Language Policy

Brian Clive Devlin
Samantha Disbray
Nancy Regine Friedman Devlin *Editors*

History of Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory

People, Programs and Policies

Springer

Language Policy

Volume 12

The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

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Foreword

The establishment of bilingual education programs in remote Aboriginal communities Australia's Northern Territory during the 1970s was greeted with enthusiasm by educators, who could see their potential benefits for academic outcomes, and Aboriginal leaders, whose many place-based languages are understood to be sacred, their vitality crucial to healthy relationships between peoples and country.

By the late 1970s bilingual programs were flourishing in the remote desert, the savannah lands, and the northern coastal areas, along with intensive 'both-ways' Aboriginal teacher education, and the local production of literature in dozens of languages.

Australian bilingual education became recognised as world-class, nationally and internationally, as local Aboriginal knowledge authorities, linguists, educators, educational anthropologists and curriculum designers worked together to theorise, develop, document and evaluate distinctive local practices of community education, even though from the beginning, only a relatively small number of communities and languages were chosen for program implementation.

This book tells the unique story of bilingual education in the Australian context, its remarkable achievements of intercultural collaboration and capacity development, of research and professionalisation, and of the continuing wider effects of the programs, now that official funding and policy support has largely been withdrawn.

Michael Christie

Preface

For some time I had been thinking of writing a book that would draw on my own experiences of Northern Territory bilingual education over the last 36 years. However, a cruel event prompted an abrupt revision of that plan. On November 6, 2012, three people were killed in a crash between a cement truck and a taxi on a main road in Darwin. In addition to the unfortunate driver, two remote-area school principals were killed. One was Greg Crowe, 71, Principal of Ltyente Apurte School at Santa Teresa, south-east of Alice Springs. The other was Leah Kerinaiua, Acting Principal, of Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School on Bathurst Island, about 150 kilometres north of Darwin. The principals had been on their way to a meeting at the Catholic Education Office. The principal of Murrupurtiyanuwu had been planning to present a paper advocating stronger support for the bilingual program at her school, so several people told my wife and me before we attended the funeral on Bathurst Island shortly afterwards. On the way home in our small plane, Nancy and I grieved over the loss—not only of those in the car accident, but the many friends and colleagues who had worked in bilingual programs around the Northern Territory, but who were no longer alive or very ill.

"We should think about putting together a book that gives those who are still alive a chance to tell their story", Nancy suggested, and so the idea for this particular compiled book was born. My initial project was shelved, and we began contacting a range of people to see if they were interested in contributing. A husband-and-wife team can have some real strengths, but I felt certain that we needed the involvement of a trustworthy scholar who could identify with the vision we had vaguely projected. Samantha Disbray had worked as a regional linguist supporting bilingual programs, after many years as a community and research linguist. She had started to research bilingual education as it evolved for the Warlpiri, and other groups in Central Australia. In 2013, she approached me to seek advice about developing a history of bilingual education in the centre. At our first meeting we found much shared ground. When I proposed that we collaborate, and draw together narratives and case studies from some of the people who had committed their time and energy to the program, she readily accepted. Nancy, Samantha and I have continued to work closely on this project ever since.

Anyone presuming to compile a book such as this needs to have some credibility, some relevant experience in connection with the topic, and some professional ability to address it. Samantha's professional life of language work in Central Australia spans two decades and she has presented and published in this field. Nancy, whose expertise is inclusive and special education, has on-the-ground experience working in bilingual classrooms as a teacher. In my own case I will simply allude to 36 years of involvement in this field, successively as teacher linguist, principal, university-based teacher and researcher, consultant, policy analyst and advocate, and now principal investigator working with Michael Christie, Cathy Bow and others to develop the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages.

Whenever we enter a new discipline or field of study, especially when taking up a challenging cross-cultural role for the first time, we naturally look to sources of guidance and inspiration. In that connection I acknowledge the role played by Joshua Fishman, Jim Cummins, Stephen Harris, Joy Kinslow-Harris, M. Yunupiŋu, R. Marika, Marta Rado, Michael Christie and Beth Graham, in enlarging my understanding of what contribution bilingual education could potentially make in expanding life opportunities for students, parents and community members in remote Northern Territory schools. Some of those who inspired me I am no longer able to thank in person.

Darwin, Australia Brian Clive Devlin

Acknowledgements

We, the editors, would like to acknowledge all people who have inspired, helped and supported us with the writing of this book. First and foremost, we would like to thank many people in remote communities of the Northern Territory, with whom each of us have worked and collaborated over the years.

We would also like to thank all the contributors, as well as their families and friends who commented informally as the chapters were taking shape. It has been a real privilege to work on this book as we have received such warm and responsive feedback along the way. This was true also of the chapter reviewers, who kindly dedicated their time and expertise to critique and improve the chapters in this book. Our thanks go to Rob Amery, Paul Bubb, Jo Caffery, Margaret Carew, Kathleen Heugh, Marilyn and Peter Kell, Margaret Miller, Georgie Nutton, Cos and Sue Russo, Marion Scrymgour, Nick Thieberger, Adriano Truscott, Jill Vaughan and Don Zoellner.

