Studies in Applied Linguistics and Language Learning

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Edited by

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PREFACE

This volume takes a fresh look at applied linguistics and language learning research, and engages readers in challenging a number of current assumptions in the field. The idea for this book came as Caroline and I were organising the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) 2008 Conference. Given the theme of the conference – Critical Dimensions in Applied Linguistics – we received a number of papers that looked at issues of identity, policies, power and privilege in applied linguistics and language learning. Following the conference we asked these participants to submit their papers to us to be included in this volume. In addition, we also approached and solicited new papers from other applied linguists in Australia who work in the area of critical applied linguistics.

All papers submitted for publication to this volume went through a rigorous blind review process and selection was based on the outcome of this review process. Twenty-eight (28) papers were initially submitted for publication and seventeen (17) of them are included in this volume.

Although this volume does not focus only on Australia, many of the authors included here work and/or have studied in Australia. Thus, the papers included in this volume have an Australian outlook to Applied Linguistics, although it is in no way a comprehensive representation of the work on Applied Linguistics that is currently being carried out in Australia. Given the breadth and scope of this volume, we believe that these papers will contribute to the field as it continues to grow.

Ahmar Mahboob & Caroline Lipovsky
Sydney, June 2009

CHAPTER ONE

IDENTITIES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

AHMAR MAHBOOB & CAROLINE LIPOVSKY

1. Introduction

As disciplines go, Applied Linguistics is a rather new addition to academia. The first course in Applied Linguistics was introduced in 1946 at the University of Michigan in the United States of America, and the first journal, Language Learning: A quarterly journal of Applied Linguistics, was launched in 1948. In these early years, studies in Applied Linguistics focussed on second/foreign language learning. However, over the last 50 or so years, the field has grown extensively and there are literally thousands of publications on the subject. With time, Applied Linguistics research expanded its domain, and started exploring new areas such as bilingualism, clinical linguistics, critical discourse analysis, forensic linguistics, language policy and planning, lexicography, multilingualism, and translation and interpretation. These areas have now evolved into sub-fields of specialisation, with books, edited volumes and journals dedicated to them. This book attempts to bring some of these diverse areas together into a single volume, and includes original studies that extend the scope of the field.

The volume, divided into three sections, includes original and new studies in the area of critical applied linguistics, language policy and planning, and language learning and teaching. The book first offers critical views on various aspects of language in society, ranging from the construction of national identity, language and justice, racial and identity issues in the ELT industry, to language in business discourse. It then reports on language policy in the school curriculum, language learning in tertiary education, and Aboriginal languages policy. In the third section, it addresses issues in language learning and teaching, such as the role of parents in literacy learning, multiple script literacy, and language learning and maintenance strategies. In this manner, this book addresses multiple aspects of interest to applied linguists. The studies included in this volume are described in some detail below.

2. Critical Applied Linguistics

The first section of this volume offers critical views on a range of issues in various contexts of institutional discourse.

In the opening chapter, "Critical constructions of a national Australian identity", Maria Chisari questions the former Howard government's official depiction of Australia's national identity, and its re-conceptualisation of citizenship in relation to a predefined set of "Australian values". This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of the language used to outline Australian values and history in the resource booklet *Becoming an Australian Citizen* (this booklet is required reading for applicants attempting the Australian citizenship test, and provides information about Australian systems, history, culture and values). Chisari argues that the Australian identity, as represented in the booklet, is "one where Australia is a nation with unique, identifiable, core Australian characteristics", that "advocates for integration rather than multiculturalism", "has strong white allegiances" and "underplays the nation's multi-lingual and multicultural population" (p. 14). Chisari investigates the government's official rhetoric on Australian national values and identity in its social and political context, using van Dijk (2000), who argues that such discourses are so "premised on seemingly legitimate ideologies and attitudes, and often tacitly accepted by most members of the dominant majority group that they become a form of 'ethnic hegemony'" (p. 34). In doing so, Chisari reflects on hegemonic struggles within societies, and probes notions of identity and belonging.

