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Demystifying Grammar: Rethinking language awareness for teacher education

Final report 2016

Deakin University

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List of acronyms used

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language or Dialect
ESL	English as a Second Language
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
KAL	Knowledge of Language
LOTE	Language/s other than English
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching
SFG	Systemic Functional Grammar
TEMAG	Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group
TESOL	Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Executive summary

This report describes a project, supported by the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), that addresses the question 'what kind of language awareness do teachers need to meet the stated goals of the new national curriculum, and how can this be integrated into teacher education?' Language-related components of Australian teacher education courses were reviewed, and interviews were conducted with pre-service teachers and teacher educators in Victoria and Queensland about their views and experiences of language issues in education.

The current environment for pre-service teacher training in Australia is framed by a new national curriculum in which knowledge of language (KAL) has been emphasised. In recognition of Australia's increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2011) made it explicit that all teachers will be required to provide pedagogy that responds to the language learning needs of students whose first language is not English, regardless of whether these teachers have had formal language teacher training or not. For teachers to be able to do this, they need knowledge of the structure of English, of how both first and second languages are learned, and some awareness of pedagogy that scaffolds second language learning. Awareness of these, it is argued, would enhance self-confidence for dealing with language in areas also beneficial for mainstream students for whom English is a first language.

The new curriculum for subject English outlines in reasonable detail the features of English language that should be the focus of each year level in primary and secondary education. The curriculum has been informed by language specialists, who have suggested that an effective approach would be to include elements of both traditional and functional grammar in teacher training, but there is much debate about how this could be achieved (Adoniou & Macken-Horarik, 2007). The ACARA document does not, however, specify in detail how teachers of other content areas could be enabled as language-aware teachers, nor does it explicitly state what kinds of knowledge about language would enhance their capability to respond to English as an additional language (EAL) students. In some UK and Australian studies, lack of knowledge about language is shown to be related to lack of confidence in dealing with it in classroom situations (see Cajkler & Hislam, 2010; Petraki & Hill, 2010).

Research over the past two decades into the acquisition of additional languages has also revealed much about the social and cultural nature of language (e.g. Ortega, 2009), and the connections between language and culture are emphasised in the findings reported here. This project then aims to identify what kind of language awareness training should be included in pre-service programs for Australian teachers of all content areas.

This project and its report are intended primarily for university academics and particularly those involved in the planning and delivery of teacher education courses. The factors influencing enhancement of teacher education are complex, particularly in Australia with its urban and rural contexts, and diverse groups of speakers of other languages, groups which include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as migrants. Added to this complexity is the surfeit of accreditation requirements imposed on teacher education programs and the running commentary by state and federal governments and media on

teacher education students. When all factors are considered, it is not possible to offer a one-size-fits-all approach, but the report does offer directions toward best practice through a review of current course content, the initiation of dialogue about language among educators of different disciplines, and through feedback from pre-service teachers.

The report is presented over five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the project and presents its scope with a brief review of relevant literature. Chapter 2 reports on what language-related components are currently included in the Australian teacher education curriculum through a review of a sample of courses. This is followed by a brief discussion of relevant teacher education practices in a small sample of countries held to be successful in promoting highly literate and language-aware teaching workforces. Chapter 3 reports on the views of pre-service teachers who were interviewed about their experiences with language in their own schooling and in teaching practicums. Chapter 4 reports on the views of teacher educators, from a range of discipline areas, who were interviewed about their views of language in their content area, and how the teacher education curriculum should cater for this. Finally, Chapter 5 summarises the findings, discusses the implications of the study, and details the dissemination activities to date.

The project found that policy change in regards to language in education over recent decades has led to confusion and inconsistency in dealing with language in both primary and secondary schooling. It is suggested that language-specific modules, containing cultural elements, be included as core units in the education of teachers of all disciplines, linked to a stronger practicum component ('unit' being typically a one-semester subject of between 20–35 hours). Language studies units are offered widely in teacher education, but are rarely compulsory outside English or modern languages major or minor methods. This seed project presents exploratory findings. An investigation involving more content areas and more contexts, and especially including the views of in-service teachers and English as an additional language (EAL) students themselves, would increase the understanding of how the design of language-related units relates to positive outcomes in the inclusive classroom.

Chapter 1: Introduction and scope of project

Australia's new national curriculum is attempting to address the need for mainstream teachers working with EAL learners to develop substantive knowledge of curriculum design and ways of implementing courses. This includes knowledge about language, understanding the nature of spoken and written language, knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation (Hammond, 2012). There is in Australia a significant and growing number of students for whom English is a second or additional language, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, migrants and refugees. The need for teachers of any curriculum area to be language-aware is crucial in the interests of equity and social cohesion (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Rushton, 2008). Development in language awareness would respond to the national professional standards for teachers – specifically, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards 1: *Knowing students and how they learn*; and 3 *Planning for effective teaching and learning*.

Responses from the teaching community to the ACARA guidelines include suggestions from some teachers that language development is an issue for teachers of all discipline areas, and this is little addressed in other curriculum proposal documents. There is a challenge in providing support for all teachers to develop the necessary knowledge about language and literacy to enable them to embed language and literacy teaching across the curriculum. Derewianka (2012), Hammond (2012), Jones and Chen (2012) and others have pointed out that current practice is still in danger of furthering a deficit model rather than a language resource model.

Recurring themes in the literature are: a) inadequacy of teachers' grammatical knowledge, (see Christie, 2010; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 2001; Harper & Rennie, 2009); and b) the preparedness and confidence to teach grammar in the contemporary manner advocated in the new curriculum (Hammond, 2012; Jones and Chen, 2012). The current situation in Australia is mirrored in other English-speaking countries. In the United Kingdom, for example, a large survey concluded that there are still 'far too few teachers of English with an adequate grounding in the linguistics of English' (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, p. 613). New Zealand English teachers (Meyer, 2008) have also shown a fragmentary knowledge about language. The situation is similar in Canada, where a survey of 400 pre-service teachers (Williams, 2009) revealed that problems with understanding of language limited their capacity to comprehend how children learn about and through language.