A special mention must be given to Paul Black and Peter Jones for commenting on two different early versions of the whole book. Charles Darwin University and its faculty of Law, Education, Business and Arts in particular provided in-kind support while we were writing. We also received a small grant from the School of Education to cover the cost of designing the maps in the book. Our thanks to Brenda Thornley for producing these maps. Michael Christie and Jim Cummins are also to be acknowledged for their support, and their contributions at the beginning and end of this volume. Chuck Grimes customised a font for us (GentiumPlusAuSIL) so that we could use Yolŋu orthography in a way that is familiar to people in several Northern Territory communities. Finally, we are grateful to Nick Melchior and Ang Lay Peng at Springer for being enthusiastic about the book right from the very beginning.

Contents

Government Support for NT Bilingual Education: A Short Timeline

1950 The Australian Prime Minister and other key officials acknowledged that bilingual education would be 'desirable' for remote Aboriginal students in some circumstances (Devlin, Chap. 2, this volume)

1972 The Australian Government launched a plan to give "Aboriginal children living in distinctive Aboriginal communities … their primary education in Aboriginal languages" (Whitlam, 1972)

1973 The Australian Government set up the first five pilot bilingual education programs in the Northern Territory at Angurugu, Areyonga, Hermannsburg, Milingimbi and Warruwi, acting on advice from the Watts Committee and with considerable assistance from Missionary linguists. The first languages chosen for use in these programs were Anindilyakwa, Arrarnta, Gupapuyŋu, Maung and Pitjantjatjara. Head office assistance was provided from Darwin

1974 Six additional programs were established: at St Therese's (now Murrupurtiyanuwu), Shepherdson College on Galiwin'ku, Oenpelli (Gunbalanya), Yayayi (a Papunya outstation), Yirrkala and Yuendumu (see Table 2.1, Chap. 2, this volume). The languages were Gumatj, Kunwinjku, Pintupi-Luritja, Tiwi, and Warlpiri.

In December Cyclone Tracy destroyed much of Darwin, killing 71 people. Half of the senior Bilingual Education advisory staff left Darwin.

1975 Bilingual programs were commenced at Pularumpi (formerly Garden Point) in Tiwi and English. Experimental oral Kriol pre-school programs were authorised at Bamyili (now Barunga) and Roper River (Ngukurr).

1976 Programs commenced at Barunga (formerly Bamyili) in Kriol, at Haasts Bluff in Pintupi-Luritja, at Numbulwar in Nunggubuyu (Wubuy) and Wadeye in Murrinh Patha (See Table 4.3 in Devlin 2011 for more information).

On August 16 the Secretary of the Department of Education directed that further expansion be limited, that existing programs be consolidated and evaluated. This began a period of consolidation.

1977 New bilingual programs were introduced at Umbakumba in Anindilyakwa and at Willowra in Warlpiri

1978 On July 1 the Australian Government ceded its control over education to the Northern Territory.

A new bilingual program in Ndjébbana commenced at Maningrida.

1979 A Pitjantjatjara-English bilingual program began at Docker River.

1981 A bilingual Pintupi/Luritja program commenced at M'Bunghara Homeland Centre and Watiyawanu (Mt Liebig).

1982 Lajamanu (formerly Hooker Creek) began a Warlpiri-English bilingual program.

The NT Department of Education revised the eight aims of bilingual education (see McKay, Chap. 8, this volume), shifting the focus to English literacy and Mathematics.

1983 Wa̲lungurru (Kintore) began a Pintupi/Luritja program. Yipirinya became an official independent Aboriginal school with bilingual programs in Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri and Western Arrarnta.

1984 At Papunya a Pintupi-Luritja program was started.

1986 Maningrida added a second bilingual program in Burarra.

1987 A Pintupi-Luritja program recommenced at Watiyawanu (Mt Liebig).

1989 Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) began a bilingual program in Eastern Arrernte.

1996 A Nunggubuyu (Wubuy) program was re-established at Numbulwar.

1998 On December 1 1998 the Northern Territory Government (NTG) announced on that it would be phasing out specific purpose funding for bilingual education programs. This decision was strongly contested.

1999 A review of Aboriginal education (Collins and Lea 1999) was commissioned in response to the outcry which followed the NTG's 1998 decision. Some bilingual programs were discontinued. Others were rebadged as 'two-way learning' programs.

2005 The Northern Territory Government announced in August that it was putting bilingual education back on the agenda (Devlin 2009)

2006 The Education Department developed a strategic plan which aimed to expand the Bilingual Program (NT DEET 2006).

2008 On September 12 the first set of national skills test results (NAPLaN) were released. On October 14 the Minister for Education and Training announced that all schooling in Northern Territory schools was to be conducted in English only for the first four hours of every school day. Step-model biliteracy programs would no longer be supported. All schools were directed to teach in English for the first four hours of every school day.

2009 The NT Government introduced the 4 hours of English policy. All schooling in Northern Territory schools was to be conducted in English only for the first four hours of every school day, including pre-schools where Aboriginal students understood little or no English (Devlin 2011; Simpson et al. 2009)

2015 The Northern Territory Department of Education appointed a Bilingual Education Coordinator to oversee remaining programs.

On May 15 Country Liberals Government launched a 10-year Education Strategy, introducing the US-based Direct Instruction program into remote NT Aboriginal schools.

Note Interested readers are advised that a much more detailed timetable of events is available online at fobl.net.au.