Ahmar Mahboob further explores hegemonic discourse and subsequent issues of marginalisation and exclusion in "Racism in the English Language Teaching Industry", an investigation of the concept of nativeness in the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry. In this paper, Mahboob highlights race and nativeness based discrimination in the ELT industry. Based on an analysis of web-based postings, survey data, and a sample of the current literature in Applied Linguistics, Mahboob shows that hegemonic discourses on the White native speaker teacher's superiority ensure that he/she continues to be the referent of the English as an Additional Language classroom. The fact that the native speaker of English is described as White and speaking a variety of English associated with the UK, Canada, the USA or Australia, while non-White individuals who speak a variety of English associated with a South country (such as India, Nigeria or Singapore) are constructed as non-native speakers, defines two dimensions of prejudice in the ELT industry: 'Whiteness' and 'native speakerism'. This results in discriminatory employment policies

and hiring practices, whereby employers hire native speakers over non-native speakers, and White non-native teachers over other non-native teachers. In a global world where communication in English between non-native speakers tends to prevail, Mahboob posits that the notion of a White native speaker as a model for language learning and teaching should be challenged and revised.

The next three chapters discuss how language is used and adapted in various contexts. J.R. Martin, Michele Zappavigna and Paul Dwyer, in "Negotiating shame: Exchange and genre structure in youth justice conferencing", explore the way in which participants negotiate meaning in the context of restorative justice. They state that in recent decades, governments around the world have begun to experiment with various relatively informal legal processes, often characterised as forms of "restorative justice", as an adjunct or alternative to formal court proceedings. In this paper, they focus on the model of "youth justice conferencing" which has been operating in New South Wales, Australia, since the late 1990s. Evaluations of conferencing consistently show that the majority of participants are highly satisfied with it as a process but the theoretical accounts to explain this phenomenon have so far paid almost no attention to close-up discourse analysis, relying instead on social-psychological theories of affect, and implying that an ideal-typical conference moves through a core sequence of remorse, apology and forgiveness. Martin, Zappavigna and Dwyer's examination of the exchange structure of the interactions between convenors (or ethnics liaison officers) and offenders highlights the presence of a regulatory pedagogic discourse, which in turn projects an integrative discourse of social responsibility whereby young offenders are realigned with the values of their communities and families in place of the values of their peers. This highlights the dominant contribution of the convenors and ethnic liaison officers, compared with the relatively passive and scaffolded role of the young offenders. The authors' close linguistic reading, however, allows them to counter-balance ensuing reservations about the sincerity of the offender's apology—and its ability to satisfy the victim—with the opportunity for all involved (offender, victim, families and police) to negotiate solidarity.

Issues of language and justice are also considered by Sowmya Devaraj and Jane Goodman-Delahunty in "Dialect and credibility judgments of Indigenous Australian suspects", in which they turn their attention to issues of credibility, in relation to suspects' racial appearance, pauses in conversation, and argument strength. In Devaraj and Goodman-Delahunty's paper, concerns are raised as to whether the rate of Indigenous

overrepresentation in the legal system can be attributed to biased judgments about their credibility. Devaraj and Goodman-Delahunty highlight three factors that might contribute to biased credibility judgments about Indigenous suspects: racial appearance (Aboriginal vs. Caucasian), silence during conversation (long pauses in speech vs. no long pauses) and force of exculpatory argument (weak vs. strong). Their investigation of these factors shows how cultural differences in norms of verbal communication—such as periods of silence in conversation in Standard and Aboriginal English—could affect veracity judgments in legal settings, such as police interviews and the courtroom. As such, theirs is an important contribution to the body of studies which expose the disadvantage that speakers of minority varieties suffer in institutional settings where a different variety is the norm.

In the next chapter, "Business discourse as a site of inherent struggle", Alan Jones argues that the orientation to communication and language in business discourse is fundamentally dissimilar from the one that prevails in non-institutional contexts. In this paper he assembles sources suggesting that business discourse is inherently conflictual. He links the business ideology of competition (Porter 1979, 1980, 1985) to the Habermasian concept of strategic action (Habermas 1984), and argues that business discourse is both consciously and unconsciously strategic, leading in the latter case to what Habermas (1976, 1984) calls "systematically distorted communication". He represents business as a set of discursive practices that not only account for and mirror movements of money and material goods but, especially in their more spontaneous enactments, reveal the internal dilemmas of strategic actors who are also bound by the "involvement obligations" of the interaction order (Goffman 1959, 1967). While Jones's analysis of business discourse is grounded in empirical descriptions of discourse in use, it also transcends specific contexts of communication and genres, as he goes beyond the examination of the immediate discourse situation to explore the relationship between participants' language use and their socio-economic interests. In doing this, Jones discusses three kinds of evidence capable of showing that the discursive practices of the business world are unconsciously conflictual, or "distorted." These are: a) the occlusion of risky topics; b) a high incidence of discursive shifts or alternations, indicative of competing motivations; and c) the occurrence of impeded or self-contradictory speech.

