 2. CyGOC coverage across the modules

	AWL %	GSL 1K %	GSL 2K %	Off-list %
CyGOC Overall	9.56	75.69	5	9.75
M0	11.32	72.28	76.05	12.63
M1	9.98	74.71	4.06	11.26
M2	9.14	72.85	6.41	11.6
M3	9.35	73.97	6.57	10.11
M4	11.53	73.88	4.53	10.06
M5	12.21	73.88	5.44	8.46
M6	10.66	72.63	5.56	11.16
M7	12.04	72.78	6.2	12.04
M8	11.77	74.2	4.24	9.8
Readings	11.89	72.71	77.33	10.78
Video Transcripts	6.16	80.46	5.33	8.05

The overall AWL text coverage in the CyGOC is 9.56 %, which is in alignment with the proposed 10 % AWL coverage in all academic texts in literature (Coxhead, 2000). This result is higher than some other reported studies, such as the 4.66 % in Konstantakis' (2007) business word list and the 4.94 % in Mozaffari

and Moini's (2014) study which investigated the presence of AWL words in education research articles. However, it is lower than some recent studies, as in the example of Gholaminejad and Anani Sarab (2020), in which the AWL coverage in English language teaching textbooks was reported as 11.13 %. This result is impressive considering the size of their corpus - 11 million words.

In terms of AWL coverage, it is highest in Module 5, the module on teaching writing, and lowest with 6.16 % for the video transcripts, which is expected due to the nature of spoken language in the videos. Contrarily, GSL 1K has the highest coverage in the video transcripts with 80.46 %, whereas it is around the same percentage in all other modules. As a whole, the off-list words seem to have a remarkable coverage, ranging from 8.05% to as high as 12.63% across the modules. Seeing the coverage of the AWL and the off-list words around similar percentages calls for a further analysis to investigate the off-list words in the GOC. GSL 2K has the lowest coverage among the lists in all modules; among the modules, GSL 2K is highest in Module 3, which is on grammar. In terms of off-list words, the coverage is the highest for the Introductory texts (Module 0) and Module 7, the module on teaching speaking, while it is the lowest in the video transcripts. Nonetheless, off-list words have relatively similar coverage compared to the AWL list with less than 0.20% difference between the two lists in the overall CyGOC coverage.

As a further investigation, CyGOC was analyzed with ten individual sublists of AWL to detect which sublist has a higher or lower coverage. Table 3 displays the type and token distribution of AWL sublists in CyGOC. Sublist 1 has the highest numbers of AWL types and tokens whereas Sublist 10 has the lowest numbers, which is also represented graphically in Figure 1.

Table 3. CyGOC type and token distribution across AWL sub lists

Sub list	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Type	230	189	154	137	123	124	126	88	68	27
Token	3,741	3,064	1,981	1,367	898	1,335	705	632	516	538

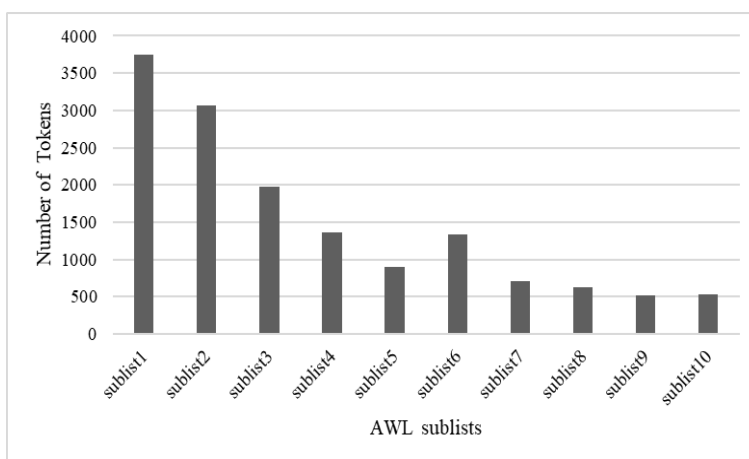**Figure 1.** AWL sub lists in CyGOC by number of tokens

Table 3 and Figure 1 reveal that there is a gradual decline in the usage of the AWL in terms of tokens from the given sublists becoming less frequent. This finding is in line with what other researchers found in the literature, that earlier sublists in the AWL are used more compared to later ones (for example, see Pathan et, al., 2018)

4.2. CyDis coverage

CyDis consists of discussion posts and replies from the 49 participants in the six Fall 2020 course sections from Module 2 through Module 5. CyDis differs from CyGOC in that CyDis is a learner corpus in the sense that the English teachers are non-native speakers who are learning new content and concepts related to integrating technology into their English courses. The number of tokens for each base list across each module in the CyDis is shown in Table 4. Figure 2 shows that GSL 1K is significantly higher than other lists and that all other lists notably remain under 2,000-word level across all modules.

Table 4. Number of Tokens in CyDis

	AWL	GSL 1K	GSL 2K	Off-list	Total
CyDis Overall	4,045	63,359	4,508	5,458	77,370
Module 2	907	16,403	1,104	1,683	20,097
Module 3	1,152	17,413	1,578	1,575	21,718
Module 4	920	15,474	835	1,018	18,247
Module 5	1,066	14,069	991	1,182	17,308

Figure 2. Number of tokens in CyDis
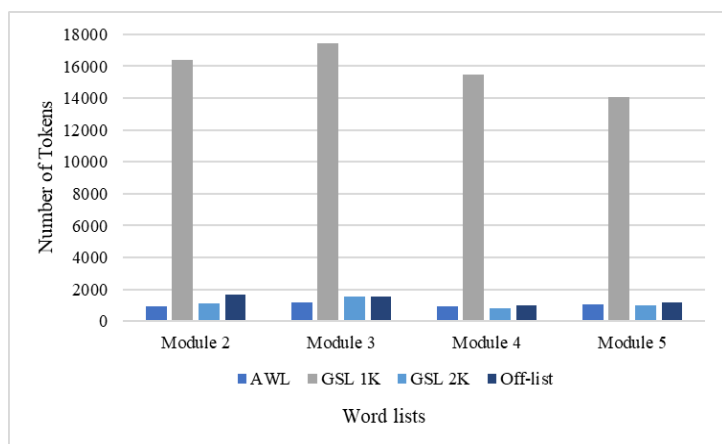
In terms of coverage, CyDis is significantly lower compared to CyGOC when it comes to the AWL words. It has 5.23 % overall AWL coverage compared to CyGOC, which has 9.56%. Moreover, as can be seen in Table 5, GSL 1 and 2K have higher coverage in CyDis compared to CyGOC. However, off-list coverage is lower in CyDis compared to CyGOC. One question that begs answering regards the relatively low coverage of AWL in the CyDis corpus - whether this is due to register differences or participants' English levels. When participants sign up for the course, they do not submit any documents indicating their English proficiency. Therefore, more research is needed to determine the causes of low AWL coverage in this learner corpora, and to what extent including other course assignments would help improve AWL coverage. As discussion boards provide a platform for social interaction in online learning, they carry elements from written and spoken language (Chen et al., 2018). In Rudy et al.'s (2019) study based on a spoken corpus of medical students who were English learners, the researchers found a coverage as low as 1.5 % for AWL words. Considering these two studies' findings, it would be interesting to compare the language of these discussion boards within the course to spoken recordings that the participants submit as part of one major assignment to see how AWL usage differs.

Table 5. CyDis coverage across the modules

	AWL %	GSL 1K %	GSL 2K %	Off-list %
CyDis Overall	5.23	81.89	5.83	7.05
Module 2	4.51	81.62	5.49	8.37
Module 3	5.3	80.18	7.27	7.25
Module 4	5.04	84.8	4.58	5.58
Module 5	6.16	81.29	5.73	6.83

A general increase in the AWL coverage is observed from the earliest modules to the latest ones with the lowest AWL coverage in Module 2, the vocabulary module, and the highest coverage in Module 5, the writing module. This could be due to the participants' gradual adaptation to the course language as the weeks go by and thereby using more appropriate academic vocabulary when writing their discussion posts and replies. However, the highest coverage level of AWL in CyDis is still lower than the lowest AWL coverage level in CyGOC.

Furthermore, to shed more light on the learner corpus, the CyDis, Table 4 shows the breakdown of tokens in the corpus across the word lists and the four sampled modules. It could be seen from Table 4 that the total number of AWL tokens is 4,045, a rather small number compared to 63,359 GSL 1K tokens. The highest number of AWL tokens is in Module 3, the grammar module, whereas the lowest number is in Module 2, the vocabulary module. Moreover, the total number of off-list words is 5,458 compared to 14,432 words in CyGOC.

RQ 2. The alignment between the module glossaries and AWL and off-list words.

Module glossaries are provided for each module with the key words, phrases, or concepts that the course developers believe are necessary for that module. There are eight module glossaries in total. The vocabulary items in these glossaries could be single words (e.g.,

authenticity), two-to-three word phrases (e.g., critical thinking, high-frequency words), acronyms (e.g., COCA, AWE) or websites (e.g., Lingro, Voice of America). The terms in the glossary are introduced with their definitions or explanations. A closer look at the terms in these glossaries reveals that these are highly technical concepts from the field of English language teaching (e.g., incidental vocabulary learning, needs assessment, descriptive grammar). Some terms occur more than once across the glossaries (e.g., authenticity, register, corpus). Additionally, some words describe field-related tests, such as Flesch-Kincaid, a test designed to indicate how difficult a passage in English is to understand, and Gunning Fog, a readability test for English writing to estimate the years of formal education a person needs to understand the text on the first reading (Chapelle & Hegelheimer, 2022).

Learning vocabulary from a list, such as a glossary, has some benefits, especially for low level learners. In the course, glossaries serve to introduce discipline-specific words, which are of crucial importance in vocabulary learning (e.g., Gustafsson & Malmstrom, 2013; Hyland & Tse, 2007). However, the number of words provided in the GOC module glossaries are fairly few in number, ranging between 10-25 words/phrases for each module. When analyzing the alignment between glossary words and AWL, GSL 1K and 2K and off-list words, the frequency and coverage of glossary words were evaluated by including all the

glossary words from the course in a .txt file and running an analysis on this file in AntWordProfiler with the three base-lists. The results displayed a total of 2,897 tokens in the glossary file. Table 6 displays the breakdown of these numbers across the three word lists. As can be seen from the table, approximately 43% of the course glossary tokens were not covered by the three base-lists.