Petraki and Hill (2010) surveyed Australian teacher confidence in teaching grammar in primary schools, high schools and private academic institutions, and found that 47 per cent of teachers surveyed felt underprepared and lacked confidence when teaching grammar. They also found a significant number (55 per cent) felt that grammar teaching would be beneficial both integrated with other skills and on its own, and crucially, one particular type of grammar is not adequate preparation for teaching language. Similar issues have been identified in the UK: Cajkler and Hislam (2010) found that anxiety in pre-service teachers when explaining grammatical points or difficulties in class remained high, due to the tension between public expectation and what it is possible to achieve during training. They concluded that any hasty, haphazard re-introduction of 'grammar' could cause greater confusion than the ill-considered flight from grammar teaching in the 1960s.

Different grammatical phenomena can be explained using different grammatical theories. Focusing on one particular approach to grammar does not prepare teachers adequately for scaffolding student language development. The perceived danger is that many Australian (English) teachers work with traditional and functional grammars but often in a haphazard fashion. In a project in progress, Macken-Horarik, Love and Unsworth (2011) argue that English teachers need new *kinds* of knowledge about language. They are investigating different kinds of praxis and the language awareness this inculcates in teachers. Exley and Mills (2012) also conclude that the new curriculum might draw upon the complementary tenets of traditional Latin-based grammar and systemic functional linguistics across the strands of Language, Literature and Literacy in innovative ways.

In this report the terms *knowledge about language* (KAL) and *language awareness* are used interchangeably; this is common practice in research of this nature. As Cenoz and Hornberger (2008) point out, these terms are broader in scope than terms like 'grammatical knowledge' or 'metalinguistic awareness', which refer more narrowly to structural components. This project argues that a broader approach to language places structural elements in social and cultural contexts, which are more meaningful to the field of education as a whole. The placing of 'grammar' teaching within the larger concept of 'language awareness' (Garrett & James, 2000), aims to dispel the notion of grammar as a rarefied area of study for language specialists, and posits language awareness as a concept accessible to all users of language. This project therefore investigated understandings of language awareness through understandings of the mechanisms of language, which include but are not restricted to traditional grammar and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) approaches. Through interviews with teacher educators and trainee teachers, it examines their views of current practice, and also their views on how best practice could be achieved.

Scope of project

This project involved the participation of teacher educators in two states, Victoria and Queensland. The states have some differences in their traditions of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and it was important to attempt to reflect this. A request for participation was sent out to pre-service teachers in a Bachelor of Education course at Deakin University. Nine student teachers participated in recorded interviews, exploring their experiences related to subject English in their schooling, learning other languages in school, and their current awareness of language in relation to study and practicum experiences. Twelve teacher educators from two universities, Deakin University, Victoria and Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane were approached and interviewed about their understandings of language, how it was manifest in their discipline area, and what language-related aspects they felt were most beneficial in the education of teachers. The research team leader has worked at both these universities. Sample interview questions are given in Appendix B.

Part of the language emphasis in the new national curriculum can be said to respond to a perception frequently posted in the media that a significant portion of graduates who enter the teaching profession have substandard literacy skills in English. However, it needs to be said at the outset that the literature is clear that being literate and being language-aware are not necessarily the same thing. Literacy is usually taken to refer to being resourceful and

effective in (especially) reading and writing in one's own first language, whereas language awareness refers to explicit knowledge about language systems, oral and written, knowledge that is particularly useful in the learning of additional languages. A reason for confusion may be that language awareness is often equated with knowledge of traditional grammar, and the literature is clear in a long list of studies (see Wyse, 2001) that knowledge of traditional grammar does not lead to improvement in literacy *per se*.

This project report provides a snapshot of current content for language awareness in teacher education and suggests course enhancements. Through the views and experiences of the participants, issues reflected in the literature are explored and unpacked. An expanded project exploring the views and practices of in-service teachers, the experiences of EAL learners, as well as a wider range of contexts for pre-service teachers and discipline areas would shed even more light on this crucial area.

Chapter 2: Knowledge about language in initial teacher education

The first phase of the project investigated how knowledge about language is represented in Australian initial teacher education (ITE). A sample of Bachelor of Education programs in 10 Australian universities was reviewed for their language-related content. The chosen universities had substantial teacher education courses and represented ITE across most states of Australia. Relevant units tended to fall into three strands:

1. Language and literacy, typically with a functional language focus (emphases on actual uses of language and the structures used to achieve certain communication goals) including genre, targeting mainstream English for native speakers.
2. An EAL focus, typically including how second languages are acquired, social variation, and language structure, morphology and phonology.
3. Linguistics, theoretical or applied. These types of units may or may not have a pedagogical focus (for example, educational linguistics).

For benchmarking purposes, related aspects of teacher education were reviewed in a small sample of other countries.

In Australia, the debate about what kind of knowledge about language should be part of ITE has informed the new national curriculum for subject English as well as English as an Additional Language. Less evident in the curriculum is how language may be addressed in other curriculum areas. There is a growing body of literature on pedagogy for the language features of other discipline areas (See Alford & Windeyer, 2014; Herzberg, 2012). However, this area of language and content knowledge is not referenced in the relevant parts of the Australian curriculum.

University teacher education programs are addressing language in a variety of ways, and there is reason for cautious optimism. However, there are certain constraints on the development of language awareness in new teachers. The first is the 'crowded curriculum', as for some time, teachers in Australia (especially primary) have been concerned about the amount of content required to be covered. A second constraint is that language units in ITE tend to be optional for those not taking a major or minor in English (or a modern language); if a language-related unit is included as a core it tends to be from the language and literacy strand.

From the findings of this project, it is claimed that an effective way to equip teachers with useful language knowledge for catering to EAL learners is to combine features of additional language learning (which typically includes language structure to clause and sentence level) with functional language approaches at the more extended textual levels. In the samples, some units from the language and literacy strands dealt with EAL issues, but not in great depth.

The following is a brief report on Australian courses, beginning with examples of language-related units at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). In the Bachelor of Education

(B.Ed) program, one unit in introductory studies of language relates to practical issues with language faced by teachers, and is complementary to the languages/literacy type of study, although it is optional outside English major/minor areas. The rationale is that pre-service English language teachers require a solid foundational understanding of the nature, complexity and diversity of language. This unit is designed to enable students in the initial years of their course progression to gain insight into various aspects of language that impact on teaching and learning in schools.