3. Language Policy and Practice

The second section includes studies that report on various aspects of language policy in Australia, ranging from Aboriginal languages policies to language policies and practices in schools and universities, and language maintenance strategies of recent migrants.

In "Developing an Aboriginal languages policy for Western Australia: Some issues", Graham McKay sets out the background to the development of an Aboriginal languages policy for Western Australia as he considers the initial issue of what languages should be considered Aboriginal languages for the purpose of such a policy. McKay states that the Australian Government led the way in 1987 in adopting a National Policy on Languages which incorporated policy on Aboriginal languages and included creoles and Aboriginal English in its scope. He points out that New South Wales was the first State to adopt an Aboriginal languages policy, and Victoria is about to follow suit; the Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs is still investigating developing an Aboriginal languages policy for Western Australia. McKay states that these State developments, two decades after the Commonwealth policy, raise a number of questions. In his discussion of these questions, McKay explores wider issues regarding the significance of language in relation to Aboriginal people's sense of identity, as well as issues of communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, of inter-generational communication among Aboriginal people, of Indigenous education, and of successful participation of Aboriginal people in all aspects of wider society in general. In doing so, McKay highlights the importance in the development of an Aboriginal languages policy in Western Australia of accommodating the diversity of language needs of the various Aboriginal communities, and emphasises the need to not only recognise and strengthen traditional Aboriginal languages, but also recognise Kriol and Aboriginal English. In taking a broader approach to what constitutes Aboriginal languages, McKay advocates Australia's multilingualism and multiculturalism, downplayed in the Howard government's depiction of Australian identity (see also Chisari, this volume).

In the next chapter, "The place of languages in the school curriculum: Policy and practice in Australian schools", Anthony J. Liddicoat and Timothy Jowan Curnow review State and Territory documents concerning language-in-education policies in Australian schools. They point out that although the language policy at the national level and at the State and Territory level in Australia has been concerned with the question of the place of languages in the school curriculum for over 20 years, the place of

languages remains highly problematic. This paper surveys current State and Territory language education policies in Australia to examine the ways in which the place of languages is constructed. Liddicoat and Curnow argue that the quantity of policy around languages in Australia does not represent a position of policy strength. Rather, languages seem to have a relatively fragile position in education in general. Liddicoat and Curnow's review highlights a wide range of approaches in the language-in-education policies adopted in the different Australian States and Territories. Altogether, however, the policies reveal a movement away from mandated language study, weakening the status of language learning in the Australian school curriculum.

Dana Anders, Christina Gitsaki and Karen Moni, in "Australian values education policy: The official discourse", turn their attention to another education policy document: the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (2005), which defines values teaching and learning in Australian schools. The document seeks to promote the government's official rhetoric and, as such, provide legitimacy to the values it advocates—in ways similar to the resource booklet *Becoming an Australian Citizen* (see Chisari, this volume). In their analysis of the document, Anders suggests that it fulfils several strategic functions: to create legitimacy and relevancy for the framework, to persuade its receivers to view the Government initiative favourably, and to create the impression that such an intervention is based on widespread consensus. They points out that the National Framework, like all texts, is a political one in that it is crafted to meet its communicative purpose, and, in this respect, the text is effective in promoting a framework for values education in schools. However, as they adds, the question remains if such promotional aims are fulfilled at the cost of glossing over contested educational and social issues.

The next two chapters focus on aspects of language education in Australian tertiary institutions. In "Language-in-education planning of student exchanges between Japanese and Australian universities", Hiroyuki Nemoto investigates student exchanges in the novel context of collaborative language education. Nemoto's study investigates structural arrangements of a student exchange program for Japanese students at an Australian university. The focus in Nemoto's study is placed on the impact of policies and practices of such an exchange program on Japanese exchange students' participation in the Australian host community. Nemoto reports that tensions emerged in relation to credit transfer systems, subject arrangements, and academic support systems, and his analysis highlights the importance of examining the structural

arrangements of student exchanges, and shows how bottom-up planning and evaluation mechanisms could enhance outcomes of such exchanges. Nemoto suggests that improvements to the system would include tailoring appropriate pre-departure programs for exchange students, consolidating support programs at the host universities, setting up one-to-one relationships between exchange program staff and exchange students, including English for Academic Purposes courses into students' curricula, re-examining policies with regard to subjects tailored for exchange students and to language and study support, and providing financial support to students and to incoming exchange programs. Ultimately, he argues, reciprocating incoming with outgoing exchange programs might be the key to improving students' participation in exchange programs and to increasing government and institutional funding.

