

○ PAPERS FROM THE 2005 ALAA CONFERENCE

The papers in this first volume of *ARAL* issued under the new editorial team were originally presented at the 2005 ALAA conference, held at the University of Melbourne. It had originally been our intention to publish a refereed volume of proceedings of the conference, but after the review process was complete, insufficient papers remained to make a single volume viable. Therefore, the authors of the accepted papers were offered the alternative of having their papers considered for publication in *ARAL*. Additional papers accepted as part of this process will be appearing in future issues of the journal.

The title of the 2005 conference was ‘Applied Linguistics in Australia and Beyond: Offerings, Directions, Invitations, Questions’, which indicates something of the spirit in which the conference was planned. As the abstract for one of the final papers in the conference noted, there is still debate as to what *is* applied linguistics in Australia, and what areas may be included under this umbrella. The conference presenters’ diverse affiliations – coming not just from university departments of Applied Linguistics – demonstrated that Applied Linguistics work is being undertaken in many different domains and endeavours, exploring how language is used, developed and understood.

In this issue we present five papers from the Language Policy and Politics strand – those of Clyne, Winter and Pauwels, Nakahara and Black, Woodward-Kron and Remedios, and Slaughter and Hajek. The paper by Crichton and Scarino was from the Intercultural Issues strand. And the paper by Kurata focuses on the social settings and opportunities for second language learning.

Michael Clyne’s paper has been developed from the plenary presentation he delivered at the conference. In his paper he ranges over a wide number of important issues, starting with the functions of language, and providing examples of recent irresponsible uses of language. He then gives instances of Australian linguistic contributions and impact – how we *have* made a difference. The paper explores a number of fallacies that are associated with the Australian monolingual mindset, including the ‘crowded curriculum’ fallacy, which is taken up again in the Slaughter and Hajek paper. Other myths about language learning which are debunked in this paper are the ‘monoliteracy’ fallacy, that one can only acquire literacy in English; the ‘global English is enough’ fallacy; the ‘unfair advantage’ fallacy, which relates to students studying their home language at school; the ‘language maintenance by osmosis’ fallacy; and the ‘automatic language shift’ fallacy.

He advocates that language professionals have a social responsibility to provide information about languages and responsible insights into the role of language(s) in society.

What happens when a person comes from Japan to an area of Australia where a monolingual mindset is entrenched, with the intention of teaching her language? The literature on such teachers discusses such issues as learning to cope with the culture of Australian schools and classrooms, learning to deal with power differences, the teacher's own English ability, racism and prejudice, and the more general marginalisation of languages and language teachers. In their paper, Nakahara and Black trace Nakahara's journey through this cultural minefield, using personal introspection as the research tool. They discuss the difficulties faced by Nakahara as she undertook her preparation to be a teacher in the new culture, and the ways in which she coped and eventually succeeded as a newly-employed teacher of her language and culture.

Still in the area of languages other than English, Slaughter and Hajek examine the provision of different languages in Victorian schools. They note a trend away from the provision of programs that teach languages, towards 'language awareness' programs, where, rather than *learning* a language, students learn *about* languages, or, more usually, about an idealised 'culture' associated with a language. They particularly examine how community languages are faring in the battle for space in the so-called 'crowded curriculum', and note how differences based on geographical distribution, and competition from other languages, are affecting community languages provision. They consider the sociocultural factors that could account for this change in languages provision, together with the implications for primary school aged children coming through the system.

Moving away from languages other than English, the study by Woodward-Kron and Remedios was conducted in a university physiotherapy department, where smaller classes engaged in Problem Based Learning (PBL) are increasingly common. Also increasingly common are students from diverse linguistic and social backgrounds. Through a detailed systemic functional linguistic examination of stretches of classroom talk in PBL, Woodward-Kron and Remedios reveal the limited amount of participation of the international students and the need for faculties engaged in PBL to provide better support for students to engage with the increased linguistic demands of this type of learning.

Also in the university context, the paper by Crichton and Scarino is a meta-analysis of two earlier studies into the issue of how to include an intercultural dimension in university teaching and learning. The authors note that much of the work in this field is conceived only in terms of English and in terms of globalisation. For these authors, learning involves dialogue, and they advocate moving beyond merely learning facts about another culture. Through ethnographic studies conducted in three different university

programs, they have arrived at a conceptualisation of intercultural education as involving content, communication skills, relocation and diversity. Examples are given of sites of intercultural interaction, where learning is social, interactive and reciprocal.

Finally, turning from language acquisition to language *use*, Winter and Pauwels explore the use of the courtesy title for women, *Ms*, by participants in the ‘teagirl’ project, which is investigating the use of gender inclusive language in three countries – Hong Kong, the Philippines and Singapore. The use of *Ms* in countries of the inner circle of English use, Australia, the US, Britain and New Zealand, has been well documented. What of its use in the countries of the inner and expanding circle? Does *Ms* mean the same in Singapore as it does in Melbourne or Wellington? The authors employed an online survey to collect information on how women in the three countries refer to themselves and address other women. The authors found that *Ms* use broadly correlates with region and status of English, but with some surprising patterns of diffusion which are hinted at by the title of the article, which have implications for language planning and policy.

I would like to thank all the contributing authors who were willing to put in the extra effort of submitting their papers for review, and meeting the various deadlines that have been necessary along the path to publication. Thanks also go to the reviewers who were involved in the process of blind reviewing the articles which were submitted for the conference proceedings and appear now in this and subsequent issues of the journal. And finally, thanks are due to Cathie Elder and Sue Fernandez for their assistance with the reviewing process.

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Conference chair, ALAA 2005 conference