Table 6. Glossary coverage in CyDis

|	AWL	GSL 1K	GSL 2K	Off-list
Frequency	383	2,013	177	324
Coverage	21.49%	26.45%	8.26%	43.80%

The high percentage of glossary tokens from the off-list may indicate that course designers tended to choose advanced words specific to the field of English language teaching. Nonetheless, more than 55% of all tokens from the glossary words still come from the three base lists that advanced learners, let alone teachers, should know (Nation, 2013). Therefore, the effectiveness of these glossaries may need further consideration from the course designers. The focus of these glossaries should be on helping GOC participants understand and use more advanced specific words. Consequently, an update to the currently short glossaries, in the form of adding the technical words that this present study has recommended, could supply future learners with more scaffolding to increase their vocabulary range with words relevant to their field.

RQ 3. The words that course participants need to know in order to successfully interact with the course materials.

Nation (2001) proposed that vocabulary is divided into high-frequency words, academic words and technical words, which is represented in this paper as GSL, AWL and the off-list words respectively. The frequency and coverage of the CyGOC and CyDis corpora, as evaluated in this paper, revealed that all three are represented with differing percentages in the GOC. Figure 3 displays the token and type percentages of all the word lists under investigation. It is seen from the table that the type percentage of the off-list words is almost as high as the two GSL lists combined.

Figure 3. CyGOC overall coverage percentages
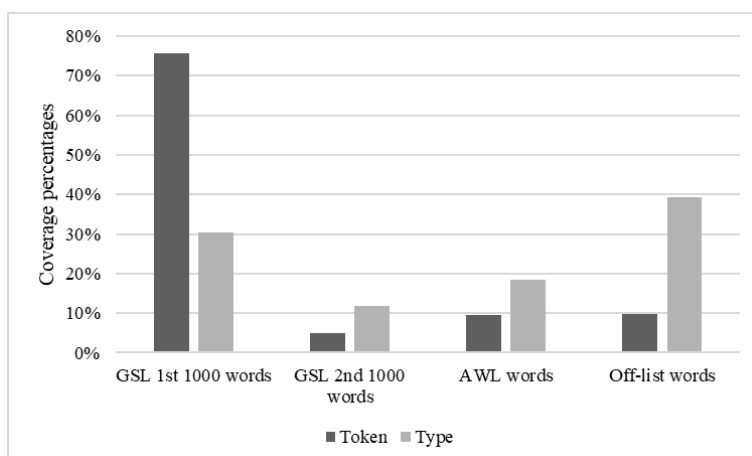
Due to GSL's high coverage, it could be argued that through CyGOC, learners are exposed to high frequency words during the course. The AWL's 9.56 % coverage is close to Coxhead's (2000) reported coverage of 10% AWL words in all academic texts. However, it is apparent that the off-list words cover a higher percentage of the words than the AWL words. This could be explained by the fact that CyGOC is a specialized corpus which requires technical words, as suggested by Lu and Durrant (2017). Therefore, learners could benefit from learning the specialized vocabulary in their field in order to be successful in the course, as suggested by many researchers (e.g., Martínez, et al., 2009; Vongpumivitch, et al., 2009; Yang, 2015). For this reason, a word list containing the most frequently used words from the off-list words were bundled together into a new list named CyVoc to supplement the future participants with the technical vocabulary needed to have a better coverage of course materials. In the creation of this list, only the words which occurred at least 30 times were chosen. This is a comparatively smaller threshold compared to Coxhead's rule of words occurring 100 times when creating the AWL. However, considering the smaller corpus size of this paper, the number could be regarded as frequent. Additionally, expert opinions from the course developers and teaching assistants will be obtained in order to ensure the relevance of the words included in the list.

To provide more insight into the current study, Table 7 was created to display which AWL words are used the most in the materials to help future course designers and corpus researchers understand how often the AWL words appear in the course. However, due to the limitations in time and considering the scope of this paper, we presented here the five most frequent AWL words per module.

Table 7. Five most frequent AWL words per module

	Word 1 (freq)	Word 2 (freq)	Word 3 (freq)	Word 4 (freq)	Word 5 (freq)
Introductory texts	participate (20)	community (13)	contact (13)	instruct (11)	professional (10)
Module 1	technology (34)	task (32)	expert (17)	assess (12)	lecture (12)
Module 2	task (28)	lecture (24)	resource (23)	technology (22)	media (17)
Module 3	function (39)	resource (31)	lecture (27)	task (27)	technology (22)
Module 4	text (79)	task (23)	select (16)	lecture (15)	assign (14)
Module 5	lecture (39)	technology (35)	assign (29)	task (29)	process (25)
Module 6	resource (23)	task (22)	lecture (16)	technology (15)	assign (14)
Module 7	task (26)	technology (23)	resource (20)	assign (14)	create (14)
Module 8	assign (32)	technology (31)	task (27)	project (25)	process (22)
Readings	process (226)	technology (192)	create (169)	text (157)	project (147)
Video Transcripts	technology (183)	text (129)	process (110)	create (95)	context (62)

Words including technology, task, lecture, assign, create, process are among the most frequently occurring AWL words. Given the course objective, to "help teachers integrate pedagogical knowledge and skills with technology to enhance language learning and teaching through course readings, discussions, and assignments, which create new learning activities" (Chapelle & Hegelheimer, 2023 p. 1), the prevalence of the words seems quite fitting.

5. Conclusion

Creation of the CyGOC and CyDis corpora have allowed a data-driven look into the workings of the GOC, offering suggestions for how to better tailor the materials provided in this course for participant needs. Off-list words make up as much frequency as AWL words, therefore both lists are important for the course. However, while the course designers incorporated some technical vocabulary into the glossaries for the course, participants have shown a tendency to use words that are more basic. Therefore, by enhancing the effectiveness of the course glossaries by adding words that are needed in GOC, the course can better encourage the internalization and use of more specified English vocabulary to the course content and learners' English language proficiency level.

Competing Interests
The authors declare none.

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Review

A sociocultural perspective understanding the role of L1 in the learning of L2 through TBLT and CLIL pedagogical approaches

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, there have been an increasing number of empirical studies exploring the use of the first language (L1) in pedagogical approaches (e.g., Lee, 2018; Lo, 2015; Turnbull, 2001). However, to date relatively less research has undressed the role of the L1 from a sociocultural perspective to inform educational practitioners of theory-supported teaching practices. With a focus on two specific pedagogical approaches, namely, task-based language teaching (TBLT) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL), this paper reviews two recent studies whose findings pertaining to the role of L1 in second language (L2) learning and teaching are discussed and re-interpreted through the lens of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of mind (1978, 1986). The discussion uncovers the multifaceted role of L1 as a cognitive, affective, and interactional mediator, which I argue could optimise the L2 learning process within both the TBLT and CLIL classroom discourse. Such a reconceptualisation of the mediating role of the L1 may shed light on the benefits of using L1 in TBLT and CLIL pedagogies and help language educators make research-informed decisions about their language use choices in the L2 classroom.

1. Introduction

The recent decades have witnessed an increasingly important debate over the usefulness of the first language (L1) in teaching a second language (L2). Early researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) criticised the potential benefits of L1 in L2 learning. For instance, Selinker (1972) believed L1 impedes learners' interlanguage development. Similarly, Krashen's monitor theory (1982) excluded students' native language use in the classroom. However, a certain degree of consensus has recently been reached among researchers (e.g., Almoayidi, 2018; Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009) regarding the role of native language in facilitating classroom interaction and helping learners understand abstract L2 concepts.

Largely, many SLA studies above considered the use of L1 in L2 pedagogies in relation to human cognition. There are relatively fewer studies discussing the role of L1 in the L2 knowledge construction process at the social or psychological level in the human mind (Sheldon, 2019). In this case, Vygotsky's sociocultural

theory of mind (1978, 1986) is of great help in elucidating the role of L1 in L2 learning due to its chief concern about how L1, as a crucial semiotic device, mediates the process of learning a target language (TL). Grounded on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, L1 could be claimed as an effective verbal mediating tool helping to improve students' understanding, feeling, and interaction during their L2 learning process (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). Therefore, this paper will adopt a Vygotskyan sociocultural perspective to evaluate the role of L1 in three aspects including cognitive, affective, and interactional mediation.

The current paper will focus on two pedagogical approaches, namely, task-based language teaching (TBLT) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL). TBLT aims to develop L2 learners' communicative competence by involving learners in meaning-focused communication while performing tasks (Nunan, 2004). The term 'communicative competence' denotes fluency in the communicative process, linguistic (attention to language forms) and interactional competence (use of TL to participate in discourse). These competencies enable students to achieve the task goal. Hence, learning is evident as long

as students can construct and comprehend messages in spoken and written forms, attend to the TL forms, and fulfil the task goal. CLIL is a dual-focused approach which gives equal attention to content and language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Curricular content is taught through the medium of the TL so that students can articulate the academic concepts using academic language. To claim that learning takes place, students should demonstrate development in both academic language and content knowledge.

TBLT and CLIL are fundamental in investigating the role of L1 in the TL learning process. Both TBLT and CLIL provide a specific context for research to be conducted on students' L1 use. In studies grounded on TBLT classrooms, the role of L1 was often examined in learners' L2 task-based activities (Ellis & Shintani, 2013), while the research concentrating on CLIL lessons might explore how L1 mediates TL learning in content subjects (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Choosing TBLT and CLIL as pedagogical approaches in analysis embodies the mediating effects of L1 in greater detail. Therefore, this paper will review two empirical studies focusing on TBLT and CLIL respectively. Both studies are selected for their sufficiently well-addressed sociocultural orientations and findings appropriate for the explication of the L1 mediator at cognitive, affective, and interactional levels. The present paper will further acknowledge the beneficial role of L1 as a mediating tool for L2 acquisition by arguing that L1 interweaves thinking with emotion in L2 learning, enables L2 learners' intersubjectivity through interaction, and provides cognitive support with which learners can analyse their TL. Accordingly, implications will be yielded to encourage teachers to adopt L1 as a tool to mediate learners' L2 interaction.

2. The role of L1 in L2 learning through TBLT pedagogy

Based on the central concepts of sociocultural theory, Bao and Du's study (2015) aimed to explore the extent to which L1 was used and interpret the functions of L1 while learners were performing tasks in task-based L2 classrooms. Eight Danish beginner-level lower-secondary school learners of Chinese were asked to complete tasks including sentence construction, information-gap, and role-play. To capture the process when learners performed tasks, video recordings were employed. Data were collected from nine lessons across the term. The recordings were then transcribed and rechecked to increase validity and reliability. Through discourse analysis, Bao and Du (2015) found that L1 use mainly occurred in learners' efforts to mediate L2 task completion, and they further identified the role of L1 during task completion into five types. Bao and Du (2015) recognised L1 as "a reliable tool that bolsters L2 acquisition" (p. 19) and advocated using L1 for its numerous benefits, such as providing cognitive, emotional, and interactional support.

2.1. L1 as a cognitive mediator in task-based L2 learning

Bao and Du (2015) claimed that L1 acted as a cognitive mediator that regulated learners' language and thought. Using L1 offered learners cognitive support to enable them to identify and assess the TL, create joint understanding, and strategise how to complete L2 tasks, as shown in the following extract.