In "Dimensions of learning German at Australian universities", Gabriele Schmidt turns her attention to the sources of motivation that influence students in their initial choice to study German at university. Schmidt points out that German has been taught at Australian universities for over 150 years, and is currently offered by thirteen universities. Schmidt observes that for the vast majority of students, learning German is a free choice and is usually not required by their degree. As a result of this, she reasons, it is not surprising that the number of tertiary students learning German in Australia has declined between 2000 and 2005 by 18%. To study this, Schmidt conducted a questionnaire survey of 520 students from ten Australian universities who were enrolled in German courses at beginners or intermediate level. Schmidt's study highlights how students' root motivations have a substantial bearing upon their choice to study German at university. She shows that students' reasons for learning German are quite diverse, with a general interest in learning languages coming first. Coming after are a strong interest in travelling to a German-speaking country and in communicating with German speakers, as well as an interest in their culture. Schmidt argues that these findings should be taken into account when designing curricula and marketing German to potential learners.

In the next chapter, "Language maintenance strategies and language attitudes of new migrants from Italy", Antonia Rubino explores multilingualism and language maintenance amongst new Italian migrants to Australia. In her paper, Rubino analyses the language maintenance strategies and attitudes of a group of Italian women who migrated to Australia throughout the nineties under different immigration categories (family reunion, work, own business). During in-depth interviews, the women were asked to talk about their linguistic practices and their

personal experiences dealing with languages both in Italy and Australia, as well as their interaction with earlier Italian migrants. Rubino's study sheds light not only on the impact of recent socio-economic and socio-cultural circumstances on bilingualism, but also on the influence of the linguistic practices of earlier migrants on the language attitudes and maintenance efforts of later migrants. Rubino also shows how recent Italian women migrants seem to have better opportunities to be bilingual than earlier migrants did. Contributing factors include their use of Italian at home, exposure to other languages before migrating, higher levels of education, close contact with Italy via the internet or visits, and a strong motivation to transmit Italian language to their children. Their language maintenance efforts are also fostered by their interactions with earlier Italian migrants in that they promote puristic attitudes about their language use, such as steering away from transfers, code-switching or language mixing. The broader Australian context also comes into play, as Australia is perceived as a country where languages are not actively promoted (see Liddicoat and Curnow, this volume), hindering their language maintenance efforts.

4. Language Learning and Teaching

The third section of this book includes chapters that address issues in language learning and teaching. Literacy is investigated through the role of parents in their children's literacy development, and a study of children's experiences of multiple script literacy. Students' reading comprehension in L2 Japanese, and learners' use of oral communication strategies in L2 English are also examined, while the effectiveness of explicit use of contrast in teaching English pronunciation is investigated. Finally, students' perceptions of their native vs. non-native ESL teachers are discussed.

As more children with a non-English speaking background enter Australian schools, teachers face the challenge of engaging with their parents' beliefs about literacy practices, so as to maximise the children's literacy development. How this can be successfully achieved is central to Honglin Chen and Pauline Harris's study in "Learning to become school-literate parents of ESL children". Chen and Harris state that although the role of significant others (e.g. parents) in children's literacy learning has been well documented, there are few studies that inform schools of how parents of ESL children facilitate their children's literacy learning. Chen and Harris point out that most of these parents had their schooling in a different context mediated through a different language, and were brought

up with a different set of literacy practices. Thus, their previous literacy experiences may affect their perceptions of what it means to be literate in English at school, and the kinds of literacy experiences they provide at home. Drawing on theories of identity and situated learning, and using a case study approach, Chen and Harris explore how one parent of an ESL student learned her role as a facilitator for her children's literacy learning. Their study highlights the complexities, for parents of a non-English speaking background, of gaining access to English literacy practices in order to participate in their children's literacy learning, as this means questioning and redefining their original beliefs about literacy practices. For the parents of ESL children, becoming a school-literate parent in the novel context of Australian schooling actually entails negotiating a new identity, as they reshape their beliefs about literacy learning. The study further posits the question of reciprocity, and how schools may tune into children's home literacy practices.