The actual unit topics are as follows: the language basis in current approaches to the teaching of English; nature and function of language; the dynamics involved in classroom interaction; the educational implications of linguistic diversity within the community; sociocultural variables, including gender and class, and their impact on language use; and an introduction to traditional and functional grammar.

A key statement in the content description is: *understanding of the connection between language and culture will inform analysis of these issues, and a discourse/critical literacy approach will be adopted.* The connection between language and culture arises in the discussions with pre-service teachers as well as teacher educators, and there is a suggestion that this connection may help bridge the gap between complex technical terminology and a deeper appreciation of language.

At QUT, 'grammar' in the language and literacy strand is addressed by a unit that looks at the theoretical and pedagogical implications of grammar in the classroom. The unit descriptor states the need for teachers to have systematic knowledge of language and how it works. In much of Australia this systematic approach to describing language comes principally from the systemic functional school of linguistics (Exley and Mills, 2012; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

QUT also offers an optional EAL-focused unit that emphasises the value of language and content integration as 'across-the-curriculum' skills development. It also includes intercultural competence, the refugee learners' experience, and assessment issues for second language learners in the mainstream.

An innovative and interesting development at QUT has been the compulsory inclusion of a new unit that addresses language and culture, with a second language focus as related to indigeneity. It complements a *Culture Studies* unit that focuses on the relationship of mainstream Australia to its indigenous culture. The new unit extends this to language, with enhanced EAL content that applies also to migrants and refugees.

The units selected above are a reasonably typical example of the approaches offered in the samples explored. The approaches in the various language strands represent different traditions of language education, and this report argues that differences in perspectives on language should be complementary and should inform each other. The varying traditions can in part be attributed to differences in professional and cultural experience; for example Teaching of English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) teachers typically spend time living within other cultures, and also often enter the teaching profession through an industry-based rather than academic (university) course (Neilsen, 2009).

In the sample of Australian ITE courses examined, there is more consistency in the language/literacy components (that is, an organised approach to functional grammar), than in additional language-related units. Some language and literacy units include limited EAL focus, and EAL-type units often include some functional grammar. Some other universities (such as Deakin University), while including language and literacy, also include theoretical linguistics in teacher preparation, with rather dense linguistic concepts such as phrase and clause structures that may be somewhat inaccessible to first year students.

The University of Sydney combines language strands in a unit titled ***Language, Literacy and Diversity,*** and combines three aims: to provide the skills and understandings for the effective teaching of English as a second language (ESL) students; to give a background in teaching reading and writing to all students; and to develop an understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and diversity in schooling. Another unit offered by this university reflects the large number of international students that come to Australia: *Teaching International English.* This unit acknowledges the different pedagogies that may apply in students' countries of origin, and claims to inculcate strategies for dealing with this.

Other universities offer specialised units in the EAL area that reflect current trends in research. The University of Melbourne offers *Language and Identity*, which reflects the 'social turn' in linguistics; and The University of Western Australia has the only *Educational Linguistics* unit encountered in the sample. Its stated aim is for solid linguistic principles for training TESOL and Language/s other than English (LOTE) teachers, but is also recommended for teachers of any subject who have a strong interest in language and a desire to understand the use of language in the classroom. An interesting stated outcome, highly relevant to the theme of responding to EAL learners, is that student teachers will be in a better position to ensure the unambiguous delivery of their course material, understand linguistic and sociolinguistic differences among students and assist students in their language development.

Macquarie University offers *Exploring English* which draws on a view of language as a 'social semiotic'. It moves from basic, traditional concepts in English grammar to looking at the grammatical choices made by users of English in a variety of contexts. This university also offers *Language as Evidence*, the only unit of its type found in the sample, which builds an understanding of corpus use and language samples. It aims to integrate material covered in previous units, helping students understand how their program of study fits together as they approach graduation.

In summary, units covering language-related areas are present at most universities in Australia and New Zealand. Units offered include structural and (sometimes) cultural aspects of language. Units falling into the language and literacy strand with a mainstream focus have a functional grammar orientation, and may include some EAL focus. Units with an educational linguistics or EAL focus were not found to be compulsory in discipline areas outside English or modern languages. Only one core unit, *English Literacy and EAL***,** was found to have a more balanced combination of approaches, and this was at Victoria University in New Zealand. The next section offers a brief look at some issues related to language in teacher education in other countries.

ITE in other contexts

Every country has many contextual, historical and cultural aspects that affect teacher education. Adapting practices from other contexts must take into account a diverse range of factors. This section takes a broader view of issues that influence language awareness as part of a teacher education curriculum. An overview is given here of relevant ITE features in countries comparable with Australia.

Canada shares many linguistic and cultural issues with Australia, in that it has a continuing flow of non-English speaking migrant children from diverse contexts that need to be integrated into the school system. However, Canada differs in that it has a nationally integrated context for Teaching English as a Second Language, that of Quebec. Much pioneering work has come out of Canada as a result of research into French-language immersion schools. Immersion programs are shown to be very effective in creating language-aware students, and have also existed in Australia since the late 1980s.

The UK introduced its own national curriculum in 1988 with an emphasis on language, after its own 'grammar wars' (Clarke, 2010). A new version of the curriculum was implemented in 2014, with grammar firmly embedded. The UK has professional teacher standards similar to the AITSL standards in Australia. ITE is still typically the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), a one-year course after a Bachelor degree. There are many similarities to Australia in course components, and the presence of language-related units with parallel titles. Also featured are units offering orientation to other educational contexts, particularly Europe.

Ireland has similar teacher education programs to the UK, but St. Patrick University, Dublin has an interesting core component of teacher education involving the relationship between play and language: *Play, Language and Learning in the early years*. This unit teaches a range of strategies to support and promote young children's oral language development and thinking, including working with music. Another core unit concerns literacy education in the early years, of which the key components of a balanced language and literacy framework for the early years of education are identified and evaluated. It also emphasises the integrated nature of language learning.

South Africa's linguistic and cultural diversity has an impact on its teacher education. Cape Town University has a comprehensive core unit *Language in Multilingual Schools*, which theorises additional language learning in multilingual contexts. This includes an overview of the global and local contexts of English language learning, language ideologies, theories of second and bilingual language acquisition, and of classroom discourse.