Extract 1. L1 as a cognitive mediator in three Danish students' task-based group talk (Bao & Du, 2015, p. 16)

L: Hvis det er den sidste, mon ikke det såbare er dem alle sammen?
If it is the last one, I wonder if it isn't just them all?
Y: Jo, men I hvilken rækkefølge? "Tāmen" er det "deres"?
Yes, but in which order? "Tāmen" is that "theirs"?
S: Ja
Yes

In Extract 1, these students adopted L1 as a cognitive mediator to promote the L2 task completion together. The entire conversation initiated and sustained in L1 formulated a shared goal for effective L2 task completion. Using L1 in this TBLT classroom not only increased learners' ability to control language use but also improved performance throughout the task procedures.

Student Y identified and assessed "Tāmen" with the help of L1 private speech, thus achieving his self-regulation. When facing a cognitively demanding L2 task, this learner chose L1 as private speech, described by Lantolf and Throne (2006) as "an externalised verbal attempt" (p. 12), to gain cognitive mediation. L1 private speech here functioned as a medium to control and organise the learner's thinking process when struggling with the difficult TL vocabulary.

Student S helped the group reach a consensus by replying in L1, which consolidated the group members' existing L2 knowledge. Using L1 as a verbal mediating tool allowed learners to comment, reflect, and control the ongoing activities. Hence, L1 cognitive mediation facilitated a common understanding during the task, and at the same time, increased learner participation in tasks as discourses surrounding metatalk and metacognitive talk also increased.

Another focus of Bao and Du's study (2015) is on the task type. Table 1 displays the amount of L1 produced by learners across three different tasks.

Table 1. The amount of L1 use across three tasks
(Bao & Du, 2015, p. 16)

Tasks	L1 turns (%)	Total turns
Sentence construction		
Student Y-L-S	58%	84
Student O-J	29%	133
Information-gap		
Student Y-S	33%	143
Student O-J	32%	132
Role-play		
Student O-J-S	86%	120

As presented in Table 1, it is apparent that the highest percentage of L1 use took place in the role-play task. Students were required to use a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures fluently in this task. This led to more L1 talk, in which the externalisation of metacognition was often involved through a familiar and easy-to-understand language (Brooks & Donato, 1994). The cognitive requirements were deeply related to the task type, and this could influence which language L2 learners might choose to deal with their cognitive challenges. As a result, while role-playing, L2 learners relied on their L1 more to mediate their thinking about the TL.

2.2. L1 as a student-level affective mediator in task-based L2 learning

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978, 1986), one's feelings are intertwined with thoughts since emotion and attitude impact the mind and behaviour. Therefore, the chosen language form has a direct implication on how the learners think, feel, and act, and thus influences the affective functions (Imai, 2010). From the lens of sociocultural theory, Bao and Du (2015) argued that learners' L1 private speech could serve as an affective mediator in L2 learning. The following extract from a TBLT class illustrates the role of L1 private speech in regulating learners' emotions while struggling with L2.

Extract 2. L1 as an affective mediator in task-based peer work (Bao & Du, 2015, p. 18)

(Jakob is a character in the task)
J: Jakob yǒu shénme?
What does Jakob have?
O: Eh, xīngqīsì Jakob yǒu eh dānmàiwén eh tǐyù wén
Oh Thursday Jakob has eh Danish class eh sport class
J: Dānmàiwén og hvad ellers?
Dānmàiwén and what else?

As shown in Extract 2, Student O got stuck in a cognitive difficulty when constructing meaning in L2. He used a Danish private speech "eh" unconsciously to convey negative emotions so that the L2 peer talk could continue to move towards the completion of the task. The private speech might reveal that he was regulating his hesitation and confusion towards L2 expressions during the thinking process. In this case, Student O's L1 private speech could be considered a student-level affective mediator in his peer work.

There are many instances where students' use of L2 may not vividly express their thoughts and emotion (Prior, 2016). Under such circumstances, L1 is usually used to convey and mediate any undesirable feeling. Bao and Du (2015) summarised 14 episodes where the beginner-level L2 learners used L1 to "release their frustration (p. 17)" when they were incapable of remembering or finding the appropriate TL words. Using L1 enabled learners to regulate emotional dissonance during their thinking process so as to keep the peer conversation going, fulfil the L2 task goal, and eventually create an effective TBLT classroom.

Unlike in any teacher-centred approach, in TBLT L1 can be adopted as a micro-level affective mediator among students themselves. Bao and Du (2015) explained that TBLT group talk creates a learner-oriented and experiential group context where students can speak L2 and L1 freely. Speaking and expressing in L2 may be stressful since one is anxious to form thoughts and share them verbally in a new language. By contrast, constructing L1 speech is easier because learners can readily regulate their thoughts and words in a relatable language, and therefore establish their own emotional and cognitive unity. As Lorette and Dewaele (2015) agreed, L1 use during L2 peer talk "regulates learners' feelings and social skills through emotive utterances" (p. 20). This will improve learners' group talk engagement and help them attain self-identified focus. As a result, students opt to use L1 as a mediator for affective and social purposes when communicating with their peers in L2 during task completion.

2.3. L1 as an interactional mediator in peer scaffolding within the ZPD in TBLT pedagogy

In Bao and Du's study (2015), tasks were mostly designed to be slightly beyond a TL learner's unassisted efforts so that each student in the group would have the communicative needs to collaborate and achieve the task goal. Therefore, learners were commonly seen to use L1 for peer scaffolding to facilitate a zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD, according to Vygotsky (1978), is:

> *"The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).*

Bao and Du (2015) mainly concentrated on the analysis of student-student interactions. For instance, the following extract happened when a pair of learners with the same beginner-level Chinese proficiency encountered an L2 lexical problem and they could only adopt Danish as their L1 to scaffold entry into Chinese during the information-gap task.

Extract 3. L1 as an interactional mediator in the task-based peer interaction on an L2 problem (Bao & Du, 2015, p. 17)

S: xīngqī …ja ja
xīngqī ... yes, yes
Y: åh nej, xīngqī, xīngqī er søndag
oh no, xīngqī, xīngqī is Sunday
S: nej, xīngqī er dag, wǔ er hvornår
no, xīngqī is the day, wǔ is when
Y: xīngqī wǔ er fredag
xīngqī wǔ, that is Friday

As presented in Extract 3, noticing Student S's use of L1, Student Y was trying to use the Danish word "søndag" to explain the Chinese phrase "xīngqī", but he actually misunderstood it. Hence, Student S corrected him with the help of the Danish L1 words "dag" and "hvornår" to emphasise the concepts of "xīngqī" and "wǔ". Receiving his partner's corrective feedback in L1, Student Y finally understood the correct meaning of the L2 phrase "xīngqī wǔ" and found its equivalent translation in L1 Danish. In this example, a ZPD was co-created by these two students who scaffolded each other. Student S defined the TL words in L1, demonstrating his understanding of the lexical meaning behind them. Building on the L1 translation provided by his peer, Student Y managed to generate the correct L2 phrase "xīngqī wǔ", which helped to reinforce Student S's L2 knowledge. This pair of same-level learners used L1 to achieve L2 learning and further improve their L2 competence, which demonstrates that students with similar L2 proficiency in a group can "achieve a performance level beyond each individual learner's competence level" (Bakhoda & Shabani, 2019, p. 37) through a certain amount of L1 interactional mediation.

Although whether the number of participants may affect the group interactions was not examined in Bao and Du's study (2015), there exists a correlation between the L1 use and the number of participants in peer scaffolding. As Dobao (2014) proposed, more participants in a group may bring more linguistic resources to be shared because each individual has his/her unique "strengths and knowledge" (p. 514). Dobao's (2014) claim may clarify in the above case that compared to only one learner, a group of participants using L1 to negotiate languages could pool more contextual and linguistic knowledge together, and might thus be more facilitative to the development of their L2 in TBLT classrooms.

3. The role of L1 in L2 learning through CLIL pedagogy

Adopting an illustrative case study approach, Tavares (2015) reported on the use of L1 by Miss Sitt, an experienced bilingual teacher, in her mathematics L2-medium classroom in Hong Kong. The learners in her class were Grade 9 average-ability students who spoke Cantonese as their L1. They were in their first year to have mathematics lessons using English as a medium of instruction (MOI). By analysing the video-recorded class interaction data as well as the teacher's and students' semi-structured interview data, Tavares identified the teacher's strategic use of L1 to mediate her students' gradual adaptation to the shift in the MOI.

The particular aim of Tavares's study (2015) is to "visualise, concretise, and theorise classroom interactional discourse" in the CLIL lessons (p. 322). The inclusion of instances in which students employed Cantonese to regulate their academic English learning adds validity and reliability to this study and makes it worthy of analysis.

3.1. L1 as a cognitive mediator in the CLIL classroom

Framed within the sociocultural perspective, Tavares's study (2015) examined the role of L1 as a cognitive mediator through the lens of translanguaging in L2 classrooms. According to Li (2018), translanguaging refers to the process by which bi/multilingual speakers draw on their full linguistic and semiotic resources to make meaning. Although English was the MOI, the coherent and integral use of the L1 from students' multiple linguistic repertoires could facilitate the mental process of their L2 learning (Tai & Li, 2021; Tai, 2022). Extract 4 displays how L1 was used to mediate L2 learning cognitively.

Extract 4. L1 as a cognitive mediator in CLIL teacher talk (Tavares, 2015, p. 329)

T – Teacher (Miss Sitt)
S – Student (S1 – Jenny; S2 – Candy)

Move
1 T: Very good! Now, divide both the … Look at the board. Divide both the numerator and the denominator by Cosine θ. *[putting the two words on the blackboard – 'numerator' on top and 'denominator' below it, using strokes to divide them into syllables]* Okay? *[pauses for 3 seconds]*
2 T: Now have a look! Would the whole class please read this word out? *[pointing to this on the board]* nu/me/ra/tor This one: *[pointing to this word]* de/no/mi/na/tor *[gesturing the positioning of the two words when written in a fraction. Students read chorally as a class after the teacher.]*
3 T: Right! Now, in this case, 'numerator' 分子 (numerator), 'denominator' 分母 (denominator), okay? The writer has divided both the numerator and the denominator by Cosine θ. Okay, now we carry on.
4 T: Now after this one, you look at Step Two. The second line. Now, then they split the fractions into two. 分數 (fraction). Split the fractions into two, okay?