In some Australian schools, ESL children receive part of their school curriculum in their first language, and part in English. In this case, what enables children to transfer their knowledge of literacy from one language to the other? This is the question that Michèle de Courcy and Hana Yue attempt to answer in "Children's experiences of multiple script literacy". De Courcy and Yue argue that in the second language development of bilingual children, a particularly important role has been found for literacy in the first language, even when the second language "does not share the same writing features, grammar, graphic conventions or even the same type of writing conventions" (Arefi 1997, iii) with the first. De Courcy and Yue point out that concepts of print, directionality of script, sound-grapheme correspondence (if applicable), and strategies for getting meaning from print—using semantic, grapho-phonic and syntactic cueing systems—once learnt in one language can be transferred to the other language (Cummins and Swain 1989). However, they state, "transfer of academic skills across languages will not happen" automatically (Cummins 2000, 184), and, where the two languages are quite distant, it may be more that underlying skills to do with literacy are transferred, rather than knowledge of surface features (Eisterhold 1990, 97-98). De Courcy and Yue's study highlights how strategies that significantly affect literacy development can transfer from a first to a second language, even when the two languages use different scripts. They also demonstrate how the transfer of strategies, skills and knowledge from the first language actually fosters literacy development in the second language. This shows the positive interrelation of literacy development in first and second languages, regardless of the first language spoken by the children.

Sayuki Machida, in "Reading L2 text: How more and less skilled learners read L2 text", investigates the reading comprehension of a group of advanced learners of Japanese, and reports on a piece of small-scale research which investigates how L2 Japanese advanced learners read an expository text in Japanese. Machida's study highlights a number of factors that play a role in L2 learners' reading comprehension process, such as the importance of word recognition and syntactic knowledge in order to be able to retrieve ideas and propositions, as well as linguistic and pragmatic discourse knowledge in order to be able to combine propositions into rhetorical units. Machida also shows that students' higher performance in retrieving propositions (the lower level of processing) increases their performance in connecting ideas and building a text's rhetorical structure.

In "Pronunciation as categorisation: The role of contrast in teaching English /r/ and /l/", Helen Fraser challenges the Critical Period Hypothesis—or belief that adults cannot learn new phonological contrasts—as she extends previous demonstrations (eg. Lively et al. (1994) that adults can effectively be taught phonological categories. Fraser reports an experiment designed to test the effectiveness of explicit use of contrast in teaching the distinction between /r/ and /l/ to Asian learners of English. The experiment uses computer-based training in which users not only receive right/wrong feedback on their perception of English r/l minimal pairs (e.g."fruit/flute"), but are also able to explore the contrast under their own keyboard control. Based on the results of her study, Fraser argues that a shift of perspective from physical sounds to conceptual sounds entails considering the learning of pronunciation as part of a conscious and socially situated context. This inclusion of a concept formation approach in the teaching of sounds calls for a guided exploration of contrasting examples so that learners can establish appropriate phonological concepts and improve their perception and production.

In "EFL Learners' use of oral communication strategies", Hsin-Fei Wu and Christina Gitsaki explore Taiwanese learners' Oral Communication Strategies (OCS), and study how these are related to their gender, age, language proficiency, the frequency of using English in and out of school, and their motivation. Interestingly, while most students in Wu and Gitsaki's study reported that they were learning English to enhance their career prospects, those students whose motivation was to make more friends had the highest frequency of use of OCS strategies. Other reasons for learning English included travelling abroad and personal interest. These results are similar to those in Schmidt's study (this volume), and

highlight the precedence of personal interests over professional interests in students' motivations for learning a foreign language or improving their ability.

In "Student perceptions of native English teachers and local English teachers", Florence Ma adds to the native vs. non-native speaker debate as she examines the "native speaker fallacy" according to which the ideal language teacher is native (see Phillipson 1992). Ma's paper analyses student perceptions of Native English teachers (NETs) and Local English teachers (LETs) in Hong Kong, in the hope of contributing to the discussion of issues regarding non-native speaker English teachers (NNESTs). Ma's study supports Mahboob's (2004) findings that students find both their NETs' and LETs' contributions valuable in their English language learning—e.g. NETs' for facilitating the learning of speaking and listening skills, and LETs' for their comprehensibility and ability to use students' L1.