Finland and Germany both have highly successful systems, and they show some interesting differences in teacher training from the other countries explored here (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Simola, 2005). Finland is often held as a shining example of success in literacy outcomes (Faridi, 2014). Faridi reports that teaching in Finland is a 'trusted profession' that is highly competitive to enter. There are virtually no elite schools. Pedagogically, a high degree of flexibility occurs, rather than a top-down approach, and teachers are required to engage in continuous professional development throughout their careers. Literacy in the early years is not fostered by teachers alone, but by a multi-professional approach also

involving caregivers and communities. More than half of pre-school children are able to read. Other societal factors also support this – for example, Finnish is rarely spoken outside Finland, and much of its film and television is in other languages. Instead of dubbing, subtitles are used, which encourages reading.

The country is also officially bilingual (Finnish and Swedish) and historically there is a context of two very different language systems. There are still concerns around finding a balance on teaching grammar skills. There is a strong grammar tradition and teachers feel that grammar teaching starts too early (Ranta, 2010). Other concerns include a high load of homework and, as in Australia, overly expanded syllabi – the crowded curriculum.

In Germany, teacher education is divided into two stages, a course of higher education and practical pedagogic training. The recent Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) report (Australian Government, 2014) in Australia suggests a strengthened practicum component along these lines. Teacher education courses are offered at both universities and teacher education colleges. Training at the teacher education colleges is in the hands of experienced teachers (lecturers or heads of department), who are typically freed from some of their own educational duties to teach at the colleges, or are even seconded to a teacher training college fulltime for a limited period. Teachers at schools who are identified as particularly highly skilled both professionally and methodologically are responsible for instructing trainee teachers in schools in the practicum experience (Lohmar & Eckhardt, 2013).

A more in-depth analysis of language-related teaching in other countries could reveal more insights to inform the Australian curriculum, and would indeed be included in a larger project. For the purposes of this project, the above has presented a sample of the kind of ITE content that aims to raise the language awareness of pre-service teachers in Australia. It is evident that a wide range of language-related content is available in ITE; mainstream English units tend to be more consistent in content and approach than EAL strands, and they are also more likely to be core units. From the examination of various courses, it is concluded in this report that a combination of approaches in a core module across ITE nationally would be beneficial. The next chapter looks at the experiences of pre-service teachers in their own schooling, in university courses and in practicums, and also examines their beliefs about language, as belief is a strong indicator of practice (Borg, 2003).

Chapter 3: The experiences with language of pre-service teachers

For this project, nine out of a proposed 10 pre-service teachers made themselves available for interview. This sample size was considered adequate for the scope of a seed project, which sought to establish general themes from language-related experiences through in-depth interviews. The sample also included both recent school leavers and mature students, providing a balance of perspectives. All were drawn from years one to four in the Bachelor of Education course. Five were in the primary education strand and four in secondary; the secondary trainees were doing either a major or a minor in English. They had all completed at least one practicum in a Melbourne school.

Semi-structured interviews of 45-60 minutes took place either in private spaces in person or by telephone and were recorded and transcribed. The participants' comments were organised under five pre-identified categories. The findings from each category are summarised below. The categories correspond to the interview questions, which sought to identify factors that contributed to their awareness of language and understandings of how they would respond to language issues in classrooms. The five categories are:

1. Learning subject English at school
2. Self-perceived language awareness
3. Learning another language at school
4. Language-related experiences in school practicums
5. Beliefs about language education needs

1. Learning subject English at school

Students were asked to relate their experience of subject English during their own primary and secondary schooling. Several reported that there was some basic work on traditional grammar in upper primary years, but little in the middle years of schooling. There was an apparent gap in attention to language (although there was a literature focus) and when language work reappeared in upper secondary years, it was mostly genre-based.

The responses represent changes in the English curriculum that encouraged more creative self-expression in the 1980s, but then gradually brought back more textual examples for the purposes of critique. The younger students reported a 'grammar gap' where grammatical notions were refocused from primary to secondary (from traditional to functional) but the prevailing sense was of grammar as something 'hard'. They seemed to be equating the linguistic or structural side of language as a kind of 'difficult' or 'hard science' approach.

2. Self-perceived language awareness

A number of the students had taken language/linguistics-type units as electives, and some as a compulsory unit. In a number of cases, their experience of the units provided a stimulus to discuss their current awareness of traditional grammar. The mature students cited the time between leaving school and returning to study as responsible for the gaps in their grammar knowledge, but the overall impression was that they had never studied the structure of language in great detail. One student teacher demonstrated a wider awareness of language – that rules are not fixed, that language itself is subject to change, and the concept of thoroughly 'knowing' a language, even one's mother tongue, is open to question.

In summary, the pre-service teachers mostly equated language awareness with grammatical awareness, and many had to be prompted during the interview to make connections with pragmatic or cultural aspects of language. However, some referred to a growing realisation that the cultural aspects of language were interesting and important, and this connection with the cultural side of language learning 'de-stressed' them to an extent. There was a sense that they realised grammar was only one part of knowing about language, but a useful one for helping EAL students. These realisations eroded the notion that a lack of knowledge of grammar equated to some kind of deficiency in literacy.

3. Learning another language at school

It can be argued that the process of learning a foreign language is a powerful means of acquiring greater language awareness, through the challenging engagement with different linguistic systems (Flowerdew, 1998). The process models for the student the difficulties encountered (after puberty) for all levels of language performance, from pronunciation to grammatical structure. The research literature since the 1990s has also pointed to the need for a focus on contextualised grammar (Ellis, 2006), certainly for adult learners of an additional language. The question of languages teaching in Australia is a challenging one however, and a wider discussion of languages education is beyond the scope of this project; its relevance here is that language learning experience may enhance language awareness to an extent.

The general findings were that school language learning experiences lacked depth and consistency. Several respondents referred to languages in school as 'not treated seriously' or 'a bit of a bludge'; one referred to the value of second language learning for grammatical knowledge that she was unaware existed. Others reported the 'rote learning' practices of older, more traditional teachers as a boring experience. Traditional grammar, without any context, was essentially meaningless.

It is also worth pointing out that many migrants come from bilingual or multilingual contexts, giving them more advanced intuitive language awareness than many of their monolingual teachers. Students with a heritage language are an unrecognised language resource. A commonly reported occurrence in migrant families is that parents may encourage their children to make more efforts to learn the language of the host culture at the expense of the mother tongue – a deficiency model of bilingualism, critiqued by

Cummins (2000) and Cummins and McNeely (1987). If parents do not encourage learning of the home language, social issues may arise from the resulting problems with intra-family communication. One pre-service teacher recognised this issue and gained a sense of empowerment from making efforts to learn her parents' language

The current environment of languages education in Australia is more positive now than for many years previously, and policy statements such as the Victorian Vision for Languages Education (Victoria State Government, 2013) promise to put languages firmly back on the agenda. However, the main challenges remain the lack of qualified LOTE teachers who are also proficient in designated languages, and the monolingual mindset of native speakers of English.

4. Language-related experiences in school practicums

Critical moments related to language in practicum experiences were key to pre-service teachers' understandings of the language issues faced by EAL students. Participants reported that the schools where they did practicums did not have significant numbers of EAL students; the schools also had no specialist EAL teachers (with one school excepted). The assignment of pre-service teachers to experienced mentors should be a valuable experience. However, what the respondents reported was at times critical and very telling about attitudes to EAL students – or foreign languages – in schools. All expressed a sincere wish to be able to 'cater to all types of student', and one of the mature pre-service teachers critically assessed the lack of flexibility of some in-service teachers, pointing to a need to be able to recognise different learning styles and develop responsive pedagogy. One respondent was disturbed by stereotyping treatment she observed. An East Asian boy in the class was discussed as if he was not present, and assumptions were made that he must be 'good at maths' because he was Asian.

Two recurring issues influencing classroom teachers emerged in the interviews: the feeling that 'different' students take up more time, and that inclusivity policies pressure teachers to lump these 'different' students together, for example, EAL students with students that exhibit learning disorders. The recognition of cultural differences in the classroom presented extra challenges.

Pre-service teachers may not yet be skilled observers of pedagogy, but they are interested observers who usually have the opportunity in practicums to focus on specific areas. The experiences of working with actual learners of English as an additional language led them to empathise with the students and made them critical of some of the ways language (and cultural) issues were handled. These recalled experiences naturally prompted questions about what they felt they needed to know to be prepared to deal with language in the classroom.

5. Beliefs about language education needs

There was some division of opinion on the depth of structural knowledge needed by pre-service teachers. Some felt strongly that grammar should be understood by all teachers – and connected knowledge of it to being able to help students with both oral and written expression. One expressed precisely what all respondents seemed to feel, that all teachers are language teachers whether they like it or not.

It should be restated at this point that all the respondents felt they did not have enough grammatical knowledge about their own language. They had also completed the first two units of a suite of four linguistics-based units, units that included dense linguistic information, which is perhaps overwhelming to those who have not had much exposure to grammar in school. The challenge of the units was to an extent mitigated by the assessment, which reflected the cultural aspects of language difference. They had to do a case study of both a learner of English, and a speaker of a different variety of English. Some pre-service teachers had elderly relatives who came from another country that they used for the case study, and for some this personal connection was reported as building awareness. What tended to happen was that they had impressions of the total person as a language user first, and then they noticed subtle points of difference, in the use of different words or phrases, then of different phonemes. The social and cultural aspects of the whole person seemed to provide a bridge, or give meaning to the more detailed linguistic knowledge, and the metalanguage. There was also a stronger realisation that language is a cultural phenomenon.

The responses suggest there is a need for teachers to know structural metalanguage and other linguistic elements such as phonological basics, but that these should be presented in context. Knowledge about language boosts personal confidence and confidence in dealing with language in class. This knowledge has been fostered in the English subject curriculum through a new model that combines the functional with the traditional, yet to be responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students, practical pedagogic elements need to be included. As has been seen, both elements are there in training, but EAL-focused courses that include basic structure as well as cultural elements are rarely core units, whereas language and literacy units sometimes are; these use functional grammar approaches with cultural elements and sometimes EAL, but the end result is often that pre-service teachers see them as two separate areas. They could be combined in meaningful ways, and this combination could be reflected in assessment.

Chapter 4: The views of teacher educators

In this chapter, the views of teacher educators on language in ITE are discussed. The original intention was to ask teacher educators to provide details of language training components in ITE courses. This was found to be unnecessary, as unit descriptions were easily found on university websites. It was then decided to increase the sample of teacher educators to be interviewed from five to ten, giving the opportunity to present a wider spread of views from various discipline areas. Subsequently there was considerable interest from educators in both Melbourne and Brisbane, and the number then increased to twelve. They were interviewed, in person or on the telephone, for approximately 60 minutes each. They represent the language disciplines (EAL, language and literacy, and LOTE) and also science education. They also represent both primary and secondary education, as well as early childhood.

The interview data were organised into six categories reflecting the sample interview questions for teacher educators (see Appendix B). The categories were chosen on the basis that the views of language and culture of teacher educators, together with their understandings of current policy and pedagogy, would reveal important implications for teacher education for language awareness.

The categories are:

1. Policy issues (EAL or LOTE)
2. Challenges for teachers (pre-service and in-service)
3. Views on current language-related education
4. Views of language
5. Culture and language
6. Views about language support needs (for EAL or mainstream)

1. Policy issues

EAL

Interviewees' comments on policy are considered first as the policy environment is the framework that both in-service and pre-service teachers work within. The current policy around EAL in schools is that English is taught within the content areas of the regular curriculum, to avoid contrasting environments (Harklau, 1994). There is still some specialist provision for those with beginner or elementary proficiency, but overall the number of EAL specialists has diminished in recent years. One teacher educator pointed out the value of maintaining a sizeable core of additional language specialists given the diverse nature of Australia and its school students and communities. There exists a reasonable amount of resource material directed at content teachers who are not language specialists (e.g. Gibbons, 2002; Paul, 2014). However, for content teachers whose own language awareness

is not developed there may be limited benefits. Most educators saw EAL as a situation that needs to be accommodated, as much a part of professional responsibility as any practice for inclusivity. There was some criticism of NAPLAN assessment as 'muddying the experience of inclusiveness', and as subsuming many agendas in education. Several of the interviewed teacher educators saw the way NAPLAN construes grammar as problematic and not research-based, and also criticised this assessment system for not articulating through diversity.