After the teacher's use of syllabification, learners were still grappling with the precise meaning of the target words "numerator" and "denominator". To mediate her students' understanding, Miss Sitt gave them the Cantonese translations "分子 (numerator)" and "分母 (denominator)" and further applied them in the specific context. The mention of Cantonese activated learners' linguistic cognition, as indicated by Miss Sitt's self-assurance to carry on because she was sure they had understood both the content and L2 knowledge at the end of Move 3. This evidence of learners' activated linguistic cognition indicates students' learning and development of academic language and concepts. By drawing on students' L1 knowledge, the teacher managed to clarify the complex academic target vocabulary and L2 concepts. The whole class were then on the same page, and the lesson could move on. Similarly, Miss Sitt then merged the Cantonese vocabulary "分數 (fraction)" into her English expressions and repeated the L2 sentences in Move 4. With the help of the coherent act of translanguaging, students learned to put the target vocabulary in context and grasped both the L2 concepts and academic language in a communicative unity. Therefore, the integration of L1 into L2 mediated learners' TL understanding.

According to Kern (1994), decoding words in L1 demands less attention than in L2, because when using L1, learners will synthesise "the semantic meaning" which can be "retained in their working memory for a much longer time" (p. 451). That is to say, the use of L1 lessens students' cognitive load, accelerates language processing, and strengthens the impression of semantic meaning in their minds. Kern's (1994) argument can be expounded in the CLIL classrooms where students will possibly encounter many academic words or subject-based concepts in L2 but they rarely encounter them in everyday life. Thus, learners have to translate the less familiar L2 knowledge into the equivalent L1 knowledge that they are familiar with. This is the reason why Miss Sitt, in the above example, mapped the academic target words with students' L1 understanding by using translanguaging. While learners' actual cognitive gains with the use of L1 are still under investigation by current researchers, what is beyond doubt, according to Cahyani (2018), is that using L1 in translanguaging in CLIL classrooms can bring cognitive benefits to students' L2 learning.

3.2. L1 as a classroom-level affective mediator in the CLIL classroom

Tavares's study (2015) revealed that L1 as a classroom-level affective mediator relieved learners' language anxiety and also helped to establish a positive CLIL classroom atmosphere. Extract 5 is an excerpt of classroom talk of a lesson during which students were struggling with trigonometric identities.

Extract 5. L1 as an affective mediator in CLIL classroom talk (Tavares, 2015, p. 326)

T – Teacher (Miss Sitt)
S – Student (S1 – Jenny; S2 – Candy)

Move		
1	S1:	Err … Put the Cosine θ … *[Struggling to come up with a word, she looked at Miss Sitt and said in L1]* 即係 … (That means …)
2	T:	Okay, you try to speak in Chinese first.
3	S1:	將個 Cosine θ … 另外除 … (Use Cosine θ … Divide it by …)
4	T:	Example 9.11 … Are you sure?
5	S1:	唔係 … 即係 … 將佢地兩個都除返 Cosine θ (No … That means … Divide both of them by Cosine θ)
6	T:	Very good! Okay, can you repeat again in English? Try. *[Jenny continued to look at her book and hesitated. She scratched her hand, looked to a classmate on the right and said 'Err…']*

Being uncomfortable with the L2 and unfamiliar with the content topic, Jenny kept answering in L1 throughout the teacher-student interaction. Tavares (2015) noted that Jenny was able to translate her L1 understanding into English precisely and completely after going through several rounds of interactional exchanges (p. 326). This indicates using L1 in CLIL lessons mediated learners' language anxiety, and thus facilitated both the TL learning and academic concept understanding.

The teacher-student translanguaging interaction above also yields insights into the affective mediating value of L1 at a classroom level. In the stimulated recall, Miss Sitt clarified that considering English was a new MOI in her class, she allowed Cantonese to be adopted on purpose while interacting with students to calm their anxiety and let them concentrate on the academic concept first prior to contemplating the L2 (Tavares, 2015, p. 327). Miss Sitt's students also reported that knowing they were not expected to use English entirely throughout the class alleviated their pressure when facing a cognitively demanding math problem and made them better adapt to the sudden shift in MOI (p. 324). Therefore, allowing students to use their L1 can help the class, to some extent, relieve their L2 anxiety and generate a supportive atmosphere for using TL in CLIL classrooms.

3.3. L1 as an interactional mediator in teacher scaffolding within the ZPD in CLIL pedagogy

Most CLIL classes are associated with the academic aspects of language and knowledge (Dafouz & Hibler, 2013). This requires students to utilise different kinds of resources, such as academic L1 and L2, from their communicative repertoires. However, drawing on multiple resources may easily go beyond learners' full capacities both cognitively and affectively. As a result, in CLIL classrooms, teachers, as more capable others, often assist their students by interacting with them using translanguaging. A beneficial way for

CLIL teachers to increase their students' L2 academic vocabulary is adopting the L1 (Liu, 2020; Vázquez & Ordóñez, 2019). Acutely aware of this, Tavares (2015) investigated L1 interactional mediation by focusing specifically on teacher scaffolding.

Extract 6. L1 as an interactional mediator through CLIL teacher's scaffolding (Tavares, 2015, p. 331)

T – Teacher (Miss Sitt)
S – Student (S3 – Alice)

Move		
1	T:	… replace Tangent θ by 2. Look at the board. replace Tangent θ by 2. *[writing 'replace by' on the blackboard and repeating the phrase]* *[looking at the class]* replace by 代替咗佢 (replace by), okay?
2	T:	What about the second way? *[pausing for 2 seconds]* For this second way, what have they done here, Alice?
3	S3:	At first he used the Sine θ over Cosine θ … err … equals Tangent θ
4	T:	And then?
5	S3:	And then … err … *[Alice's gestures suggesting uncertainty]*
6	S3:	That means change the Tangent θ equals Sine θ over Cosine θ
7	T:	What happens on the third line?
8	S3:	*[open-mouthed, remaining silent, looking at the teacher]*
9	T:	The third line. Alternative solution. The third line. What have they done here?
10	S3:	*[looking back at her book]* Err … he put the Cosine θ on the right. *[gestures to the right]*
11	T:	Right! Put the Cosine θ on the right hand side. It becomes like that. How about the fourth line? What have they done?
12	S3:	Err … Put the … Because Cosine θ equals 2.5 metre, so the 2.5 metre … *[inaudible]* *[her hand gesture suggesting that she was trying to come up with the word]*
13	T:	to replace the …
14	S3:	to replace the Sine θ

In Extract 6, the L1 interactional mediator foregrounded Alice's understanding of the academic language and subsequently facilitated her to describe the mathematic knowledge in L2. To make sure learners fully grasp the L2 concept of replacement, Miss Sitt repeated the L2 expression "replace by" in its Cantonese equivalent "代替咗佢 (replace by)". This parallel translation facilitated Alice's academic language learning progress. It functioned as an interactional scaffold that activated not only Alice's higher-order thinking in Move 3 but also her subsequent construction of academic English syntax by employing the L2 word "replace" in Move 14.

Miss Sitt used only a small amount of L1, but it helped Alice internalise the L2 academic vocabulary and scaffolded Alice's learning effectively. The teacher's use of L1 helped to develop learners within their ZPD, for during the teacher-student translanguaging interaction, Alice gradually deepened her understanding of the subject, and therefore her L2 answers were progressing in the register of mathematics.

Although the use of L1 indeed scaffolds interaction, it is only a means of interactional mediation but can never become the final goal in CLIL classrooms. Lo (2015) concurred by arguing that students' mastery of subject knowledge in the L2 (but not L1) is one of the main learning objectives in CLIL lessons. As Tavares (2015) posited, the use of L2 is "the focus of output" (p. 328) while L1 use elicits learners' prior knowledge that constitutes the progressive L2 input. Therefore, although the current paper encourages the use of L1, CLIL teachers are advised to adopt L1 as a tool in an appropriate way to mediate students' L2 interaction and increase input for the L2 rather than rely solely on their L1.

4. Discussion

From the above two empirical studies, we can find the role of L1 as a mediator to L2 learning shares both commonalities and differences in the TBLT and CLIL classrooms.

In terms of L1 as a cognitive mediator, L1 in TBLT classrooms was mainly used for mediating learners' L2 social language or relevant linguistic concepts in certain tasks. While in CLIL lessons the cognitive role of L1 could be multi-functional because it was also related to organising academic contents expressed predominantly in L2 words that were comparatively more obscure and more cognitively demanding than students' everyday language. According to Cummins (2008), learners will unavoidably refer to their L1 while learning new knowledge in TL, because most of their prior subject knowledge and linguistics-related knowledge is encoded in their L1. Hence, it can be assumed that L1, as a cognitive mediator, activates learners' linguistic knowledge and regulates the relevant background knowledge to L2 learning effectively in both TBLT and CLIL classes.

Regarding L1 affective mediation, both studies revealed that the use of L1 helped to reduce learners' language anxiety in their L2 talk. However, influenced by the characteristics of these two different pedagogical approaches, the application of this affective mechanism to TBLT and CLIL classrooms could be slightly different. The use of L1 in the TBLT classroom primarily occurred at a micro level, such as the student-level L2 peer talk, and it aided students' L2 task completion (Seals et al., 2020). Yet in the CLIL classroom, the use of L1 frequently happened at a relatively macro level in the form of classroom-level L2 talk between the teacher and students (Martínez-Adrián et al., 2019). Both the teacher and students were applying their L1 to create a positive and highly-motivated classroom atmosphere (Tai & Li, 2021).

In the aspect of interactional mediation, the

distinct forms of L1 used for peer scaffolding in TBLT and teacher scaffolding in CLIL share a commonality. Even a limited amount of L1 use in task-based interactions could help a group of students with the same L2 competence reach a performance level higher than each learner's proficiency level (Johnson, 2020; Storch & Aldosari, 2010). Similarly, in CLIL teacher-led conversations, with the help of only an insignificant amount of L1 linguistic scaffolding, the teacher could activate learners' higher-order linguistic knowledge, enable learners to internalise the L2 academic vocabulary as well as the syntax, and enact their progress in the L2 academic register within the ZPD (Gallagher & Colohan, 2017; Lin, 2015). Thus, either in student-student interactions or teacher-student conversations, L1, if used appropriately, can realise its full potential as an interactional mediator to facilitate learners' L2 development within their ZPD.

5. Conclusion

After reviewing the above two research articles, it can be argued that L1 might play a major role as a cognitive, affective, and interactional mediator in both TBLT and CLIL classrooms as it optimises the L2 learning process. From a Vygotskyan sociocultural perspective, we can conclude that when learners are encountering cognitively demanding linguistic concepts, emotionally challenging L2 tasks, or sophisticated TL academic vocabulary, L1 is a significant tool for both teachers and students to mediate L2 learners' language and thought, alleviate their negative feelings, and provide them with necessary scaffolding.