5. Concluding Remarks

The papers included in this volume are of interest to applied linguists who work in diverse sub-fields. These papers critically review the issues in Applied Linguistics and contribute to and/or challenge some of the current thinking. As such, we believe that these papers will contribute to the field as it continues to grow.

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PART I

CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS

CHAPTER TWO

CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF A NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

MARIA CHISARI

1. Introduction

In October 2007, the former Howard government introduced a citizenship test for immigrants seeking Australian citizenship. Enacted through the *Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill 2007*, the test consists of twenty computer-based multiple choice questions that assess candidates' knowledge of Australian systems, history, culture and values. The government proclaimed that the new citizenship test would ensure that migrants embrace "Australian values" and Australian culture and integrate into Australian society. Prospective candidates prepare for the test by studying the contents of the resource book, *Becoming an Australian Citizen: Citizenship-Your Commitment to Australia*.

   The Australian identity depicted in the resource booklet is one where Australia is a nation with unique, identifiable, core Australian characteristics that hark back to a nostalgic history of the bush, diggers and prime ministerial sports heroes. It is a national identity that is reminiscent of the narratives espoused by controversial historians such as Geoffrey Blainey. It is a national identity that advocates integration rather than multiculturalism. It is an identity that has strong white allegiances and it is one that reveals some "absences" in the narratives of Australia's past. The Australian history portrayed in the resource book not only underplays the nation's multi-lingual and multicultural population but it is also a constructed "Australianness" that does not acknowledge Stolen Generations. This paper aims to problematise the portrayal of Australia's national identity as depicted in the resource book, *Becoming an Australian Citizen,* and suggests that reassurance and integration are key concepts being promoted in the current debates surrounding citizenship in Australia.

2. Background and Theoretical Framework

Recently in Australia, public notions of citizenship are being reconceptualised in terms of promoting the gaining of citizenship as a particular way of being an Australian citizen. According to government discourses, the granting of citizenship now entails adopting and living by a predefined set of "Australian values". These values in turn are purported to represent a unique Australian identity and their adoption promises successful entry into the Australian community.

Many recent studies in sociolinguistics, sociology and political science have explored the multiplicity of public and media texts relating to national identities, immigration issues and citizenship rights (Anderson 1991; Castles and Miller 2003; Elder 2007; Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen and Dawson 2007; Moran 2005; Ware 2007). Many studies employ discourse analytical approaches in order to describe the structures and strategies of these texts and relate them to social and political contexts (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Pillar 2001; Ricento 2003; van Dijk 2000). Similarly, in her analysis of official "rejection" letters relating to family migrant reunions in Austria, Wodak combines her discourse-historical approach with van Leeuwen's critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to "intertextually connect" related genres of discourse and strategies to the history of post-war immigration in Austria, including Austrian immigration laws (1999). This triangulated approach to CDA not only describes discourse as representative of and constituted by social practices but it also reflects hegemonic struggles within societies. This paper also uses discourse analyticial approaches to explore "the knowledge" and language portrayed in *Becoming an Australian Citizen* with the aim to disrupt "commonsense", "mainstream" views about what becoming an Australian citizen entails.

3. Testing Australian Values

The contemporary phenomena of globalisation, mass transmigrations, war, environmental disasters and perceived threats of terrorism have raised concerns about the significance of nationalism in today's world (Jupp 2002; May and Fenton 2002; Weedon 2004). This in turn has heralded a global crisis in citizenship which has brought into question commonsense notions of identity, belonging and nationhood (Weedon 2004). As a response to this "crisis", the Howard government followed trends in nations such as Britain, Canada, USA and the Netherlands and introduced

the citizenship test as a tool for migrants to learn to become "good citizens". The recently elected Rudd government has not challenged the former Howard government's agenda of using a test as a means of promoting a particular way of life, that is, to emphasise a particular way of being Australian. Testing, after all, is the instrument by which those who hold authority and power monitor and investigate the knowledge of those being tested and those wanting entry into a particular field which in this case is the Australian community.

A pivotal requirement of the recently introduced Australian citizenship test is that candidates respond correctly to all three multiple choice questions about Australian values. These values are defined as respect for the individual; freedom of speech, religion, association and secular government; support for parliamentary democracy; equality of opportunity for men and women and under the law; peacefulness, tolerance and mutual respect (Becoming an Australian citizen, 2007). The booklet states that:

> In particular, new citizens are asked to embrace the values of Australia. As important as the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, these values provide the everyday guideposts for living in Australia, for participating fully in our national life and for making the most of the opportunities that Australia has to offer (page 4).