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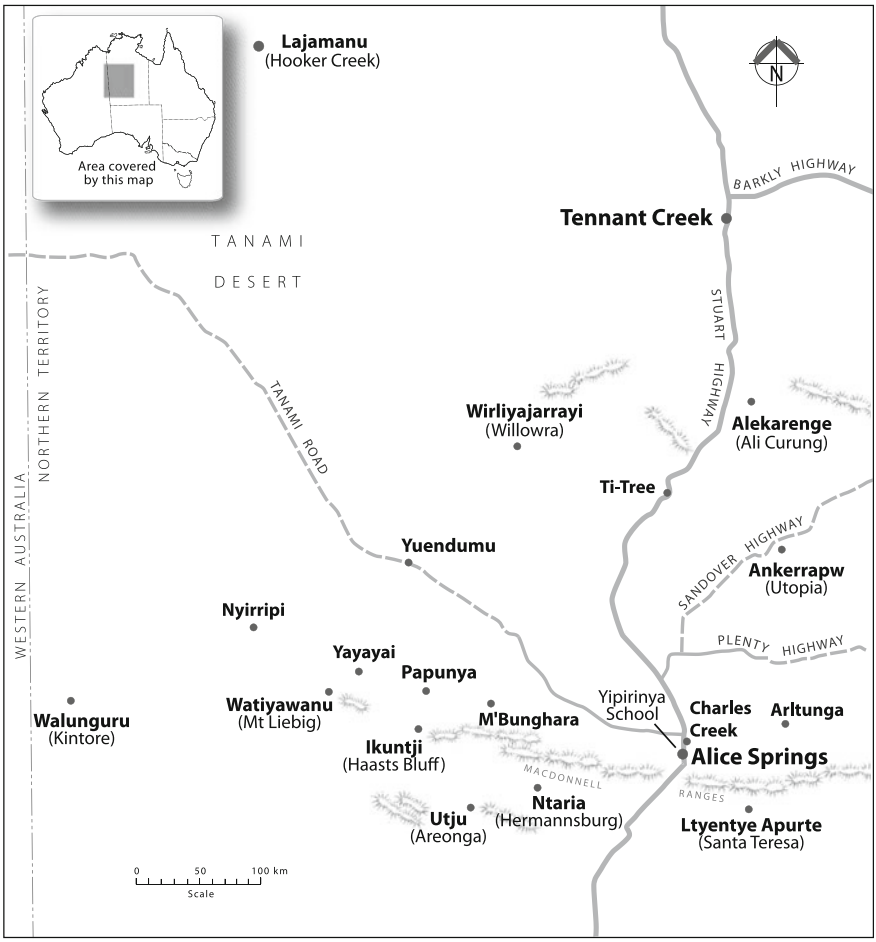
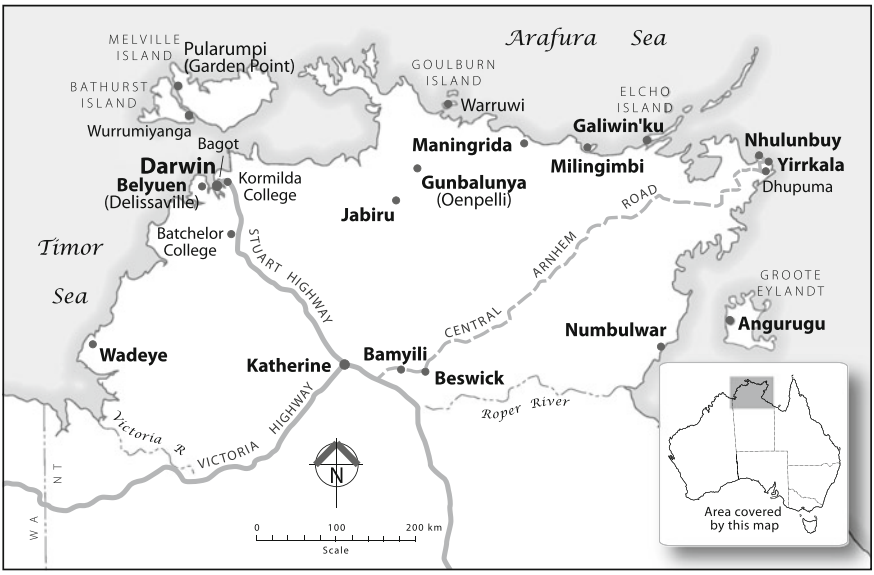


Map 1 Central Australian region



Map 2 Northern NT region (or 'Top End'), Australia

Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Brian Clive Devlin is Honorary Professorial Fellow at Charles Darwin University. Formerly Associate Professor of Bilingual Education and Applied Linguistics at CDU, he was also Visiting Professor and first holder of the Dr. R. Marika Chair in Australian and Indigenous Studies at Cologne University, Germany (October 2009–February 2010). He is now helping to build a digital archive of the texts produced in the Literature Production Centres (LPCs) during the bilingual era of education in the NT (see www.cdu.edu.au/laal). In the 1970s and 1980s he worked as teacher-linguist, principal and principal education officer (Bilingual) in the Northern Territory Department of Education. His research interests include the use of vernacular languages in educational programs, interactive e-learning for isolated communities and bilingual education policy in the NT.

Samantha Disbray is a Research Fellow at Charles Darwin University and the Australian National University, researching language in education and carrying out language documentation in the Northern Territory. She has worked as a community and research linguist in Central Australia and has carried out language documentation and resource development work with speakers of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal languages. While employed as regional linguist for the Northern Territory Department of Education, she supported schools with bilingual and Indigenous language and culture programs. From this experience she became fascinated with the history of the bilingual program, and its place in the history of education and languages policy in Australia.