Understanding the role of L1 in the learning of L2 is essential, as it contributes to the debate over whether L2 teachers should adopt or exclude the L1. This paper identifies that L1 can be a mediating tool conducive to TL learning. The two reviewed studies indicate a close relationship between the L1 and L2. Therefore, teachers and students are advised to interweave the L1 and L2 appropriately so that L1 can bring more benefits to the L2 learning process. The mediating value of L1 on the learning of additional languages will help educators recognise the facilitating role L1 plays in L2 education and make research-informed choices of their language use in TBLT and CLIL classrooms.

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Issues of monolingualism: A new expression of Neo-Colonisation? The ideological underpinnings of language education in Australia: The case of New South Wales

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Abstract

In recent decades, the drift toward English monolingualism has been a significant concern in Australian multilingual education. Despite Australia being multicultural and linguistically diverse, extensive research has shown that the nation is still adversely affected by a persistent 'monolingual mindset'. Potential weaknesses regarding multilingual education have been long addressed but no satisfactory countermeasures have been implemented.

A recent challenge to the conceptual underpinnings of the 'monolingual mindset' have emerged in the last half-century from the neoliberal marketisation of education. Discouragement of multilingualism and multiculturalism may be related to Australia's 'liberal status quo', in which language education has not been provided with adequate structural support from Australia's liberal government and society. While Australian language educators have made continuous efforts to maintain ethnic minority 'community languages' within this context, these efforts will seemingly remain ineffective if a monolingual mentality is permitted to remain at a structural level. Recently, a neoliberal challenge has been levelled to make such structural changes, with the privatisation of education encouraging the learning of minority languages and cultivation of ethnic identities. However, political problems are raised by this response, which risks stressing ethnic conflict and political tensions. This paper investigates the issues around Australia's liberal 'monolingual mindset', the structural causes for its discouragement of language learning and the strengths and weaknesses of its responses.

This paper utilises a qualitative approach to analyse documents relevant to current language syllabi in New South Wales. Through critical discourse analysis, thematic categorisation will reveal the values and interests contained in these documents. New South Wales has been chosen as a reference for other Australian states and territories regarding language planning and education due to its rich multicultural and multilingual makeup. This study is intended to motivate further inquiry into what may motivate students to pursue future language studies.

1. Introduction

Australia is known for its multicultural and linguistic diversity. Currently, more than 300 languages are spoken in Australia, as well as more than 250 indigenous languages (AIATSIS, 2018), and more than one third (21%) of residents speak a language other than English at home. The latest survey from the Australia Bureau of Statistics (2016) showed Australia's multilingual makeup, with 2.5% of Mandarin speakers, 1.4% Arabic speakers, 1.2% Cantonese, 1.2% Vietnamese, 1.2% Italian, 1% Greek,

0.7% Hindi, 0.6% Spanish and 0.6% Punjabi speakers. Moreover, compared to data from 2011 multilingual speakers are on the increase (ibid.).

The above statistics reflect a multilingual social reality, which raises the importance of Australia's approach to language education. A considerable amount of literature has shown that despite its multilingual makeup, there are significant monolingual trends in Australian culture (Clyne & Clyne, 1991a; Liddicoat & Crichton, 2008; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016). A number of studies have raised concerns regarding how non-English, 'community languages' in

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Australia are threatened by the country's 'monolingual mindset', despite Australia's multilingual, multicultural background and resources (Adoniou, 2018; Sinkeviciute, 2020). This monolingual mindset relates to a liberal 'status quo' that stresses English as the dominant language of the market economy. Recently, this status quo has been challenged by neoliberalism, which aims to make more room for ethnic identities and community languages. However, there are problems with neoliberalism, which risks stoking ethnic tensions by preserving its stress on market outcomes and economic emphasis. Further research is needed to address the current state of language education and multilingualism in Australia to navigate between liberal and neoliberal extremes. This study, therefore, examines each Australian state's approach to language education, providing further documentation and analysis on this topic.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Unpacking the 'Monolingual Mindset' and its impact

While Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world, it is home to a 'monolingual mindset' predicated upon xenophobic attitudes. Australia's multiculturalism and multilingualism are reflected in the country's linguistic demography, but as Sinkeviciute (2020) has written, even among multilinguals there is a 'monolingual ideal' associated with Australian citizenship, and which perceives both immigrants and foreign languages as threats. The formation of this Australian linguistic mindset is complex, and thus it is imperative to examine the historical facts surrounding Australia's cultural landscape to better understand the monolingual mindset, and how this mindset affects language education.

Multilingualism in Australia has been identified, promoted, neglected and outlawed in the 200 years since British and European settled on the continent in the 19th century, but its most recent addressal was through the 1981 National Language Policy (Clyne & Clyne, 1991a). This policy was a perhaps delayed recognition that, despite considerable efforts, Australia continues to experience a clear linguistic conflict between multilingualism and monolingualism that favours the English language as a unified, secure, de facto national language (Clyne & Clyne, 1991a; Liddicoat & Crichton, 2008; Liddicoat, Heugh, Curnow & Scarino, 2014; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016). Moreover, linguistic drift away from ethnic minority or 'community' languages remains a significant concern in Australian society (Clyne & Kipp, 1996; Clyne & Kipp, 1997; Hunt & Davis, 2019). As a result, Australia's linguistic image remains a centre of social and economic tensions, with Lo Bianco (2009) writing that Australia has not yet achieved a fully successful integrative language planning, despite its inclusive rhetoric.

The most recent attempts to resolve the monolingual mindset in Australia show newer policy influences, although full results remain uncertain. For example, recent neoliberal policy changes have been employed by the government to influence state and territorial language policies, favouring an emphasis on English literacy (Bianco, 1990, Clyne, 1991a, and Djité, 1994). Yet, paradoxically, neoliberalism in fact exacerbates both sides of the equation, threatening to reinforce the monolingual mindset by stressing economic outcomes and associating English with the liberal economy, rarefying minority languages as 'authentic' and therefore a luxury item. Furthermore, Djité (1994) highlights two major language policy documents in Australian language development: *The Language of Australia: Discussion Paper on an Australian Literacy and Language Policy for the 1990s* (known as the 'Green Paper') and *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy in 1991* (known as the 'White Paper'). Both policies have considerable implications for language education and have been widely criticised by language scholars as heavily economic-oriented. Moreover, recent events such as the global Coronavirus outbreak in 2019 have heightened xenophobic attitudes towards certain languages, exacerbating linguistic conflict (Piller, Zhang & Li, 2020), a particularly acute crisis among Asian language groups (Weinmann, Neilsen, & Slavich, 2021). That said, scholars such as Piller (2016) argue that these linguistic problems have existed under-the-surface for many years and have never been adequately addressed.

2.2. The weakness of multilingualism and bilingualism in Australia

Australia's monolingual mindset have contributed to the gradual deterioration of multilingual and bilingual education over the past century, and have undermined the development of Australia's linguistic education (Clyne & Clyne, 1991a; Clyne & Clyne, 1991b; Clyne & Clyne, 1991c; Hajek & Slaughter, 2014; Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2015; Hatoss, 2018). This monolingual mindset, which fails to accept cultural and linguistic diversity, represents a liberal proposition in its emphasising the economically utilitarian language of English.

The history of language education in Australia has been extensively studied, with many scholars showing that student motivations in learning foreign languages are often 'pragmatic' and determined by economic incentives emphasised by the government. More recently, government policies toward language education have exhibited neoliberal characteristics, promoting policies that privilege the economic returns of language learning. Academics such as Clyne (1991a; 1991b) and Piller (2010) have promoted multilingual education as a source of cognitive, cultural, social, and intellectual skills, but these skills are broadly secondary to economic priorities. The economy, moreover, has provided the rationales for language learning for state

and territory language education curriculum (Weinmann, Neilsen, and Slavich, 2021), and economic justification is almost a 'must-mention' when arguing for the advantages or benefits associated with language education. Therefore, despite academic support for the benefits of multilingual and bilingual education, economic priorities are still foremost on the minds of the Australian public.

2.3. Australian language education in the pre- and Neoliberal Eras

Issues and conflicts surrounding Australian language learning predate the neoliberal era, and if anything were part of Australia's 'liberal status quo' of the mid-twentieth century. This status quo refers to a 'lax', or even dismissive attitude towards secondary- or foreign-language learning in Australian society, with many individuals not even fully aware of the diversity of foreign languages in the Australian context, resulting in a persistent climate of lack of recognition, and therefore discouragement, of multilingualism. Caballaro (2010) has described the danger to Australian multilingualism posed by simple proximity to anglophone areas, and how, if conscious effort is not made to preserve, maintain and promote ethnic minority languages, Australia risks losing its multilingual heritage, and resources. Anglophone areas are of particular concern because of their economic and political power, which frequently refuses to acknowledge diversity if it comes at the expense of economic strength. Consequently, 'strong' monolingual English is associated with Liberal dominance, and it is this very dominance, which fails to recognise alternatives, that is the problem. Piller (2016) notes how previous attempts to preserve and maintain community languages were conducted in English, and most of their supporting academic studies were conducted in English, so while they seemed to support multilingualism they further maintained the monolingual 'status quo'.

Building on the works of more recent scholars such as Piller and the neo-liberal stress on individualism, Bacon (2020) has suggested practical measures that language educators can personally take to proactively preserve multilingual education. These solutions focus on *self-critique*, with teachers focusing on their own internalised ideologies and expressions to overcome the monolingual mindset. Åkermark and Huss (2014) also stress how ideological clarification is the key to successful linguistic revitalisation, preservation and maintenance. Nevertheless, even these focuses on teacher responsibility often occur within a monolinguistic context, so their ability to 'unlearn' monolingualism is debatable. A clear, systematic, regulated process of 'unlearning' is required that can move educators and students beyond their linguistic comfort zone (Scarino, 2014).

2.4. Historical causes for the liberal status quo & insufficiencies of the Neoliberal critique

While neoliberal critiques of Australia's linguistic 'status quo' have been effective, it is important to recognise the historical reasons for the development of monolingualism, as the sheer assumption that multilingual or bilingual education is politically valuable is not the most practical approach. Historically, cultural groups with linguistic autonomy have resisted conforming to state rules, resulting in serious political tensions. For instance, the resistance of Australian German-heritage Lutheran groups to linguistic diversity led to cultural and religious non-cooperation in Australia during the twentieth century, and contributed to significant political divisions in the years preceding the World Wars (Clyne & Clyne, 1991a). Significantly, newer neoliberal critiques from Piller (2016) praises German scholarship as promoting multilingualism, without considering that such scholarship has had significant political repercussions in the past.