LOTE

The point was made in Chapter 3 that learning a foreign language in a consistent and meaningful way can enhance language awareness significantly. There is now significant support from some states and the federal government for languages education, but challenges remain. There are good intentions but some negative outcomes. The lack of specialist teachers is a recurrent theme, as is the stop-go approach regarding what is being supported, which can send out very mixed messages. The LOTE educator interviewed advocated a paradigm shift, as the way of thinking advocated by Michael Clyne, (see Clyne, 2005) which focused on the cognitive benefits associated with learning an additional language, is not persuasive enough. Another factor limiting interest in LOTE is the widespread use of English as a global language, removing to an extent the economic and social needs to learn another language, despite the economic repositioning of Australia within Asia.

2. Challenges for teachers

For language-aware cohorts of teachers to emerge from ITE, it seems reasonable to assume that these teachers should have effective literacy skills. It has been shown in studies since the 1960s that there is no evidence that traditional grammar instruction improves literacy *per se* (see Andrews, 2005; Wyse, 2001). However, there are questions of credibility if teachers exhibit sub-standard literacy skills. Several teacher educators were of the opinion that an increased awareness of language and some of its structural elements would have a beneficial effect on confidence in usage. The question is, perhaps, what depth of structural knowledge is useful. There was a perception shared by all the teacher educators interviewed, that the level of literacy, usually identified as the ability to communicate effectively through writing, is unacceptably low among many undergraduate students. Therefore setting a good example for standards of written communicative competence is an issue of responsibility to their future students – a bottom line. One teacher educator suggested implementing a regime where students self-identify and design self-development plans to enhance their literacy skills. Another echoed the need for structural knowledge, and knowledge of the corresponding metalanguage, but saw the connection of these to the genre approach as beneficial, as student teachers are never prepared for the low levels of literacy in some of the classes they teach.

Communication between the language and the content areas is a central theme of this project. Collaboration between EAL specialists and content teachers has been dealt with extensively by Arkoudis (2006), Creese (2002 and 2005), Davison (2006), Davison and

Williams (2001), and De Jong and Harper (2005). Although the teacher educators in this study all saw the need to connect language and content, some resistance towards attempts to address language awareness in the curriculum was reported. Some pre-service teachers saw attention to language as irrelevant to their content area. Pre-service teachers may rate language issues lower on the importance scale given the amount of pedagogical concerns they have to deal with in the 'crowded curriculum', with the result that feedback on language issues in the classroom is not always reported to teacher educators supervising practicum units.

3. Views on current language-related education

Views of teacher educators about language education naturally reflected their areas of expertise. There was general support for the enhanced preparation in ITE for EAL students, but an integrated approach was seen as having challenges. One EAL educator claimed that language across the curriculum was in a more positive pedagogical space than it had been for some time, with certain reservations; she cited the example of the core unit in a Queensland university (referred to in Chapter 2) that addresses the language needs of indigenous learners, in the past unrecognised as EAL learners of standard English, as well as those of migrants and refugees.

On the other hand, an Early Childhood educator reported current gaps in attention to language within the Early Childhood curriculum, citing the recognised importance of language development in early years. She reported that second language learners are not catered for in current pre-service units in Early Childhood education, although modules have addressed this in the past. A doctoral student she supervised studied four teachers in a multicultural community in Victoria and asked them what they knew and understood about theories of first and second language learning and how that influenced their practice. The student found that the teachers could not articulate any theories about language learning and that the practices that they were using were not specifically targeted towards supporting language.

Another educator pointed to two major disadvantages for EAL students. The first is that they are often not supported in English literacy in their home environment, as their parents may have low proficiency in English. The second problem relates to the inconsistency of practicum experiences; placement regulations were not always applied rigorously. In theory pre-service teachers should have practicum experience in a wide range of schools, so that they may observe socioeconomic difference and diversity and how these affect educational outcomes. In practice this doesn't always happen, so some teachers never see difference, and remain unaware of the problems with language and literacy in some social sectors.

One language and literacy educator reported an interesting innovation. To give a richer language experience, he had taken his students to schools to put language and literacy pedagogy in context. He instigated the practice of pre-service teachers' posting of thank you notes to the students they taught, specifically to recognise what these students had taught them about language.

4. Views of language

This section presents and discusses the teacher educators' perspectives on language in their discipline areas. Although all saw language as central to teacher education, there were naturally subtle differences influenced by discipline fields. EAL educators claimed a connection between knowledge of linguistics as a subject and the enhancement of pedagogy, a view endorsed by Denham and Lobeck (2010). The critical role of language in learner developmental stages was emphasised by others; several cited its role in the creation of social connections and relationships. One also highlighted the connection between oracy and literacy in development, and felt that this was not being addressed enough in teacher education.

Two Science educators acknowledged the central role of language in their field, but included wider semiotic representations in a broader concept of language, including charts, tables and other representations. Assessment for them does not always have to be declarative, but can also be represented in gestures, roleplays, diagrams or drawings.

Within the language strands, there were many shared perceptions. The main differences, as reflected in the curriculum, are that language and literacy educators tend to have a deeper grounding in functional grammar, and EAL educators and LOTE educators, may have a deeper structural knowledge. Educators within all three strands showed frustration with how language is currently perceived in schools, and even by parents, despite the more positive spaces promised by the new curriculum. The LOTE educator felt that negative perceptions about EAL or LOTE as disciplines were still common in schools; being either a language or EAL teacher was a 'hard, ungrateful job'. In addition she felt there was still a deficit model perspective on the part of EAL parents who won't speak in the first language to their children because they feel that their children 'wouldn't get enough exposure to English'.

A language and literacy educator reported his practice of beginning one lecture in the course by speaking in an Aboriginal language that he knows. The point he is making with this practice is that the scaffolding of English as an additional language has to take into account linguistic rights, and this is also an important reason for all teachers to be able to respond to linguistic differences.

5. Culture and language

Linguistic rights are closely connected to cultural rights. Responding to EAL students' language needs is an issue of inclusivity, and cultural difference also needs to be taken into account when considering ways of learning. Relationships between teachers, students and parents differ from one culture to another; as an example, students may be reluctant to voice their needs to an authority figure such as a teacher, resulting in loss of input. The student is then 'invisible' in Australian culture; the idea of passivity as negative can create assumptions.

A language and literacy educator at Deakin University, who has a Tongan parent, believes notions of inclusivity are often misunderstood; there can be misguided attempts to ignore difference, a kind of 'colour blindness'. She cites her own experience as a student and later as an educator. She found it odd that her ethnic origin never came up in conversations even in informal social settings, or if she brought it up herself it was ignored. Another educator extended this 'misplaced inclusivity' idea, pointing to the paradox whereby Pacific Islanders, just as Indigenous Australians, have not been recognised as EAL speakers, who speak a variety of English but nevertheless need scaffolding in the standard language norms to achieve academic success. The results of ignoring difference can lead to attitudes that still persist, that speakers of other varieties of English are somehow substandard learners of language. One educator actively attempts to dispel notions like these when she takes groups of pre-service teachers for practicum teaching experiences in the Northern Territory; student teachers quickly realise how linguistically flexible and competent members of the local communities are.

A deficit view of bilingualism or multilingualism is still evident in some sections of the teaching workforce. Significant work has been done on the importance of mother tongue development in enhancing second language competence (see Cummins, 2000), yet the benefits of involving mother tongues in the learning process often remain unrealised. An early childhood educator was researching school communities in the western suburbs of Melbourne, mostly with Vietnamese families. Teachers were complaining that they were not able to involve the community as they had been encouraged to do because parents wouldn't come into school and read to younger children, because they couldn't read in English. The teachers did not recognise the value of parents coming in and reading in their own language to Vietnamese-speaking children, to foster story-telling and grow an oral community.

Encouraging student teachers to realise the diversity that exists in Australia can enhance cultural awareness, as students realise that in many cases they and their families are part of that diversity. When cultural awareness activities are undertaken, there is increased understanding that no one is in any sense 'pure' anything, and that most actually have a much broader cultural background than they first thought. Gaining such awareness is another positive step in recognising that linguistic difference also reflects cultural difference, and that learning about such differences is a rich experience.

6. Views about language support needs (for EAL or mainstream)

The final section reports on how teacher educators believe language awareness can be enhanced in the curriculum for future cohorts of teachers. There is a sense that the question has begun to be addressed, but that results are so far intangible or inconsistent. There was broad support for putting more structural knowledge of language in the pre-service curriculum with the condition that such grammar is taught in context. One educator presented a common view that good language teaching is for everybody, not just international or migrant students. She cited a report that one university in the UK was putting all of their first year students through a compulsory specialist language program that was originally intended for international students only. This came about because of the

observation that many tertiary domestic students had equally poor reading and writing skills in English as international students.

The notion of grammar in context reflects the general support for the blending of functional and traditional grammar in training, as reflected in response to the new English curriculum, but many are wary of a 'haphazard' blending. Another complicating issue is that metalanguages vary (with some overlap) across language disciplines. Linguistics, modern languages and TESOL all show differences in terminology applied to structural features.

To sum up, there was support for enhancing language awareness, including but not limited to 'grammar' across content areas, and linked to cultural awareness. There was also a general perception that there should be a unique module in training to address this. It could be developed through dialogue between different discipline areas, and it would benefit from a definite focus during practicums in schools where pre-service teachers learn more about language directly from school students. A final highly compelling reason to give language awareness the attention it deserves is the empowerment that control and knowledge of language can give to the teachers as much as to the students.

Chapter 5: Summary and conclusion

This report has described an OLT-funded seed project that responded to the need stated by ACARA for teachers of all discipline areas to be able to plan for EAL learners, and diagnose linguistic problem areas that hinder their learning of content. There is a popular view that a deeper knowledge of the grammatical structure of English will facilitate this, but caution should be observed; grammar is an important part of language, its organising feature, but language is more than this.

The subject English curriculum gives guidelines for structural components that school students should master at each year level. The national curriculum in this way appears to view language as the content of the English curriculum, and does not address its other role of facilitating the learning of content in other areas. Current pre-service teachers were at school during a period when many of their own teachers did not have a good grounding in structural features of language. The result, as evidenced by the pre-service teachers in this study, is that there are not only gaps in knowledge and awareness of language but also confusion because language learning was approached differently in primary and secondary settings.

Awareness of language, as stated above, is more than knowledge of grammar, although an enhanced understanding of grammar seems to give teachers more confidence in dealing with language. An EAL specialist has knowledge of the complexity of language systems, including phonology, morphology, syntax and pragmatics. They also have crucial knowledge of cultural difference as reflected in language, and of the pedagogy of teaching an additional language. It would be unrealistic to attempt to include all the systemic aspects of language to the same depth in pre-service training, but some awareness of these systems could be combined with cultural awareness and pedagogical approaches to EAL, to enhance language awareness in ITE, and this is what is proposed in two pilot units mentioned below.

Achievement of project aims

This section responds to the core aims outlined in the original proposal, and details to what extent they have been achieved.

1) To identify what kind of language awareness training should be included in pre-service programs for Australian primary and secondary teachers.

Considering the findings of all three phases of the project, it is recommended that a core unit of language studies should be included in all ITE in Australia; the content should include three main elements: 1) pedagogical grammar at the word and sentence level; 2) functional and genre approaches which are informed by the metalanguage for pedagogical grammar; and 3) the relationship between language and culture. The depth to which these elements are taught is still under debate, and the response to aim number 4 below describes how this might be realised in practice. Another recommendation to achieve the above aim is that specific language features should be mapped out in the curriculum for each content area. This has not been addressed as yet by ACARA.

2) To identify concrete ways in which to build confidence and knowledge in pre-service teachers when dealing with language in their discipline.

A unit as described above would go a considerable way towards building confidence in dealing with language, but this should also be connected to a focus on language in teaching practicums. The example given on p 17 is a good example of raising language awareness, by encouraging pre-service teachers to acknowledge what they have learned from school students about language. (The full description of this innovation is described in the longer version of the report, available from the project director.)