Nancy Regine Friedman Devlin is a lecturer at Charles Darwin University in the School of Education. She works primarily with students in the professional teaching degree programs. Her areas of interest are focused on providing an education for students that will enable them to have choices and feel good about themselves. She joined CDU in 2002 to help establish certification for students interested in

education support due to her long time association working with teaching assistants in government and non-government schools, in bilingual and special education programs in Australia and the United States. She has also taught in China, Germany and Papua New Guinea.

Contributors

Neil Bell was a head teacher and teacher-linguist in the bilingual education program at Areyonga school from 1975 to 1981 when he became the local member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. After retirement from the legislative assembly, his legal practice and associated interpreting work have involved several matters affecting the Areyonga community.

Catherine Bow is a linguist with research experience in both descriptive and applied linguistics. She has described the sound system of an African language, investigated language development in children with impaired hearing, explored endangered language documentation, and researched the language and communication needs of international medical graduates. She has worked as a trainer and coach for language learners, and currently works as project manager for the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages at Charles Darwin University.

Wendy Baarda started work as a post-primary teacher in Yuendumu school in 1973. The bilingual program started in June 1974. She was given a position with the title, Coordinator of the Bilingual Program for 2 years. Since then she has been employed as teacher-linguist, senior teacher early childhood, outstation teacher, and mentor until retiring as an Education Department teacher in 2005. She continued to work voluntarily in the printer and also supporting singing of Warlpiri songs in classes. She then was given a shared position of literacy worker. She is now employed by the school council to continue this work.

Deminhimpuk Francella Bunduck belongs to the Kardu Yek Neninh clan. Her own language is Magati Ke and she is also a speaker of Murrinhpatha—the language of her mother, her husband and children. Deminhimpuk worked as a teaching assistant at OLSH Thamarrurr Catholic College, Wadeye then trained at Batchelor College and later obtained a teaching degree through Charles Darwin University. She has been teaching in the vernacular side of the bilingual program at Wadeye for about 20 years and continues whilst also working as a writer in the literature production centre.

Therese Carr worked as a teacher-linguist at Numbulwar 2003–2008. It was the first time she had lived and worked consistently by the sea and she thoroughly enjoyed learning about the coastal foods and lifestyle, as well as an exciting new language. Before that she worked in Western Australia, first with language workers on small community-based language projects for the Kimberley Language Resource Centre, then supporting school-based language revitalisation programs in remote Kimberley communities. After completing further research studies with an

in-depth study of Wunambal, she taught in Batchelor Institute's Diploma of Languages and Linguistics program.

Michael Christie started work as a teacher at Milingimbi in Arnhem Land in 1972. He was appointed as the first teacher-linguist when the bilingual program started in 1975. He took up the position of teacher-linguist at Yirrkala in 1986 before moving to Darwin to set up the Yolŋu Studies program at Charles Darwin University in 1994. He is currently Professor in the Northern Institute, heading up the Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance research group, working on collaborative research and consultancies in a range of areas including health communication, 'both-ways' education, resource management, digital technologies, and contemporary governance.

Jim Cummins is Professor Emeritus at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. His research focuses on literacy development in educational contexts characterised by linguistic diversity. In numerous articles and books he has explored the nature of language proficiency and its relationship to literacy development with particular emphasis on the intersections of societal power relations, teacher-student identity negotiation, and literacy attainment. He is the author (with Margaret Early) of *Identity Texts: The Collaborative Creation of Power in Multilingual Schools* (Trentham Books).

Leonard Freeman has worked in Indigenous community schools in the Northern Territory as a classroom teacher, teacher-linguist and principal. He began teaching at Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School in 2005 before taking up the position of teacher-linguist, then principal at Areyonga School. In 2011 Leonard moved to North East Arnhem Land, where he was school Principal of Yirrkala School and then Baniyala Garrangali School. Leonard recently completed a thesis as part of Masters of Education (International) at Charles Darwin University, which confronts and exposes the flaws in the 'evidence', which constructs the deficit positioning of the Indigenous-language-speaking students within today's education system.

Kathryn Gale is currently working as the Head of School at Melbourne Indigenous Transition School (MITS) and has previously worked as an Education Advisor in the Stronger Smarter National Partnerships Program at Independent Schools Victoria. She has worked as a teacher, teacher-linguist, education advisor, cross-cultural trainer and training manager in primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as in non-government organisations. She has worked across three states, and has over 40+ years' experience in education.

Mary-Anne Gale is a research fellow at the University of Adelaide, working in language revival, particularly with Ngarrindjeri people of southern South Australia. In recent years she wrote training courses for Aboriginal adults wanting to learn and teach their own languages. She has experience as a teacher or teacher-linguist in Northern Territory bilingual schools, where she acquired skills and understandings about Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal education, working with Yolŋu people at Milingimbi and Yirrkala schools, and Warlpiri people at Willowra. Mary-Anne

has also learnt much working with Pitjantjatjara people, the last remaining fluent Aboriginal language speakers in South Australia.

Beth Graham began teaching Indigenous children at Yirrkala in 1963. Returning in the early 1970s she worked with a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers to implement bilingual education. In 1979 as a Bilingual Education adviser she focused on the early years of schooling, publishing widely and developing curriculum in all areas. Postgraduate study enabled her to extend, clarify and consolidate this work. Throughout these years she refined a team teaching model to empower Indigenous teachers and enable more effective student learning. Her *Team Teaching* handbook allowed schools could do their own professional development. After retirement she still campaigns for bilingual education.

Dorothy Gapany has lived and worked at Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island all her life. She worked at Shepherdson College for a number of years. She has also helped Alan Maratja, husband and Margaret Miller on bible translation for many years. For the past few years she has been working as a liaison officer in a program for children from birth to school age. As well as this she has been continuing her religious studies at Nungalinya College in Darwin. She is the mother, grandmother and great grandmother of many children and is a highly respected member of her local community.

John Greatorex began teaching at Shepherdson College, Galiwin'ku in 1978, later working as specialist ESL teacher, teacher-linguist and Assistant Principal. After leaving the Northern Territory Education Department in 2003 he was appointed Coordinator of the Yolŋu Studies program, Charles Darwin University (CDU). In 2015 he left CDU and continued working as a member of a team collaborating with Mäpuru families to establish a school. He has a particular interest in schools, schooling, education and governance in contexts in particular where Yolŋu are living on their ancestral estates.

Noela Hall has over forty years' experience in education in two states. She has worked as a teacher, teacher-linguist, teacher-librarian, tutor, study skills advisor and lecturer in Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education contexts. She taught at Shepherdson College on Elcho Island for 11 years between 1972 and 1985 and returned to teach there again from 2008 to 2015. Highlights of her teaching career have been opportunities to work with Yolŋu teachers, seeing their delight as they have become more confident in their ability to express themselves through their developing ability to read and write in their 'very own' languages.

Inge Kral has some thirty years' experience in Aboriginal education as an educator and researcher. She worked as a teacher-linguist in bilingual education during the 1980s and 1990s. She started work at Yipirinya School in 1987. She has been a researcher at Australian National University for the past decade where her research in linguistic anthropology has mostly taken place in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities in the Western Desert of Australia. She is now a Research Fellow at

the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and the Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language.

Graham McKay carried out linguistic research to establish the Ndjébbana Bilingual Education Program at Maningrida, NT from 1975 to 1982. He then trained Aboriginal literacy workers at the School of Australian Linguistics in Batchelor NT until 1985. He taught linguistics at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia 1986–2011. He is currently Dean of Humanities and Education at St John's University of Tanzania, with a concurrent honorary appointment at Edith Cowan University. His publications include studies of the Rembarrnga and Ndjébbana languages of Arnhem Land, a review of Indigenous language maintenance in Australia, and papers on Indigenous languages policy.

Dorothy Meehan taught early childhood classes in Melbourne. In the Western Highlands of PNG she was involved in Enga vernacular literacy and ESL programs in the primary school, and Pidgin adult literacy classes. As teacher-linguist at Barunga in the NT she coordinated the setting up of the Kriol Bilingual Education program. In Darwin at Kormilda College she was a language/literacy advisor. After retiring in 1997 to take care of her father, who had Alzheimer's, she helped with the home-schooling of her grandchildren. She remains keenly interested in the increasing recognition of Aboriginal creoles and of current developments in their use in the classroom.

Meg Mooney was the last Literature Production Supervisor for the Pintupi/Luritja bilingual program for Papunya, Mt Liebig, Kintore and Haasts Bluff Schools. She was based at Papunya School from 1987 to 1990. Since 1998, Meg has worked for Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs, from 2002 working on Land & Learning, which supports the teaching of Indigenous ecological knowledge linked to Western science in Indigenous community schools. Meg has worked with Land & Learning in remote community schools all over central Australia. She was originally a geologist and is also a poet.

Frances Murray began working in the NT in 1978 at Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic Bilingual School. She has worked as a teacher, teacher-linguist, lecturer in teacher education, curriculum advisor and writer/developer, across primary, secondary and tertiary education in government and non-government school sectors. She currently works as an education consultant in multilingual education, providing professional development for teachers in English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D), teaching in bilingual education and cross-cultural training, as well as school policy development and planning for inclusive practices for minority-language-speaking students.

Ngardinithi Tobias Nganbe is a Rak Kirnmu man whose language is Murrinhpatha. He worked as an assisant teacher and then trained at Batchelor College and later obtained a teaching degree through Charles Darwin University. Before the bilingual program began at Wadeye he did a literacy course with the SIL and wrote much contributing to the pre readers, primers and other reading material that was used at the beginning of the program. He worked as a teacher and later

became co-principal for a number of years before becoming head of Culture and Language at OLSH Thamarrurr Wadeye up to his retirement three years ago. He is now the CEO of Thamarrurr Development Corporation.

Ailsa Purdon has been working in multilingual and intercultural education for nearly 40 years in Australia and overseas as a teacher, curriculum consultant and teacher educator. She is currently based in Darwin, Northern Territory and is working on policy and curriculum for the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in the NT.

Tess Ross worked in the bilingual program at Yuendumu for over 20 years. She has taught at every level in the school from early childhood to secondary age classes. She resigned from school after losing her sister and worked for Night Patrol for about 10 years. She has been back at school working as a literacy worker for the last three years. Tess is a very knowledgeable and respected woman in Warlpiri communities.

Philippa Stansell has been working in the Northern Territory, in remote Indigenous community schools, since 1998. She was first employed as a teacher linguist in the Warlpiri language maintenance program at Wirliyajarrayi (Willowra) in the Tanami desert. She then transferred into the same role at Numbulwar, on the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, within the Wubuy language revitalisation program. She currently works with Early Years students in Mangarrayi country, at Jilkminggan, on the banks of the Roper River.

Trevor Stockley is a Gumatj speaker who worked for 14 years at Yirrkala and Laynhapuy Homeland schools (NT), focusing on Yolngu control, the inclusion of Yolngu knowledge in a balanced curriculum, implementing Yolngu ways of working, and community-based teacher training. He currently works in North Queensland as a specialist in Aboriginal languages, teacher and program writer for the Warrgamay and Gudjal language revival programs.

Petronella Vaarzon-Morel (M.A. Indiana University) is an anthropologist with long-term experience working with Indigenous people in Central Australia. Her association with Warlpiri began in 1976 when she taught with Jim Wafer at Willowra School. Since then she has worked closely with Willowra families on land claims, oral history (*Warlpiri Women's Voices*), cultural mapping and other Warlpiri life projects. Currently, she is Research Associate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the University of Sydney, where she is working on the Central Land Council cultural media project. She is also a lecturer in anthropology and Indigenous art at New York University Sydney.

Jim Wafer began working with Aboriginal languages in 1976, when he and Petronella Vaarzon-Morel worked at the two-teacher Warlpiri school of Willowra, 350 km north-west of Alice Springs. From 1978 he coordinated the Language Program at the Institute for Aboriginal Development, in Alice Springs, then in 1981 moved to the USA to study anthropology at Indiana University, graduating with a

Ph.D. in 1989. He is currently a conjoint senior lecturer at the University of Newcastle and co-author of *A Handbook of Aboriginal languages of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory* (2008).

Teresa Ward locally known as 'Namapen', is the teacher-linguist at OLSH Thamarrurr Catholic College at Wadeye. She worked at Wadeye (then known as Port Keats) from 1978 to 1983, and again from 2009 to the present. Previously at Bathurst Island she produced 'Toward an Understanding of the Tiwi Language/Culture Context', contributed to a Tiwi dictionary, and initiated the collections which for Patakijiyali Museum. She also spent 12 years in Timor Leste, with the Mary MacKillop East Timor Mission, working on a Tetun literacy program for primary schools. Tess trained as a teacher then studied linguistics with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and missiology and anthropology, and applied linguistics at Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University).

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Chapter 1
A Thematic History of Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory

Brian Devlin, Samantha Disbray and Nancy Devlin

> We are extremely impressed with the Northern Territory Bilingual Program—so much so that we are inclined to assert that this program constitutes one of the most exciting educational events in the modern world. It is, of course just the beginning and had a long and difficult road ahead of it. However, an increasing number of dedicated and highly competent Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people are becoming committed to the program and devoting the total range of talents to it.
>
> O'Grady and Hale (1974)

In 1950 Robert Menzies, then Prime Minister of Australia, was party to a little known, high-level agreement which acknowledged that in some circumstances a bilingual approach in education might be the best way to reach more traditionally oriented Aboriginal students in remote areas of the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia. Some 23 years later a second prime minister, Gough Whitlam, publicly announced that he was endorsing this approach, and wanted to see it implemented. This set in motion an eventful sequence of developments. Five pilot programs were initially set up. By 1995 there were 21 programs in individual schools operating (Northern Territory Department of Education 1997). Now only a handful of programs are left. Some would go further and say that the 'Bilingual Education Program', the coordinated, territory-wide initiative that was managed by the Bilingual Education Unit staff in Darwin is now finished (see Graham, this volume).

This book traces the history of bilingual education in the NT. In a period of great educational innovation and enthusiasm 29 schools in the NT designed and implemented bilingual education programs in local Aboriginal languages and English. Some endured, others were short-lived. Surviving or thriving in different places and at different times, they were variously celebrated, nurtured, castigated and/or abandoned. Most were administered by the NT Department of Education. However, bilingual programs also ran in a number of Catholic schools and in one independent school.

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The thematic history in this book draws together local perspectives of practitioners and researchers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. These are sometimes aligned with, sometimes at odds with, top-down education policy that set the parameters for action. The fine-grained local accounts detail bottom-up aspirations, achievements and reflections, which have been little documented until now, but are crucial to a full understanding of the diverse motives and meanings that have guided different players, and the deep contestations that would eventually lead to the demise of most bilingual programs. For the NT Education Department, bilingual programs were deemed the best way of delivering learning for Aboriginal children in remote schools, within the limits of the resources it was prepared to commit to the task. They were designed to allow students 'the best of both worlds', underestimating the complexity of such a vision (Department of Education 1973; Northern Territory Department of Education 1986). The committed efforts of many educators, language workers, administrators, linguists and community members, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, are a critical part of this history, and their accounts are detailed in the chapters that follow. They provide important insights into teaching and learning, as well as the challenges in developing effective bilingual education programs.

The history of bilingual education must be set as part of a larger story of Aboriginal people's struggle to take back control of their lives, to express and live their own identities, and to organise their communities according to their values and aspirations. The active involvement in education that bilingual education programs afforded Aboriginal people was an important manifestation of this transformational moment in Australia's history. Schools were a site for Aboriginal adults, not only to take an active role in educating their children, but also to take up meaningful employment, as well as leadership and authority roles. This larger struggle was for the right to choose to use their own languages in formal education settings, to retain and pass on knowledge and cultural practices, which were all part of determining how they should live as Aboriginal people.

The bilingual education movement in the NT was made possible by forward thinking writers and policy makers in the 1950s and 1960s and it came to the fore in an era of Land Rights, the outstation movement and the establishment of Aboriginal corporations, which provided housing, infrastructure, health and legal services for Aboriginal people (Burgmann 2003). The radical change in Australian Aboriginal Affairs policy from assimilation to self-determination created new ideological and implementational spaces for innovation in language policy (Hornberger and Johnson 2007, discussed below) along with other domains. It was part of a larger national, indeed international, movement with social and ideological shifts evident in the 1960s, triggered by decolonisation movements in the Third World and Civil Rights movements in the First World (Clark 2008). Just as these global moves allowed the openings for bilingual education in Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory, later global shifts, both political and economic, such as the rise of neo-liberal economic policy, and the consequent emergence of a 'culture of accountability' (Biesta 2004), posed challenges to bilingual programs in remote Aboriginal schools.

This book is organised chronologically and thematically, with the early period of bilingual education set as an 'establishment phase', followed by a period of 'consolidation', then as pressure mounted against the program, a 'resistance' phase. In the final section, chapters offer reflections across time, to the present and into the future. However, a number of themes cross cut the historical periods, increasing in prominence for different stakeholders at different times. These include human rights, maintaining language and culture and staff development along with different notions of a good education, defined by the Education Department as one that provides the best of both worlds, along with academic performance and relatedly accountability and financial sustainability.

A Thematic History Told Through an Ethnographic Lens

Many of the chapters in this book reflect an ethnographic approach to language policy; that is, one which is situated, systematic, and grounded in long-term, in-depth, first-hand accounts which aim to uncover the situated logic of implicit and explicit policy making (McCarty 2011, p. 3). They explain, on the ground, "why practice takes shape the way it does" (Stritikus and Wiese 2006, p. 21). The complex historical moves of practice and policy that we observe in bilingual education efforts in the NT are the outcome of multiple, intersecting levels; not only do they result from the interactions between diverse individuals and ideological positions, but they are inevitably linked to the actions and orientations of disparate communities of practice, and the discourses and actions on the national stage as well as global forces beyond (Combs et al. 2011; McCarty 2011).

Policy involves action and power, underpinned by different players' ideological positioning of particular languages, their value and their speakers, which often create and reveal contradictions and tensions between policy and practice. Policy can be the decisions and decrees made from the 'top-down', but also the responses and actions from educators and language speakers from the 'bottom up'. The chapters in this book explore these levels and their intersections, in some cases theorised by the author, and in others this is implicit in the personal/professional practitioner account.

Critical approaches to language policy and planning emphasise power dynamics. Tollefson, for instance, posits language policies "as mechanisms for creating and sustaining systems of inequality that benefit wealthy and powerful individuals, groups, institutions, and nation-states" (2013, p. 27). Furthermore, dominant-group language ideologies act as templates, which policymakers use to justify policies that restrict educational access, and privilege particular ethnolinguistic groups, assigning value to certain language practices, to certain languages and their speakers, with resultant 'invisible' discourses and policies that keep less prestigious languages and their speakers invisible (cf Blommaert 1999; Shohamy 2006; in relation to Australia, Truscott and Malcolm 2010).

Other research has investigated decentralising practices such as the power of educators and other language policy actors to develop and satisfy local policy goals (Flores and García 2014; García et al. 2008; García and Menken 2015; Hornberger 2002, 2005; Hornberger and Johnson 2007). Such approaches capture both the power of institutions and the agentive role of local educators, language speakers and others, as they respond to the settings they encounter (see the studies in García and Menken 2010, 2015). In the NT, moves to develop local curricula and supporting materials and to take up leadership roles in schools are instances of this (see chapters in Parts 3 and 4). Educators themselves open up learning opportunities by recognising, respecting and drawing on the identities, language repertoires and multilingual practices of learners and developing new responses and practices (Flores and García 2014; Gutiérrez et al. 1999). Team-teaching and the development of Aboriginal pedagogy provide examples from the NT bilingual program (in this volume, see in particular Graham, Murray and Hall on team teaching and Disbray and Devlin, Christie and Purdon on local Aboriginal pedagogies).

However, the relationships and practices teachers created at the local level were perennially fragile. In many cases, programs were so often subject to the whim of school principals. Menken and Solorza (2015) have investigated the role of school administrators in shaping language policies and practice, noting that "principals in particular wield tremendous power in determining programming for emergent bilinguals. [… and that] school leaders act as gatekeepers for reform policies, playing a vital role in their translation, interpretation, support, and/or neglect in schools" (p. 18). Similarly, Johnson and Johnson (2014) detail the dynamics in the micro-meso-macro levels in language policy and practice processes. They investigate the implementation of bilingual programs at the school district level in response to state-level policy in one US education jurisdiction and highlight the role of 'arbiters'; administrators and officials at the different levels, as distinct from educators. The attitudes, power and agency of district-level administration staff is found to be pivotal in the implementation of programs.

Theorising the interactions between multilingual policy, competing discourses and actions, Hornberger and colleagues draw on a model of 'ideological spaces' and 'implementational spaces' (2002, 2005; Hornberger and Johnson 2007). Ideological spaces contain attitudes, understandings, awareness and discourses, which can be triggered and promoted or restricted by multilingual language and education policies. Pro-multilingual and minority language education and languages policy in South Africa and Bolivia, for instance, open ideological spaces for multilingualism, while the enactment of the 2002 *No Child Left Behind Act* in the US, with its monolingual focus, closes this space (Hornberger 2005, p. 606; Menken and Solorza 2015).

The space in which practice takes place, the 'implementational space', informs and is informed by ideology. Implementational space extends "beyond the classroom […], at every level from face-to-face interaction in communities to national educational policies and indeed to globalized economic relations" (Hornberger 2005, p. 606). Both educators and language users are agents in the interaction between the two spaces, as they can

> fill up implementational spaces with multilingual educational practices, whether with intent to occupy ideological spaces opened up by policies or to prod actively toward more favorable ideological spaces in the face of restrictive policies. Ideological spaces created by language and education policies can be seen as carving out implementational spaces at classroom and community levels, but implementational spaces can also serve as wedges to pry open ideological ones (Hornberger 2005, p. 606).

The situation for bilingual education in remote NT schools is no less complex, with competing discourses, players and system elements creating, opening and closing spaces for bilingual teaching and learning.

The Northern Territory: History and Languages

The NT is a vast, ecologically and linguistically diverse area of Australia. It covers an area of 1.33 million km^2, and includes the arid zones in Central Australia, the semi-arid and sub-tropical plains of the Barkly region, and the tropics in the north, a region dominated by a wet/dry season climate (Williams et al. 2001). Of its 227,900 inhabitants 30 per cent are Aboriginal, the highest proportion of Aboriginal people in any of Australia's states or Territories. Approximately 140,000 inhabitants live in one of the four urban centres (106, 255 in greater Darwin, 24,208 in Alice Springs, 6,094 in Katherine, 3,061 in Tennant Creek (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011). Most of the remaining population lives in remote and very remote communities, where Aboriginal people continue to live on their traditional country or places their forebears were affiliated. Some were forcibly moved in the early settlement of the NT. The distances between communities, and between communities and regional centres, can be hundreds of kilometres, accessible only by dirt road, or light aeroplanes for parts of the year. Remote community populations overwhelmingly comprise local Aboriginal people. A small proportion of non-Aboriginal people live in these communities, usually for relatively short periods of time, to access employment. Some, such as a few non-Aboriginal authors in this volume (Wendy Baarda, John Greatorex, Noela Hall, Teresa Ward, and Michael Christie) have lived for decades in these communities.

The history of colonisation in the NT is relatively short. Early explorations took place in the 1840s–1860s, with Darwin established as a permanent settlement in 1869, just as the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line began. Completed in 1871, this line ran north to south, linking Darwin in the north to Port Augusta on the coast of South Australia (Reynolds 1987). The expansion of the pastoral and mining industry in the inland followed with disastrous impacts for many Aboriginal people (Jones 1987). The history of frontier conflict and massacres is recent and in many locations people were forcibly resettled, often among speakers of unfamiliar languages (Read and Read 1991). Many Aboriginal people managed to stay on their traditional country in remote locations, with less contact and incursion than in more urbanised locations, thereby supporting the continued use of traditional languages.

According to the NT Interpreter Service, more than 100 Aboriginal languages or dialects are currently known or spoken (Aboriginal Interpreter Service 2015). Rates of bi-/multilingualism in Aboriginal languages in the NT are significantly higher than elsewhere in Australia, due to the relatively late patterns of European settlement, and the remoteness and isolation of much of the NT, whereas many Aboriginal languages and their speakers were decimated across Australia. In 2015 of the 14 languages still spoken by all generations and by more than 900 people in Australia, 12 are in the NT (Biddle 2014). Most are languages that were used for instructional purposes in bilingual education programs. However, the impacts of colonisation have meant that many languages, including these 'strong' ones, have undergone language shift and change.

The Northern Territory was still very much a frontier province when the bilingual program started. In 1974 its population was just 105,000, falling temporarily to 90,000 in 1975 after a devastating cyclone razed the Territory's capital, Darwin, in December 1974 (Population Studies Group 2008). In locations outside of the main towns infrastructure was undeveloped, with few covered roads, and communication limited to a communal radio, a weekly mail plane and no television transmission. The colonisation of remote Northern Territory was relatively late and gradual, as was the introduction and spread of formal education. In many areas the first schools were established in the 1940s, initially by missionaries. Government schools did not start until 1950 and gradually spread. In some sites schools opened in the 1980s. Initially government schools were under the control of the Commonwealth government, and after self-government for the Northern Territory was declared in 1978, this shifted to the Territory government. Thus the NT Bilingual Program was founded by the Commonwealth government and effectively inherited by the NT government.

Parts and Chapters

This book is divided into four parts, which are organised chronologically and thematically. Each begins with an anchoring chapter to provide a thematic thread throughout, and to link the diverse and fine-grained case studies in the volume to the history of the bilingual education program. Inevitably, there are gaps: in the geographic spread, the treatment of prominent themes and the array of contributors. Many expert and committed people have worked in schools with bilingual education programs in the NT. It is hoped that this book may encourage them and others to research this rich and important period of Australia's history.

Part 1, 'Starting out', covers the events and influences that guided the inception and early developments of bilingual education in the NT. It spans the period from the lead up to the first NT Education Department programs in 1973 to the end of that decade, when the programs began to consolidate. The anchoring chapter by Brian Devlin sets the scene. Beth Graham documents the beginnings of the team-teaching method at Yirrkala, which would provide teachers with an essential and enduring framework for the fledgling program across the Northern Territory. Petronella