Additionally, newer neoliberal emphases on multilingualism appear inadequate toward addressing the reality of the current onslaught on language education, given the focus on the individual and narrow, goal-oriented political concerns. Recent closures and downsizing of Asian language education departments reflect how, without support from sectors outside the economy, multilingual efforts will fail (McGregor, 2021; Weinmann, Neilsen, & Slavich, 2021). Overall, while neoliberalism has raised productive sources of critique, it remains dominated by economic considerations (Piller & Cho, 2013) and is perhaps as ineffective at resolving the monolingual mindset as previous efforts, and moreover may exacerbate ethnic tensions at the political level. While individually the focus on unlearning monolingualism on the part of teachers is a productive step, historical and contextual factors demonstrate the concrete dangers of complete linguistic autonomy (Clyne & Clyne, 1991a).

3. Theoretical Framework

To better understand current trends in Australian language education, as well as its underlying mindset, this study utilises Apple's (1971) notion of a 'hidden curriculum' and Bourdieu's (1986) theories on social, cultural and economic capitals. The 'hidden curriculum', as defined by Apple (1971), refers to values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and norms that are implicit or unspoken within educational settings. Apple's (1971) primary argument was that the hidden curriculum was an inherent challenge toward active citizenship, as students were taking as unquestioned the ideological and political values set by government authorities (Vallance, 1974; Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997). Consequently, the full significance of school subjects, including science and social studies, might not be fully comprehended, with students more likely to take for granted what they have learned as legitimate, reasonable and 'unbiased' (Apple, 1971). In many ways, a 'hidden curriculum' may apply to Australia's liberal

education system in the years prior to Apple's writing, and included a monolithic, top-down attitude toward educational perceptions, attitudes and ideologies.

Bourdieu's (1986) notions of social and cultural capital provide ways for identifying the different 'values' of language learning. Social and cultural capital have implications for indicating the elements considered 'valuable' in language education, particularly as it regards future employment. Bourdieu (1986) argues that education is one modality for distributing cultural capital, and the educational process provides definitions and provisions for maintaining cultural capital. In these terms, language education may be construed as cultivating students' critical thinking skills, providing them will information for future employment and economic and human capital. Hence, Apple and Bourdieu's discussions on knowledge and its value are useful for understanding current multilingual education in Australia.

4. Research Questions and Significance

While numerous studies have examined monolingualism and the complexities of multilingual education in Australia, these discussions have generally remained at a macro level. Given recent changes to language studies at Australian universities, particularly the deterioration of Asian language departments in the wake of COVID-19, this study explores specific patterns in educational documents to determine whether Australia's current policies are adequately addressing concerns over 'monolingual' dominance. Additionally, due to Australia's federated nature, conditions for language education differ in each state and territory, furthering the research gaps in previous studies. This research focuses on New South Wales (NSW), one of Australia's most multicultural states, and will collect and analyse discourse data derived from the region's latest rationale for language syllabi following reforms to the language curriculum in 2017 (Oriyama, 2017). This discourse data provides an opportunity to analyse current perspectives and goals of Australian mainstream language leaning, revealing any underlying ideologies of the Australian government regarding language education. While the study is limited to NSW, it may provide a valuable perspective on other states and territories navigating issues of monolingualism and multilingual education.

The following questions will provide the structure for this thesis' exploration into language policy in NSW:
1. What are the key values, interests or attitudes underpinning the current language curriculum in NSW?
2. To what extent are the values, interests or attitudes implicit within the NSW language curriculum driven by social, cultural or economic motives?
3. How does the NSW language curriculum encourage or promote multilingualism? What evidence is there for such promotion in existing course or policy documents?

5. Research Methodology

As the NSW language curriculum is presented directly as the syllabuses for each language, the syllabuses referred to in this paper correspond to the value of the language curriculum. Mainstream curricula and syllabi are generally reflective of a state's officially sanctioned economic, ideological, political, cultural and intellectual frameworks, signifying the distribution of power and opportunity in society (Apple, 2004). This paper primarily utilises a qualitative method to conduct document discourse analysis in order to examine the effectiveness and underlying attitudes of current language syllabi in New South Wales. It focuses specifically on recent changes to Asian language syllabi, selecting curricula from five major Asian languages and investigating their rationales to determine the motivations of policy- and decision makers in offering these courses. Data on students enrolled in these language subjects will also be collectively examined. In all, the thesis' critical discourse approach will combine a thematic categorisation method with an examination of the values and patterns reflected in the chosen texts.

6. Thematic and Critical Discourse Analysis

6.1. Data analysis procedure

A combination of critical discourse and thematic analyses is carried out in this study as a reflexive method that actively seeks the foundational meanings of the text of mainstream language syllabi. Textual rationales may be viewed as 'codes' for data analysis, while thematic analysis identifies, organises and interprets patterns and themes in accordance with collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012). Fairclough's (2013) notion of 'discourse' is used for the study's 'Critical Discourse Analysis', further contributing to this research's clarity, with texts or rationales being treated as discursive of a particular social perspective (ibid). Meanwhile, thematic analysis will approach data according to a modified version of steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Table 1. Data analysis procedure

| Step 1	Data Collection
Step 2	Familiarisation with data and rationale texts from main Asian syllabi
Step 3	Generation of initial code(s)
Step 4	Identification of theme(s)
Step 5	Review and definition theme(s)
Step 6	Production of report

6.1.1. Data Collection

According to the figures available from the NSW Department of Education, as of June 2016 there are a

total of 22 language courses offered in grades K-10, with Asian languages offered including Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean and Vietnamese. Asian language courses with the highest number of enrolled students were chosen for further examination based on 2020 statistics from the NSW Department of Education, since this sample data is proportionally representative. Two major sources of data were used for this study: for qualitative data, rationale texts from five major Asian language syllabi in NSW were collected and analysed, while the quantitative data used was taken from students enrolled in language courses from different institutions, including those from the government, Catholic, and independent sectors. This data was dated after the NSW language syllabus reform of 2017 to 2020, the latest available data, and is considered representative of NSW's language education at a time of reform implementation. Still, this study cannot be generalised to account for language education in all of NSW due to research limitations, but can provide certain implications regarding current trends and opportunities.

Table 2. HSC Enrolment Data from 2017 to 2020 – Five major Asian languages, according to the latest report by Department of Education
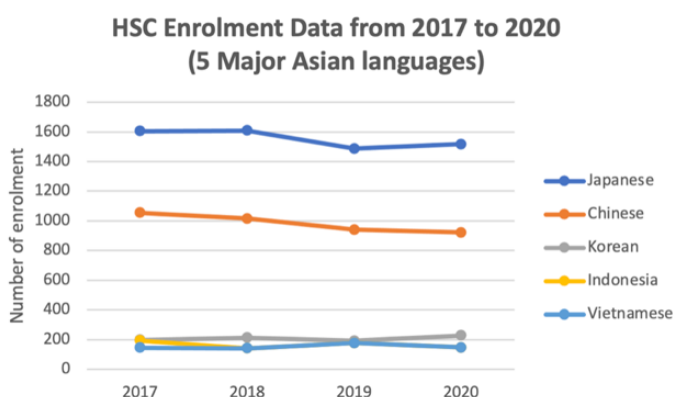
HSC Enrolment Data from 2017 to 2020 (5 Major Asian languages)

	Japanese	Chinese	Korean	Indonesia	Vietnamese
2017	1605	1055	198	194	146
2018	1609	1016	213	142	142
2019	1486	940	193	178	178
2020	1517	921	228	147	147

6.1.2. Familiarisation with data and rationale texts from main Asian syllabi

Instead of analysing all existing language syllabi, five major Asian language syllabi were selected for the study. In selecting these five syllabuses, it is considered the significant changes that have been occurring in Asian studies and Asian languages (Weinmann, Neilsen, & Slavich, 2021). In particular, the two languages with the highest number of enrolled students - Japanese and Chinese - are used as examples. Due to the absence of the former Korean, Indonesian and Vietnamese

language syllabi, the previously used 2003 Japanese and Chinese language syllabi, and the new syllabi in these languages for 2017, were analysed thematically for greater understanding and identification of meanings and trends. The rationale section of language syllabi illustrates specifically how government and related institutions understand the significance of learning.

Table 3. Seven syllabi collected

Older	Latest
Japanese K–10 Syllabus 2003	Japanese K–10 Syllabus 2017
Chinese K–10 Syllabus 2003	Chinese K–10 Syllabus 2017
N/A	Korean K–10 Syllabus 2017
N/A	Indonesia K–10 Syllabus 2017
N/A	Vietnamese K–10 Syllabus 2017

6.1.3. Generation of initial code(s)

After familiarisation of the data, this study conducts a comparative thematic analysis of the syllabi's rationale texts. The seven sample texts will be manually coded and analysed for thematic classification. As a means of 'data condensation' (Malterud, 2012), each passage of the rationale text will be categorised into a thematic code and formed into thematic units to facilitate comparison.

6.1.4. Identification of theme(s)

Next, efforts will be made to identify different themes and directions in the rationale passages. Summarised themes will be presented in table form alongside the original texts so that their characteristics may be more readily observed. In the process of condensing and organising each passage into a theme, different levels, directions and relationships will be accounted for and reviewed carefully.

6.1.5. Step 5: Review and definition theme(s)

This stage involves the further refinement and clarification of the themes identified from the syllabi. Each passage is clarified in defining the underlying themes. This section not only contains a summary of the textual data, but highlights themes which are representative, interesting and reflective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In conjunction with outgoing themes from the analysis, this section reflects the findings of this study.

6.1.6. Step 6: Production of report

In the analytical stage of the report-writing process, the researcher maintains a critical, neutral perspective while iterating, refining and reflecting upon each study topic. Given the nature of this small sample study, its generalisability will need to be enhanced through future research. Despite this, the report offers a means for evaluating ideas and assessing underlying ideologies and attitudes reflected in different document texts.

6.2. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of this paper, the data has been carefully collected from the government offical curriculum and syllabus where the wording of rationales has been carefully considered and given meaning. Considering the qualitative nature of this paper, content validity is of particular importance when examining and analysing the motivation of the documentations (Brod, Tesler & Christensen, 2009). Therefore, the methods of thematic classification and critical discourse analysis were employed to systematically assess the perspectives from the data. In a number of recurring keywords by observing the text, several themes have been identified and categorised as much of the underlying information possible.

6.3. Study Limitations

One objective of this study is to evaluate the understanding and goals of language learning as outlined by policymakers and government officials in the latest NSW Language syllabi. A sampling method was chosen to focus on rationale sections, which allow for a more thorough analysis of discourse to comprehend the vision of linguistic education fostered by the government. Additionally, other syllabi descriptions, including the study's introduction, aim, objectives and results, may signal trends and attitudes in language education, but due to the length of and timing for this thesis it would be more reasonable to focus on analysing the relevant samples in detail.