The phenomenon of defining in official rhetoric the values that a nation is to live by is neither new nor limited to Australia. Political scientists have argued that the formation of the nation-state was always based on the concept of shared values (Castles and Davidson 2000). Nor is the practice of relating national values to an established and widely held national identity a new concept. What is interesting in discourses about national values in the current climate is the "commonsense" and universal acceptance that these values imply and whilst they are proclaimed to be unique to a nation, they are also presented as pertaining to some "universal" qualities of humanity.

Through the seductive discourses of "values" such as freedom and democracy, the test succeeds in masking the marginalisation it produces, for example, the fact that refugees have the highest failure rate. As van Dijk argues, these kinds of discourses appear to be so "normal", "natural" and "commonsensical" and

> premised on seemingly legitimate ideologies and attitudes, and often tacitly accepted by most members of the dominant majority group that they become a form of 'ethnic hegemony' (van Dijk 2000, 34).

The resource booklet continues:

> These values and principles reflect strong influences on Australia's history and culture. These include Judeo-Christian ethics, a British political heritage and the spirit of European Enlightenment. Distinct Irish and non-conformist attitudes and sentiments have also been important (page 5).

What is most notable about this passage is the exclusion it implies. By choosing the lexical items, *Judeo-Christian*, *British*, *European* and *Irish*, a description is set up of an Australia that is not inclusive unless you share in the practice of Judeo-Christians and have British, Irish or European ancestry. It is not inclusive of the multitude of cultural and social backgrounds that make up the Australian population. Yet what is more startling is that the sentiments of this passage were expressed in similar terms by the former Prime Minister in the *Australia Day Address to the National Press Club* in 2006, when John Howard stated:

> Most nations experience some level of cultural diversity while also having a dominant cultural pattern running through them. In Australia's case, that dominant pattern comprises Judeo-Christian ethics, the progressive spirit of the Enlightenment and the institutions and values of British political culture. Its democratic and egalitarian temper also bears the imprint of distinct Irish and non-conformist traditions.

Clearly, the resource booklet reflects the same sentiments held dearly by John Howard.

4. There is NO multiculturalism in Australian values

The term "multiculturalism" is nowhere to be found in the resource book as presumably, it does not reflect the opinions or values of its unnamed authors. Instead, there are references made to the Australian population's "ethnic and cultural diversity" and Australia's "cohesive and integrated society" (p. 1) as well as "a society that is stable yet dynamic, cohesive yet diverse" (p. 5). Derivatives of *diversity* and *cohesion* are the preferred terms as are references to integration.

The absence of the term multiculturalism seems deliberate and is controversial when taking into account the significance of multiculturalism

in contemporary political discourses. For over thirty years, multiculturalism has been the driving force in Australia's social policy[1]. Introduced in 1972, multiculturalism was the cornerstone for creating social cohesion amongst the diverse groups of people that came to make Australia their home. Indeed, for many migrants it was the practice of multiculturalism that attracted them to Australian shores. Yet from its inception, multiculturalism has had its staunch critics and by the time of the introduction of the citizenship test, the Howard government had succeeded in downplaying its role in Australian history and had practically removed it from official usage. On November 4, 2006, *The Australian* newspaper reported that the Howard government was attempting to remove the word multiculturalism from public policy; *Multiculturalism is a dirty word* read the headlines. The same practice is influencing the current Rudd government. The new minister of immigration also avoided using multiculturalism when he was asked on the current affairs program, *Lateline* (11 June 2008) if integration was replacing multiculturalism. He did not respond to the question and changed the direction of the discussion.

This shift in policy reveals the government's preference for integration as state policy. In current popular usage, the term *integration* has been redefined and reconceptualised since the original integration policy that followed the abandonment of the assimilation policy in the 1950s and 1960s. The integration that is promoted today has been repackaged as the new philosophy for securing social cohesion and makes strong claims to notions of commonsense and universal support by the citizens of Australia.

Although the resource book states that "Australia's cultural diversity is a strength which makes for a dynamic society" (Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, 7), there is greater emphasis on Australia's British heritage. For example, on page 28, the booklet states, "The founding population of Australia was made up of the English, Scots and Irish".