3) Collected shared resources will be developed that provide language awareness concepts accessible to teachers of all content areas.

and

4) An instrument will be developed that provides language awareness concepts accessible to all discipline areas.

Both these aims were partially achieved. Resources and concepts were shared and further developed from discussions at dissemination workshops in Brisbane. Other workshops were held in Melbourne in August 2015 and Perth in December 2015. It was discovered during the course of this seed project that it would be premature to attempt to disseminate resources claimed as definitive without at least some input from in-service teachers, and the experiences of EAL students themselves should also be taken into account. The views of these groups were beyond the scope of a seed project. However, the project's findings have contributed to the modification of a core language studies unit at QUT, referred to on p7, and are also currently informing the re-structuring of language-related ITE units at Deakin University. These new units can be considered as resources and will be trialled and evaluated as part of normal university procedures. An extended trial of these units would form part of a proposal for a larger project, with the aim of establishing nationwide consistency in promoting greater language and literacy awareness for pre-service teachers of all disciplines.

The following points present specific findings in more detail, with their implications:

- Of the language-related units currently available in training, any core units tend to be mainstream language and literacy-focused. Some of these units do contain elements of EAL or educational linguistics. Therefore the blending of the EAL/mainstream and traditional/functional within core units should be explored carefully, with contributions from both EAL and language/literacy experts. Key units combining a mainstream and EAL focus could include comparisons of first and second language acquisition, as well as first and second language pedagogies.
- Many pre-service teachers lack confidence in dealing with language, even if they are studying in language-related strands. Some equate this lack of knowledge with shortcomings in their own language use. Core modules that address language with an EAL focus as well as a mainstream oracy/literacy focus would be beneficial.

- Teacher educators all saw language as crucial to their content area, but in subtly different ways. A flexible approach to language and content could be approached through more dialogue between educators in a range of disciplines. Key units could include examples of language awareness-raising in specific content areas. Language awareness could also be embedded in units in all content areas.
- Teacher educators referred to a policy environment that emphasises the importance of language but does not detail specifically how it should be approached in content areas outside subject English.
- If the ACARA requirement that directed this project is to be met, higher-level decisions about ITE course content should take into consideration the embedding of core units as suggested above.
- Both groups interviewed reported the value of practical experience in raising understandings of language issues. Trainee teachers learn to apply theoretical concepts about language in real situations. Practical experience in a range of schools with pupils from different social and linguistic groups is particularly valuable. This point supports arguments for extended practicums or internships in teacher education.
- Both pre-service teachers and teacher educators reported current and historical inconsistencies in the teaching of LOTE, and agreed that learning another language brought benefits in awareness of not only other cultures, but of one's own language and culture. Strengthening the presence and consistency of other languages education is key to a more language-aware teaching workforce.
- Growing awareness of cultural difference was reported as providing a bridge to understanding the nature of language. Any core unit addressing language awareness for EAL students should have a cultural component.

Dissemination activities

The project attracted considerable interest from colleagues and teacher educators; everyone who participated viewed attention to language in the curriculum as important. The direction of the project was enhanced during two meetings with the reference group at QUT in Brisbane, consisting of the Assistant Dean of Education and two senior lecturers in language and literacy, (primary and secondary). These meetings and follow-up correspondence at various stages of the project were invaluable in balancing the perspectives of education for language awareness against the wider educational agenda. Similarly, virtual conferences and correspondence with (academic TESOL) reference group members in the UK gave useful international perspectives.

One great benefit of such a project is the initiation of dialogue between teachers of a range of content areas, and the consequent understandings of different perspectives. Particularly interesting was the dialogue between the different language areas of mainstream English language and literacy, EAL, and modern languages or LOTE, as these disciplines have a history of occasional mutual misunderstanding, despite their common focus on language.

Workshops as forums for discussion have been given at QUT in Brisbane, and in Melbourne, at Deakin University and as an invited presentation for VICTESOL, the Victorian Association of EAL teachers; further conversations and focus groups have resulted from these presentations, including discussions with the Victorian Department of Education. The direction of the project was greatly assisted by the many teacher educators who contributed to the project's evaluation by suggesting refinements of areas of focus. These different focus areas have also been disseminated at two national and two international conferences, and an edited book chapter was published in early 2016. The national conferences provided much interesting feedback, through familiarity with the Australian context, but there was also much interest from international contexts, as many countries face similar issues with the inclusion in mainstream classrooms of speakers of other languages than the standard or official one.

Concluding remarks

Undertaking this project has been a revealing experience. Western education is characterised by increased specialisation as students progress from primary through to tertiary and beyond. At times core elements, such as language, can be obscured. The continuation of dialogue between different areas of language expertise – mainstream, EAL and other languages, as well as with other content areas, was shown to be fruitful and suggests that a multi-disciplinary approach is appropriate when considering curriculum modifications in education.

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Appendix A

Certification by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT project provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

Name: Professor Beverley Oliver..... Date: 31st May 2015

Appendix B

Sample questions for pre-service teachers

1. Which teaching area are you specialising in?
2. How do you perceive the role of language in your content area?
3. How would you assess your knowledge of the linguistic structure and grammar of English?
4. In your practicum experience, did you have ESL learners in your classes? If so, how would you assess the demands using English places on them?
5. What language issues arise with native English-speaking students, written or spoken?
6. Do you see it as your role to address these issues and demands? To what extent?
7. If language problems arise in observed practicums, are they commented on by supervising teachers?
8. Do you feel confident dealing with written and spoken language issues in class?
9. Do you feel that your university education prepared you to deal with language issues in class?
10. What kind of specific language knowledge do you feel should be covered in training?

Sample questions for teacher educators

1. What is your academic speciality/teaching role?
2. How do you perceive the role of language in your content area?
3. Is language education included as a compulsory or elective subject in teacher training at your institution?
4. If an elective, do you feel it should be compulsory? Why?
5. Do you feel knowledge about language has equal importance for subjects across the curriculum?
6. ACARA states that all subject teachers should be prepared to deal with language issues and problems in classes, especially those experienced by EAL/D learners. Do you think this is feasible in educating new teachers? To what extent?
7. What particular elements of language knowledge do you feel pre-service teachers need to be aware of?
8. Do language problems arise in observed practicums, and are they commented on by supervising teachers?