7. Findings & Discussion

7.1. The Australian Approach to Language Education

According to the latest Australian census (2016), more than 300 languages are spoken at home, with 21 % of Australians speaking a language other than English. While Clyne (1991a) has reviewed Australia's long-standing ideological 'status quo' of English monolingualism, the country's social reality is multilingual. Overall, Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2016) have identified five ideological underpinnings to Australia's language education, all of which have been historically determined: "comfortably British, assertively Australian, ambitiously multicultural, energetically Asian" and "fundamentally economic". That said, given the shifting ideological landscape to language education in Australia, as demonstrated by recent reforms to the NSW language syllabus, it may be beneficial to re-assess whether Australia has maintained these underpinnings in the face of pressure to be more inclusive of multilingualism. By evaluating reformed language syllabi, each state and territory can enhance its understanding of language education development and planning, thus better planning for language education in the future.

7.2. NSW's Approach to Language Education

To comprehend and convey the Australian government's orientation toward mainstream language learning, this study considers New South Wales' current educational reform, which aims to improve state language standards. This reform, the biggest in over 30 years, will commence in 2021 and will be fully implemented by 2024 (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2021). The reform's changes are potentially indicative of broader, country-wide developments, since the state reform will involve a large number of participants, with discussion and revisions from the government, teaching associations, parent organisations, employer groups and other community stakeholders. Accordingly, the NSW School Curriculum Reform follows several key principles and outlines three crucial curriculum changes: the priority of literacy and numeracy subjects; the restructuring of the curriculum by reducing unnecessary subjects; and the provision of modern pathways and opportunities for college and TAFE courses for Year 11 and 12 (ibid.). However, what qualifies as 'unnecessary' in this context is debatable, and there is a risk of overemphasising core English literacy and undercutting the learning of other languages.
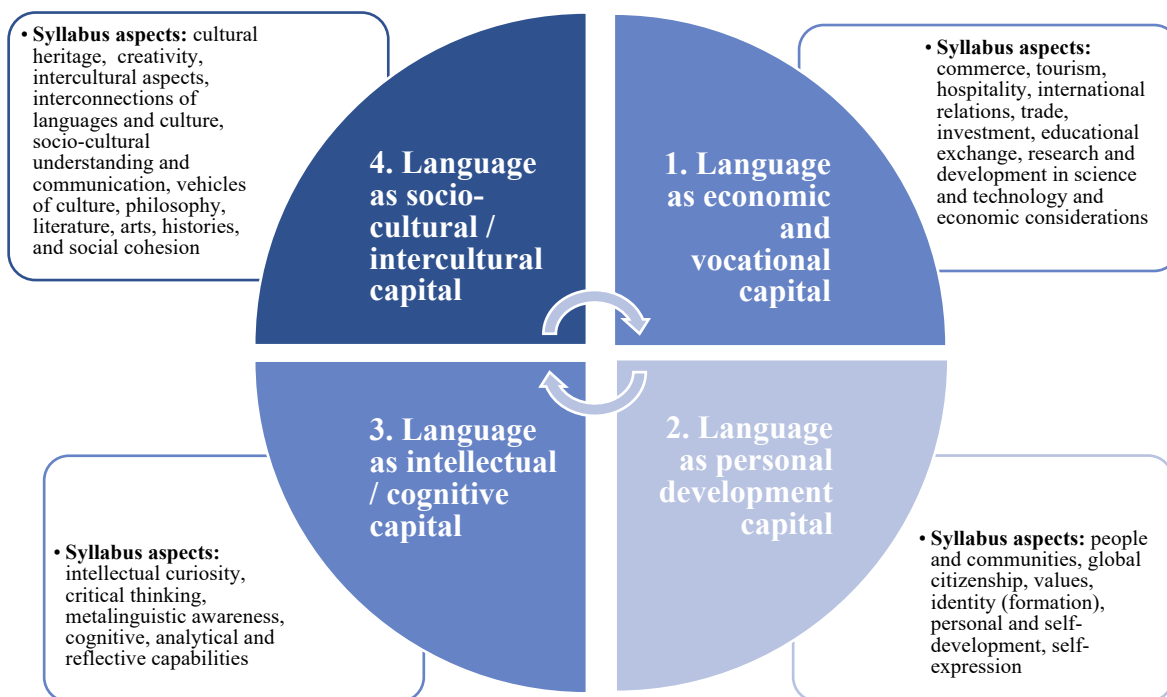
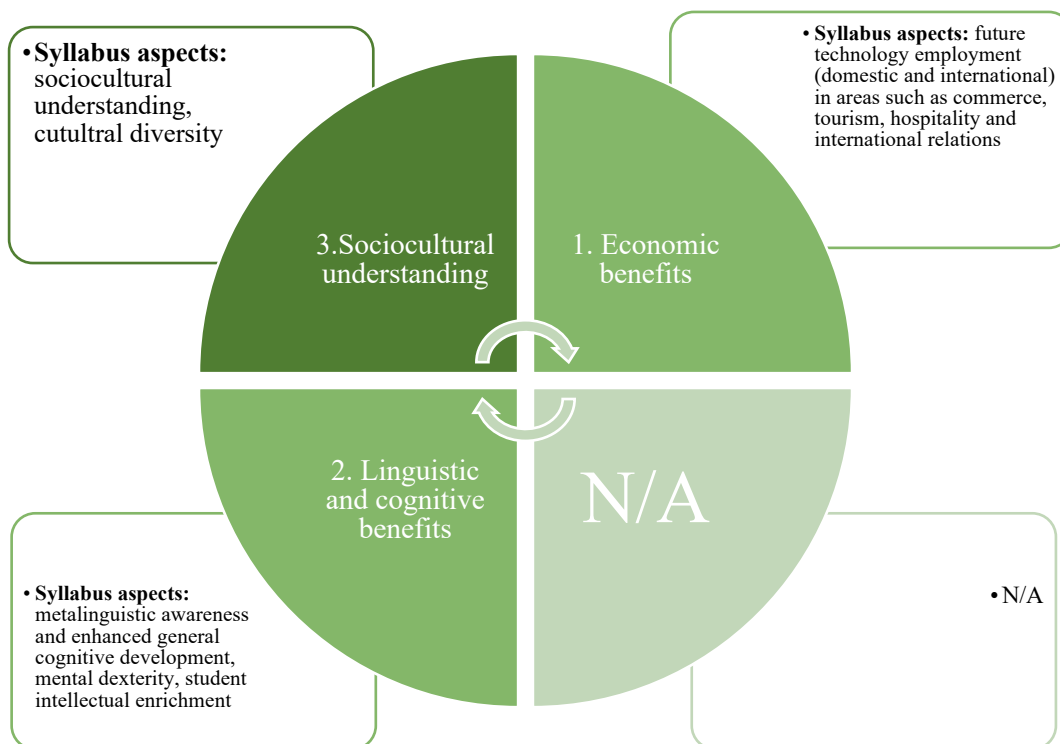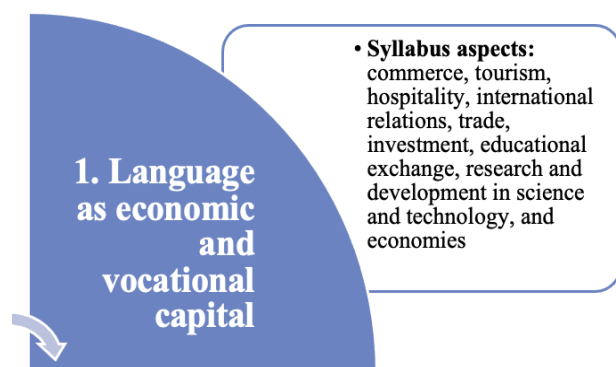**Figure 1.** Themes identified in the latest language syllabus

The figure shows a four-quadrant circle:

- **4. Language as socio-cultural / intercultural capital**
  - Syllabus aspects: cultural heritage, creativity, intercultural aspects, interconnections of languages and culture, socio-cultural understanding and communication, vehicles of culture, philosophy, literature, arts, histories, and social cohesion

- **1. Language as economic and vocational capital**
  - Syllabus aspects: commerce, tourism, hospitality, international relations, trade, investment, educational exchange, research and development in science and technology and economic considerations

- **3. Language as intellectual / cognitive capital**
  - Syllabus aspects: intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, metalinguistic awareness, cognitive, analytical and reflective capabilities

- **2. Language as personal development capital**
  - Syllabus aspects: people and communities, global citizenship, values, identity (formation), personal and self-development, self-expression

Figure 2. Themes identified from the former language syllabus

The figure shows a four-quadrant circle:

- **3. Sociocultural understanding**
  - Syllabus aspects: sociocultural understanding, cutultral diversity

- **1. Economic benefits**
  - Syllabus aspects: future technology employment (domestic and international) in areas such as commerce, tourism, hospitality and international relations

- **2. Linguistic and cognitive benefits**
  - Syllabus aspects: metalinguistic awareness and enhanced general cognitive development, mental dexterity, student intellectual enrichment

- **N/A**
  - N/A

After analysing and contextualising the rationale sections of the seven Asian language syllabi considered for this study, two figures were developed from the themes compiled, shown in Figures 1 and 2. Each of these Figures illustrates, and compare accordingly, the differences, similarities and thematic patterns of the language syllabi before and after the curriculum reform. Four main themes have been identified and categorised: language as economic and vocational capital; language as personal development capital; language as cognitive/intellectual capital; and language as sociocultural/intercultural capital. Each of these themes embodies distinct beliefs about the purpose of the knowledge (language) to be delivered in schools, values and attitudes that should be taught to students and objectives and priorities that should be emphasised in language programmes and activities.

7.2.1. Theme 1: Language as Economic and Vocational Capital

• **Syllabus aspects:** commerce, tourism, hospitality, international relations, trade, investment, educational exchange, research and development in science and technology, and economies

An example from a Syllabus rationale extract reads as follow:

> *Chinese is an important language for young learners in Australia, as Australia progresses towards a future of increased trade, investment, educational exchange, research and development in science and technology, and engagement with Asia. Students develop an appreciation for the place of Australia within the Asia region, including the interconnections of languages and cultures, peoples and communities, histories and economies….and for future employment, within Australia and internationally, in areas such as commerce, tourism, entertainment, hospitality, education, sport, visual arts, performing arts and international relations. (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2017, p. 11)*

In the context of globalisation and neoliberal marketisation, the relationship between language learning and human capital has been extensively studied on the basis that the skills acquired through education increase personal productivity. In particular, modern languages and linguistic skills are generally regarded as marketable assets or 'economic capital' working toward an individual's competitive market advantage and resultant social mobility (Stein-Smith, 2016). Moreover, language is now considered a marketable asset not only in Pacific regions such as Australia but also in the European Union and throughout the world (ibid).

While language learning's economic considerations are important, the promotion of language education based solely on economic interests may be detached from a true holistic significance. Moreover, given Australia's socio-linguistic makeup, multilingualism and multiculturalism can have measurable benefits as national resources, beyond merely symbolic recognition (Ng, & Metz, 2015). Still, based on a comparison between old and new language curricula, the emphasis on language as economic and vocational capital does not appear to have significantly changed. For example, the language syllabi consistently state that language skills are positive for those wishing to engage in national and international markets, tourism, trade and investment.

The prioritising of liberal economic values in both older and more recent language syllabi indicate the mainstream's continued approach of emphasising linguistic market value, which may continue to implicitly favour English rather than multilingualism and continue linguistic drift. If languages continue to be primarily regarded as organised according to market value, ethnic minority languages will be in danger of neglect. For this reason, governments and relevant authorities must recognise the social and educational implications of their directing language learning toward monetary ends.

Additionally, justifications for language learning on a scientific and technological basis is also frequently found on the reformed syllabus, which further emphasises economic factors, although it also promotes educational exchange, research, and technological development. This is especially evident in Asian languages, as the newly reformed language syllabus seems closely aligned with principles put forward by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which seeks to revolutionise education through innovative technological developments (Peña-López, 2016). Ultimately, this educational innovation is seen as essential for driving economic and social development (ibid.). Overall, education will benefit from this emphasis on scientific resources for nations to achieve socio-economics efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

7.2.2. Theme 2: Language as Personal Development Capital

• **Syllabus aspects:** people and communities, global citizenship, values, identity (formation), personal and self-development, self-expression

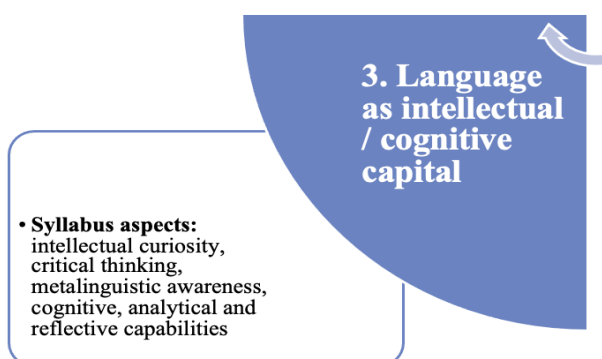An example from a Syllabus rationale extract reads as follow:

> *Students broaden their horizons in relation to personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world…. They develop understanding of global citizenship, and reflect on their own heritage, values, culture and identity. (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2017, p. 11)*

While positive economic effects are an important aspect of language learning, the theme of language as personal development capital present in the latest language curricula is especially pronounced, with language seen as essential to forming personal identity, enabling self-expression and solidifying communal identity and global citizenship. In contrast to the former language syllabus, the new curriculum reform explicitly mentions language's role in personal development and shows a government acknowledgment of how individuals may have a bond with language that moves beyond a national or

economic resonance. While older syllabi were more concerned with describing the intellectual development of an individual, the new syllabus prioritises the holistic individual, rather than simply their rational nature. The notion of educational institutions or schools functioning as mediators of "social control" (Vallance, 1974), with students passively receiving, directly or indirectly, 'the content, ideas, and beliefs taught to them by the school' and then situated within a society with a constant set of values is rejected. Instead, students are now personally engaged with language in a dynamic process that is both active and passive.

Critically, some studies question the purported impact of multilingual learning on defining one's personal identity (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). Notably, these critics argue that the association of language too closely with identity may contribute to problematic notions, such as the idea that multilingualism negatively impacts the 'purity' of one's identity, which is linguistically 'pure'. Despite this, as Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) explain, identity is a multifaceted concept and the construction of identity is multidimensional, and multilingual learning provides further possibilities for identity shaping and self-perception. Therefore, the newly reformed syllabus provides some positive direction to language learning in terms of the importance of language as a capital for personal development.

7.2.3. Theme 3: language as Cognitive/Intellectual Capital

- **Syllabus aspects:** intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, metalinguistic awareness, cognitive, analytical and reflective capabilities

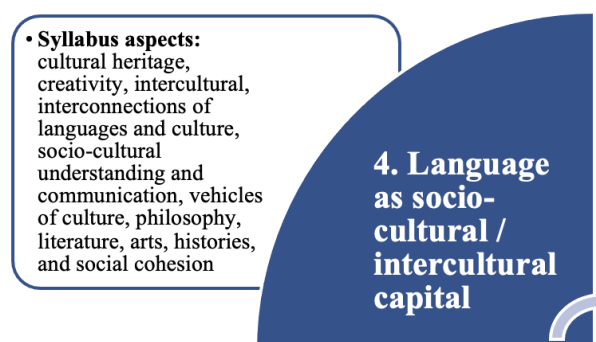3. Language as intellectual / cognitive capital

An example from a Syllabus rationale extract reads as follow:

> *Through the development of communicative skills in a language and understanding of how language works as a system, students further develop their literacy in English, through close attention to detail, accuracy, logic and critical reasoning. Learning languages exercises students' intellectual curiosity, increases metalinguistic awareness, strengthens cognitive, analytical and reflective capabilities, and enhances their creative and critical thinking. (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2017; 2018; 2019, p. 11)*

The skills gained through language acquisition not only have a significant impact on an individual's identity and personal expression, but also contribute to their cognitive and intellectual abilities. A large body of neuropsychological and social science research has established significant links between individuals with

bilingual or multilingual skills and higher and more active cognitive performance (Diaz, 1984; Marian & Shook, 2012; Hakuta, & Diaz, 2014; Kroll & Dussias, 2017), acknowledging a positive correlation between these skills and cognitive well-being (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Oz, Demirezen & Pourfeiz, 2015). In both older and newer syllabi, the NSW government has emphasised language learning for intellectual, cognitive and higher order thinking skills, specifically naming traits of intellectual curiosity and critical, analytical and reflective thinking and capabilities. Moreover, the government appears to have gained a greater insight into language-learning cognitive impacts in its newer syllabus, moving from a 'mental dexterity' focused on cognitive skills to a more comprehensive view that aims at a more holisticc individual development. This may result in greater clarity and confidence among educational institutions, educators and language learners, and closely aligns with Australia's overall educational goals (Barr et al., 2008).

7.2.4. Theme 4: Language as Sociocultural/Intercultural Capital

- **Syllabus aspects:** cultural heritage, creativity, intercultural, interconnections of languages and culture, socio-cultural understanding and communication, vehicles of culture, philosophy, literature, arts, histories, and social cohesion

4. Language as socio-cultural / intercultural capital

An example from a Syllabus rationale extract reads as follow:

> *Learning languages provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples….The ability to communicate in Chinese provides incentives for travel and for more meaningful interactions with speakers of Chinese, encouraging socio-cultural understanding between Australia and Chinese-speaking countries, and cohesion within the Australian community. (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2017, p. 11)*

Language has been increasingly valued as a socio-cultural or intercultural capital in Australia, a fact that is inextricably linked to the nature and history of Australian society. Socio-cultural capital, however, differs considerably from economic and intellectual capital in its methods of development and transmission. The concept of cultural capital as developed by Pierre Bourdieu in his conceptual triad (1986) holds that it is accumulated through 'smart networks', and can be converted into cultural capital only when one obtains appropriate networks, credentials and social prestige (Norton & Toohey, 2011). In Australia, the concept of 'socio-cultural capital' has been further tailored to reflect Australian socio-linguistic and historical

characteristics; while it exhibits fundamental characteristics of 'cultural capital' and can be accumulated, achieving and acquiring an ethnic minority or community language is complex and multifaceted (Pöllmann, 2013).

The newly revised language syllabus introduces the concept of 'heritage' for the first time, highlighting both cultural and linguistic heritage along with the interconnectedness between language and culture. This suggests that sociolinguistic-cultural engagement and connectivity is significantly woven into the new syllabus, reflecting an attempt at an inclusive, optimistic outlook towards language learning and culture. Overall, the new curriculum suggests an aspiration toward social cohesion and connectedness within Australian society, with language serving as a 'social bridge' or 'social lubricant' between diverse societies and cultures, and as a vehicle for diverse cultural expressions.

In brief, it can be seen from the reformed syllabi that the four major themes discussed could be considered as a part of an integration between a liberal linguistic 'status quo' and the neoliberal critique. Unfortunately, while there is further acknowledgment that individuals have more comprehensive needs than their intellectual capacity, there is still a heavy emphasis on economic requirements. The neoliberal critique itself is uncompromising on this point, and therefore offers no alternative that could prioritise community languages. From the perspective that language education is valued as an economic, sociocultural, intellectual and personal development capital, these syllabi still maintain a liberal ideal and an implicit monolingual mindset.

7.3. Limitations of the Study

There are limitations as to the generalisability of this study's findings. First and foremost, it is challenging to conduct a thematic analysis of language curricula, which are developed out of the collaboration of a wide system of professionals. While this study focuses on the NSW language syllabi, its scope was limited by time constraints and could not possibly examine all 22 existing syllabi, including recent ones just released in 2021; moreover, most older NSW syllabi are no longer available. The study therefore has a relatively small sample size. Second, this study utilises a hybrid approach to textual research analysis, specifically a combination of thematic and critical discourse analyses, which may not necessarily be a mature method. Third, since this dissertation is not a study on foreign language acquisition, the selected texts were excerpted only from parts related directly to this paper's research topic; a full thematic textual analysis for every course syllabus was not performed. Finally, while the aim of this paper is to explore attitudes and perceptions of the Australian government and relevant policy makers towards languages other than English, there is no overarching Australian policy for language education and language-in-education policy available for analysis.

8. Conclusion

This paper examined the current state of Australian language education and how government attitudes expressed in mainstream language curricula have ideological underpinnings that affect language teaching, educational management and public expectations of language education. A case study of NSW language curricula is utilised to illustrate the Australian government's current direction toward language education, and four main themes are highlighted: economic, cognitive, personal development and socio-cultural impacts of language as capital. This examination reveals that the current NSW language-learning syllabus is an attempt to merge the multicultural and multilingual while preserving a stress on economics.

The thesis has several acknowledged limitations as to the generalisability of its results. For example, the paper is focused on NSW data and policy, but future research and sample collection could be carried out in other states for more detailed results. First-hand data could also be collected from schools to investigate the motivating factors for students to learn languages. There is a greater need for comparative studies on each state's different syllabi, and the relationship between states, territories and Australia's national government, that could reveal further ideological trends in language education.

Lingling Zhang is a dedicated language-teaching professional with a research interest in the interplay between multilingualism and identity. She holds a first-class honours degree in education from The University of Sydney, specialising in Spanish, French, and TESOL. Currently working as a high school language teacher in Sydney, Lingling is also a prospective student at The University of Cambridge pursuing a master's degree in research in second language education. Her research interests include second language acquisition, bilingualism, and language teaching methodologies, with a particular focus on how bilingualism/multilingualism shapes identity and classroom behaviours.

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