Describing how most convicts, as well as the free settlers of the nineteenth century, originated from Britain, the extract continues, "Their Anglo-Celtic heritage was the basis of the new nation" (Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, 9). On page 29 we are reminded that throughout the nation's history, "[t]hough national feeling had grown, the sense of being British as well as Australian was still strong". Such remarks do not promote diversity but paint an image of a well-established homogeneous

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[1] In this study, multiculturalism is defined as government social policy that accepts that people of diverse backgrounds have the right to maintain their social and cultural practices in Australian society.

society that built the nation of Australia. The following passage is quite revealing:

> The founding population of Australia was made up of the English, Scots and Irish. They were different people with different traditions and had been in the past at war with each other. The Irish were the most distinct group, separated by their Catholic religion and their bitterness at rule by the English. In this new country the three groups mixed with each other and did not live in separate communities.
>
> On the whole they did not want old-world disputes and bitterness to take root here. Both the Scots and the Irish did not want the English to rule over them and the Church of England soon lost its privileged place in Australia. The Scots were prominent in education and business. The Irish, less well educated, took unskilled jobs but some flourished in small businesses. Their lively spirit made its mark on the emerging Australian identity (p. 28).

There are many interesting readings that can be made from this excerpt. Firstly, the description of different people with different traditions seems to allude to modern-day conflicts between religious sects in nations such as Iraq and Afghanistan. In these countries, populations are divided into Islamic sects. Among these sects there have been wars as there have been with the English, the Scots and the Irish. Yet, the passages suggests that, unlike the current warring factions of Islam, the British counterparts were able to put their differences aside in their newly adopted nation of Australia as "the three groups mixed with each other" and lived side by side in the Australian community.

There is also ambivalence with the portrayal of the Irish in this excerpt. Such a representation has historical links as traditionally there has been conflict between the English and the Irish. In this context, the people of Ireland are portrayed as "different". They are the exotic "Other" with their "non-conformist" and "larrikin" behaviour. There are also negative descriptions. They are represented as the "less well educated" who took "unskilled jobs but some flourished in small business". The use of the conjunction "but" is interesting here as it sets up an opposition. One reading of this, then, is that despite their disadvantage, some were able to succeed. The excerpt also suggests that modern-day groups too should leave behind "old-world disputes" and abandon religious attachments when entering Australian society.

Yet the role of the church and other religious institutions as depicted in the resource booklet is full of contradictions. Australia's desire for a

secular state is reiterated throughout the booklet: "All Australians are free
to follow any religion they choose" (p. 6). This paragraph is immediately
followed by the statement, "Australia has secular government and no
official or state religion". The following paragraph then provides details
about divorce laws and the custody of children and states that bigamy is
illegal in Australia. The association between divorce, child custody and
bigamy seems incongruous unless we contrast these notions with some
stereotypical Islamic practices that are depicted in Western media. These
three paragraphs come under the heading of *Freedom of religion and
secular government*. It is difficult not to surmise that this section alludes to
conservative practices of non-secular nation-states that are considered to
be reactionary and fundamentalist by the "broader Australian community".

　　Yet the claim for a secular state is contradicted on many occasions.
The sentence, "Australia has no official or state religion and all
Australians are free to practise any religion they wish" (p. 13) is
immediately followed by:

> Australia has a Judeo-Christian heritage, and two-thirds of Australians
> describe themselves as Christians… Religious laws are not recognised
> and have no legal status in Australia. Australia uses a Christian
> calendar. This means that days like Good Friday, Easter Sunday and
> Christmas Day are public holidays (p. 13).

On page 16, Christmas Day and Easter are also listed under national days.
It is difficult to understand how the authors of the booklet can claim that
Australia is a secular state and then highlight important days in the
Christian calendar as national public holidays. The message, then, can
suggest that Australia must be emphasised as being a secular state for non-
Christian religious systems. Christian practices are the exception to this
declared secularisation.

　　Reading the resource booklet, a portrayal begins to emerge of a nation
that is secular yet Christian, culturally diverse but with strong British
roots, democratic yet promoting a classless society. It is predominantly a
white society that is promoted. On page 29, the booklet states:
"Australians had also become conscious of the need to keep out the people
who seemed to threaten their new way of life". Similarly, in today's world,
the citizenship test aims to "keep out" the people who threaten the
Australian way of life. The passage continues with an explanation of why
the White Australia policy was introduced: