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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION
POLICY IN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA**

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Abstract

Language education policy is a topic of interest for all countries as they must all (directly or indirectly) select a medium of instruction, and foreign or second languages are commonly offered as subjects of study. This research aims to understand the discourses that are present and influence language education policy in China and Australia; both countries are highly linguistically diverse with many minority languages spoken in addition to the 'national' language. Using a cultural political economy framework (Jessop and Sum, 2006) this dissertation analyses the types of discourse present in language education policy in both countries. Discourses have been grouped into six different themes and analysed at the variation, selection and retention levels of policy. The analysis suggests that Australia and China are influenced and retain similar types of discourse, with human capital discourse being predominant at the national and global level. Additionally, both countries appear to be influenced by assimilationist social cohesion discourse. The findings seem to be largely in-line with other countries globally.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In educational settings language policy may be purposefully selected with specific aims such as the reintroduction of minority languages or for economic development (Liyanage and Walker, 2019) or it may simply be a convergence with the official languages of the country as a default without consideration of the wider effects (Liyanage and Walker, 2019). Even if countries have no explicit language education policy (LEP), they indirectly have a policy as language is an unavoidable element of education. This should be noted by countries that consider themselves to be monolingual as through international migration many classrooms have become multilingual spaces (Liyanage and Walker, 2019). Additionally, language policy can relate to second (or third) language learning

LEP is complicated due to the huge number of languages across the world with UNESCO (2021a) estimating that there are more than 8000 (spoken and signed) languages globally. This can have wide-reaching impacts on education as there are legal and linguistic rights associated with language in education (UNESCO, 2003). As of 2012 more than 40% of the global population was learning in a language they could not speak or understand (Benson, 2016), demonstrating the difficulties faced by large numbers of people across the world.

1.2 Significance

This dissertation will analyse language education policies in two highly linguistically diverse countries. Linguistic diversity will be defined using Skutnabb-Kangas's (2002) definition as the number of languages present in a country. In the literature, comparative approaches to language policy in education may use regional groupings such as Lee, Hamid and Hardy's (2021) Southeast Asian comparison, or historical groupings such as Dascomb's (2019) comparison of the policies in previously colonised countries. By considering only highly linguistically diverse countries, this dissertation will help to fill a gap in the current literature.

This dissertation aims to understand why and what policies are selected as LEP. Borjian (2014) argues that international organisations heavily influence current approaches to language policy, suggesting a degree of global interest. UNESCO has long advocated for mother-tongue education as a medium of instruction (MoI) in education (UNESCO,

2003). While the World Bank has promoted English in education as a means of internationalizing education systems (Borjian, 2014). Understanding the degree to which international organisations may influence LEP may provide an understanding of policy choice and offer implications for their role in influencing and changing policy globally.

Considering highly linguistically diverse countries may be important from the perspective of protecting global linguistic diversity. UNESCO (2011) emphasises the importance of preserving languages as they reflect culture, memories and values. UNESCO (2021b) highlights that languages are disappearing globally, and that this threatens the related cultures and knowledge systems. The UN (2018) estimates that more than half of all languages globally are at risk of becoming extinct by 2100. Therefore, it may be crucial to consider the impact of LEP in countries with high linguistic diversity.

1.3 Research Questions

The key questions of interest are:

1. What discourse related to language education is present in China and Australia?
2. What discourse is privileged in LEP selection?
3. How is discourse retained through the implementation of LEP?
4. How are the Australia and China similar and different?
5. How do Australia and China compare to global trends in LEP discourse?

For this research I have chosen to consider LEP in the two highly linguistically diverse countries: Australia and China. Although, the two countries have different political systems, cultural backgrounds and histories, these countries have been selected due to their broadly similar linguistic contexts. More than 300 languages are spoken in these two countries (Ethnologue, 2022). The two countries also have decentralised control of education to State and Provincial levels to some degree with both countries maintain some national control (Parliamentary Education Office, 2022; Qi, 2017).

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims to understand the underlying discourse behind LEP and how these influence policy choices. This may enable other highly linguistically diverse countries to determine what approaches are viable for their own policy goals. Completing an analysis focused on two highly linguistically diverse countries will fill a gap in the

current literature and will allow for comparison of policy in practice with the recommendations from international organizations.

1.5 Outline of Dissertation

The following chapter will be a literature review. The literature review will focus on the types of discourse that are prevalent globally. This dissertation will use a Cultural Political Economy (CPE) framework to conduct a policy analysis of LEP in Australia and China. The methodology chapter will outline the reasoning for selecting this approach, how the framework will be used, and the limitations of the approach. The methodology will also explain my positionality as a researcher and how this impacts the dissertation. Following the methodology chapter, I will conduct an analysis of LEP in China and Australia focused on discourse surrounding LEP. There will then be a discussion chapter which will compare Australia and China and evaluate where the two countries sit globally in LEP. Finally, the dissertation will end with a conclusion which will summarise the key findings of the dissertation, highlight the implications of the research and include some suggestions for future research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to LEP

LEP is relevant to all countries as even though most countries are monolingual when considering the official language, typically there are more languages spoken but they are not legally recognised (UNESCO, 2003). Many countries also have minority (regional) languages. Minority language is defined using the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992 definition of languages traditionally spoken in the state or an area of the state, but it is not formally recognised as an official language of the state and is spoken by only a subset of the population.

Minority languages are not evenly distributed. UNESCO (2003) found that over 70% of all languages in the world came from just 20 states, although 20 years on this situation may have changed. According to Ethnologue (2022), Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse country and there alone 840 languages spoken, which is more than double the number of languages spoken in Europe, demonstrating the extreme concentration of languages in some areas of the world.

Liyana and Walker (2019) state migration as a reason for diversity of language within schools. Migration has increased in all UN regions since the 1990s (International Organisation for Migration, 2020), which suggests that that classrooms with speakers of different languages will continue, even in countries where there is only one language and no minority languages as defined previously, highlighting a need for research.

Language constitutes two roles in education, one as a subject for study, and one as a MoI for teaching. Countries have several choices available when deciding the MoI available and the languages available for subject study. The subsequent sections will outline key themes in LEP strategies.

2.2 Minority Language Rights and Protection

Tollefson and Tsui (2014) highlight that MoI policies can impact equity and access in education through legal rights. This section will primarily focus on language rights within education as a means of achieving equity for linguistic minority groups and preserving minority languages. Additionally, the section will include broader language rights in the two countries of interest as these may indirectly shape language rights within education.

It is important to consider the wider context of linguistic and language rights as this influences the decisions made in relation to LEP. Linguistic rights and language rights will hereon be used interchangeably dependent on the source of the literature. Arzoz (2007) highlights that it is difficult to define language rights, however, he defines them as the rights related to “the rules that public institutions adopt with respect to language use in different domains” (Arzoz, 2007, pp.4). Official and dominant languages typically gain status through social norms and wider rules, therefore, language rights normally focus on minority languages only (Arzoz, 2007). Ricento (2006) argues that language rights have become increasingly prominent in language policy research.

Linguistic human rights (LHR) as a subcategory of language rights and they are the rights needed to assure people’s basic needs are met and can both prohibit discrimination and safeguard the equal treatment of minority language groups (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2006). Ordinary language rights can exceed these LHR but that does not make them human rights.

2.2.1 Binding Legal Instruments

Language rights can be enacted by via binding agreements and constitutions, as well as by soft law instruments which guides states towards policy without consequences for not abiding by agreed measures (Arzoz, 2007). Binding international agreements include the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which prohibits discrimination based on language, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (2019) this is a form of negative or non-discriminatory linguistic human rights. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2019) this form of LHR may be insufficient as it may result in minority language groups being forced to assimilate into the majority language. Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) identifies the 1995 Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) as an example of this in Europe as it is a legally binding document. This FCPNM 1995 requires the recognition of minority languages and the ability for minorities to conduct educational activities in their own languages. Following, Skutnabb-Kangas (2019) this aligns more closely with affirmative or positive LHR as it actively promotes and protects the minority language.

Of education relevance is Article 29 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This states that education must develop respect for the child’s language and cultural identity. This has been ratified by 196 states which makes it legally binding. The US is currently the only country which is not bound to this as they are only a

signatory. This reference to language rights is arguably vague and could be interpreted differently by different countries. Part VI of Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Persons in Independent Countries grants more explicit requirements related to language which states that children should be taught to read and write in their own language. However, this convention has been ratified by a much smaller number of countries, with only 24 countries ratifying it as of 2022 (ILO, 2022), meaning its effect is less widespread.

UNESCO has several other conventions which have been ratified by numerous countries. These conventions typically follow the non-discriminatory approach to language rights with the UNESCO Constitution (1945) containing the principle of no language discrimination. The Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960) is ratified by 106 states (UNESCO, 2021c) and again reinforces non-discriminatory rights, however it also outlines the rights of minority groups to do educational activities in their native language. A limitation of this is that the educational activities cannot be done in a way that would reduce the ability of minority groups to assimilate with the wider community, therefore, this international language right still would not meet the affirmative LHR as stipulated by Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) as it does not prevent assimilatory practices.

A caveat to the binding rights is that in sections of human rights instruments focused explicitly on education, language rights are often not present (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2006). Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) found that even when linguistic elements are mentioned they become non-binding due to language used to write them such as in the FCPNM which uses terms such as “as far as possible” and “sufficient demand”. This essentially allows for states to renege on their obligations towards linguistic minorities as they can argue that the implementation of these rights is not possible or appropriate (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2006).

Countries also have constitutional requirements related to language rights. Faingold (2004) classified countries into 24 groups based on the presence of language within their constitutions. Of the 187 constitutions analysed only 29 had no mention of language at all (Faingold, 2004) signifying the relevance internationally. Countries took different approaches to language within their constitutions with some offering provisions to majority groups only, whereas others explicitly reference provisions for

minority language groups (Faingold, 2004). For the relevance of this dissertation, only constitutions related to the countries of analysis will be included here.

Australia does not have an official language which has been granted the status in legislature, however from publications on the Australian Government website English can be assumed to be the de facto national language (Department of Home Affairs, 2022).

The main law in Australia relevant to language rights nationally is the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, which implements eight international treaties and declarations. The Act ensures that people, including children, cannot be discriminated based on language and states that linguistic and ethnic minorities should not be denied the right to use their own languages. The main relevance of this Act to language in education is through the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in section 3, which requires that all children in Australia can freely access education without distinction or discrimination to their language. Using Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) this national Act is an example of a non-discriminatory LHR.

Australia grants devolved powers to its states, enabling them to implement their own legislation. Only one state in Australia currently has legislation granting power to aboriginal languages and this is New South Wales (NSW) with the NSW Aboriginal Languages Act 2017. The Act recognises Aboriginal languages and is explicitly aimed at promoting Aboriginal languages in the state. The Act also include that education opportunities should be promoted in Aboriginal language activities, highlighting its relevance to education. This Act falls within the positive LHR described by Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) as it promotes and protects these indigenous languages. Other states in Australia do not appear to have explicit legislation focused on language rights.

China has published several laws based on language which both promote the national language, Putonghua, and protect minority languages. Constitutionally China grants ethnic groups the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages (Constitution of the People's Republic of China). However, beyond the constitution, Pan (2016) states that the first national law on language was the 2001 Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language, which grants Putonghua the status of the national general language. The law states that educational institutions must use Putonghua to teach language and characters, unless

otherwise stated by law (Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language, 2001).

The otherwise stated in law applies to ethnic minority regions as these are the only areas of China which have policy related to minority languages released (Zhang and Cai, 2021). The Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy (1984 amended 2001) gives several rights to minority languages in education. Firstly, ethnic autonomous regions can decide the language used for teaching and in schools that predominantly enrol ethnic minority students, resources and teaching should be completed in their language and that this will be financially supported by the government (Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, 1984). Furthermore, the law states that Han children should also be encouraged to learn local minority languages in tandem with minorities learning Putonghua. Areas included in this legislation are any of the 155 ethnic autonomous areas including ethnic autonomous regions, ethnic autonomous prefectures, and ethnic autonomous counties. This law is a positive LHR following Skutnabb-Kangas's (2006) definition.

2.2.2 Soft Law Instruments

There are numerous soft law instruments used to signal linguistic rights. The 1992 UN Declaration of the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic Religious and Linguistic Minorities is an example of this. Language is mentioned in articles 2 and 4 of the declaration, with article 2 focusing on non-discriminatory action and article 4 focusing on affirmative action. This declaration does not carry consequences for non-conformity but does provide guidance and shows the international agenda related to minority languages. Additionally, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People 2007 provides educational recommendations including that indigenous people have the right to create and provide education in their own languages.

UNESCO has also outlined numerous nonbinding declarations related to language rights in education. UNESCO's 1978 Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice makes explicit reference to the importance of mother-tongue education, however, only in relation to immigrants. The declaration advocates for provisions for migrant children to learn in their own language. However, further progress towards encouraging the rights for speakers of indigenous minority languages has been promoted by the 2001 Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity; this declaration emphasises the importance of mother-tongue education and work rights. UNESCO has also advocated for foreign

language learning via the Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (1995). These declarations show UNESCO's position on linguistic rights in education; however, countries are not obliged to meet the objectives set in them.

More recently, language rights with reference to education have been stated in the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4. Here, UNESCO (2016) emphasises the importance of language policies to prevent exclusion from education and suggests that in multilingual contexts students should be taught in their first language where possible. The educational arguments for these new proposals will be considered in the next section.

2.3 Educational relevance

The MoI may impact the quality of learning in schools (Benson, 2016). This then results in a secondary effect to the accessibility of education for children as lower quality education results in higher drop-out rates (Benson, 2016). A dominant theme in the literature is that students should be taught in their mother-tongue or first language (UNESCO, 2003; Benson, 2016; Walter and Benson, 2012).

Smits, Huisman and Kruijff (2008) completed a study which found that when children were offered instruction in their home language the dropout rates were significantly reduced and that this occurred at both the primary (ages 7-11) and secondary (ages 12-16) level. Further, Smits, Huisman and Kruijff (2008) found that the effect was greater for students in rural areas than in urban areas with Pinnock (2009) speculating that this was because children in urban areas had more opportunities to become familiar with the dominant language due to its presence in daily life. Smits, Huisman and Kruijff's (2008) finding highlights an importance consideration for equity issues within countries for language policies as rural students may be additionally disadvantaged from a lack of education in their home language when there is already a rural-urban educational gap in most countries (van Maarseveen, 2021).

A more widely documented research area is the link between mother-tongue education and the quality of learning (Benson 2004; Thomas and Collier, 2002). Benson (2004) states that the most efficient way to learn literacy skills is through a known language rather than an unfamiliar one, which can result in rote learning and memorisation. This is supported by evidence from Thomas and Collier (2002) who found that students in the US who had no background in English performed better in end of elementary school tests in both English and Math if they received some instruction in their home language,

rather than full English immersion. Furthermore, Walter and Benson (2012) highlighted that this increased attainment is also present in the Global South. Eritrea currently teaches 95% of students in their first language whereas Cameroon students are educated in English which is most students second language (Walter and Benson, 2012). When comparing the reading levels of the two countries Eritrean students in 3rd grade read at the same level as Cameroonian students in 6th grade (Walter and Benson, 2012), supporting the idea that mother-tongue education improves educational outcomes.

2.4 Political relevance

2.4.1 Colonial legacies

The political context of countries may impact the selection of LEP. Many countries have deep-rooted colonial histories. Even though many of these countries are now independent this historical context is still vital for understanding LEP choices.

UNESCO (2003) found that many colonised countries maintain the language of their previous colonisers as an official language, rather than reinstating their own indigenous languages. English as an MoI (hereon EMI) was introduced in numerous countries during periods of colonisation, such as Sri Lanka (Little et al., 2019), India (Canagaraiah and Ashraf, 2013) and Zimbabwe (Nhongo and Tshotshi, 2021) during British colonisation, and the Philippines (De Los Reyes, 2019) during the US occupation.

Colonial languages may persist for several reasons. Walter and Benson (2012) suggest that multilingualism can cause instability for newly independent states. This appears to be the case in Sri Lanka where English has been used to maintain peace between Tamil and Sinhala people (Little et al., 2019). Following independence Sinhala and Tamil had both been available as MoIs (Little et al., 2019), however in 2001 the Sri Lankan government reintroduced English (the MoI during British colonisation) as an MoI with the aim of achieving national unity following civil war (Liyanage and Walker, 2019).

Additionally, colonial languages may have administrative and institutional legacies. Faingold (2004) notes that many colonial countries have retained their colonisers' languages as official languages which has led to the need for these languages within education systems. In the Philippines much of the legal system and government business is still conducted in English (Martin, 2020) which shows the language's persistence in the country.

Walter and Benson (2012) further highlight the cost of changing education policy from previous languages. They estimate that it costs 4-5% of the national education budget to initially fund the change (Walter and Benson, 2012) and although they state the costs fall over time, this may be too expensive for countries to consider.

2.4.2 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion will be defined using Larsen's (2013, p.6) definition as "the belief held by citizens of a given nation state that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other". Ratcliffe (2011) links the concept of cohesion to a need for social stability. Osler (2011) suggests that education policy can be used as a tool for promoting social cohesion

Many linguistically diverse countries perceive an abundance of languages as threats to national unity and cohesion (Walter and Benson, 2012). In Indonesia, this resulted in the selection of a Bahasa, the language spoken by 10% of the population at home (Liyanage and Walker, 2019). Liyanage and Walker (2019) suggest the previous mother-tongue education policy for grades 1-3 was abandoned to further the development as Bahasa as a national language. Edwards (2016) also found social cohesion as a factor in Catalonia's LEP. The ability to communicate using Catalan was perceived as necessary for building social cohesion in the area and enabling the integration of people into that region (Edwards, 2016). These forms of LEP position assimilation with the majority to enhance social cohesion. Additionally, Fessha (2022) found that in Ethiopia, Amharic, the country's official language, was a subject in school to improve social cohesion.

Social cohesion can also be understood differently. Coetzee-Van Roy (2016) argues that this perception of multilingualism as threatening social cohesion is typically a Western construction. Coetzee-Van Roy (2016) states that in African and Asian academic contexts there is more of an acceptance that linguistic diversity can be coherent with social cohesion. Coetzee-Van Roy's (2016) study found that in South Africa monolingual discourse did not promote social cohesion, indicating that policy encouraging linguistic diversity may be better for social cohesion. Mikulyuk and Braddock (2018) completed a study in US schools and found that diversity can increase social cohesion more than policies which segregate diverse groups. This suggests that LEP focused on assimilation to the majority is not the only way of achieving social cohesion.

2.5 Economic relevance

Walter and Benson (2012) highlight that there is a perceived economic benefit to the pursuit of some languages due to their global status which can then enhance the economic power of that country.

Sah (2022) highlights that EMI is perceived as a tool for economic growth and development, influenced by human capital theory. The key reasons behind this are that English can open countries to the global economy and allow them access to international markets (Sah, 2022). Similarly, in the Philippines English is widely pursued in government policy due to the growth in call centres in the country, accounting for around 10% of the country's GDP (Martin, 2020); this industry requires English language skills and has shaped LEP. Additionally, many countries believe that EMI will foster greater English proficiency than just teaching English as a subject, but the evidence for this is lacking (Liyanage and Walker, 2019).

Furthermore, Laitin and Ramachandran (2022) argue that there is a perception in African countries that linguistic fragmentation hinders economic success, resulting in the national language being used in education. However, the authors found that the perception is false and using indigenous languages in education improved economic outcomes. Moreover, Walter and Benson (2012) state that in low-income countries around half of all people work in the informal economy in which speaking local languages is more beneficial; by not encouraging local language skill development states may not meet national economic goals.

3: Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Approach

LEP analysis is an under-researched area of language policy research (Ricento, 2006). Research has predominantly been in the US and Canada and there are few models for analyzing policy approaches (Ricento, 2006). One of the few language policy analysis frameworks is Grin's (2003) framework for evaluating language policy which is aimed at invigorating the status of minority of languages. Although, Grin (2003) is one of the few examples of an analytical framework that can be applied to LEP (Ricento, 2006), his approach has not been selected. Grin (2003) takes a rationalist approach to policy analysis and evaluation. As the agenda for LEP is created by different language ideologies, following post-positivist scholars' criticisms, a rationalist approach seems too simplistic (Howlett, Ramesh and Perl, 2009).

The framework for policy analysis will be the Cultural Political Economy (CPE) framework. Jessop (2010) highlights that the focus of CPE is viewing how discourse goes from socially construed to socially constructed and in turn how hegemony is produced. Jessop (2010) states that CPE aims to synthesise critical semiotic analysis and critical political economy. A key element of the CPE framework is that it applies a 'cultural turn' to strengthen the political economy framework (Sum, 2018). The 'culture turn' stresses the role of semiosis in creating meaning and the role of discourse in reducing the complexity for actors and observers (Jessop, 2010). Jessop (2010) suggests numerous approaches to semiosis including argumentation, reflexivity and discourse

CPE is a useful framework because it not only relies on semiosis but also extra-semiotic factors (Jessop, 2010). Jessop (2004) states that CPE is a necessary framework because although all social practices are semiotic, social practices can never be fully reduced to semiosis. Extra-semiotic factors include social relations such as institutionalised power relations which may restrict or prevent discourses from being selected or retained (Jessop, 2004). The combination of semiotic and extra-semiotic factors makes CPE an appropriate framework for this dissertation.

CPE aims to understand the underlying mechanisms behind the selection and institutionalization of discourses (Jessop and Sum, 2006). By utilizing semiotic and extra-semiotic factors, Jessop (2010) states that two issues which would have been created by only looking at either semiotic or extra-semiotic factors can be resolved. Firstly, Jessop (2010) argues that focusing on discourse analysis reduces analysis to

allowing agents to construct reality using semiosis alone. However, if only extra-semiotic factors were included, as in institutional policy analysis, agents become passive and unable to construct reality as social structures self-reproduce and self-transform (Jessop, 2010). This bridging between institutional analysis and discourse analysis prevents the analysis from becoming reductive.

CPE is an evolutionary approach to policy analysis as it focuses on the path-dependency created by semiotic and extra-semiotic factors co-evolving (Jessop, 2010). CPE relies on the construction of imaginaries by the government (Farrelly, 2019). This is an element of complexity reduction by the government, as reality is too difficult for actors to understand (Jessop, 2010). The construction of these imaginaries results in issues as these imaginaries are not perfectly aligned with reality, resulting in variation between the available imaginaries (Farrelly, 2019). At this stage the variation is created by wide-ranging discourse (Jessop and Sum, 2006) These imaginaries are then selected as the chosen imaginary (Farrelly, 2019). This selection occurs through some discourses being chosen because they are reinforced structurally, or actors resonate with these discourses more (Jessop and Sum, 2016). However, due to the evolutionary process of CPE, imaginaries can be subject to change and some imaginaries may be dropped (Farrelly, 2019). The imaginaries that are retained are those which have discourses that can be embedded in the institution and result in structural transformation to accommodate for them (Jessop and Sum, 2006).

Within education policy CPE has been used to analyse the choice of policies available. Verger, Fontdevila and Zancajo (2017) use CPE to analyze the trend in privatisation in education globally; from their analysis they highlight discourse created by global institutions impacting national policies. Due to the dominance of global institutions in shaping LEP (Borjian, 2014), I posit CPE as a suitable framework for analysis as it situates critical discourse analysis within structural constraints. The framework allows for consideration of the institutions and actors involved in policy without being reductive to their agency.

Although the CPE framework provides a clear guide for structuring the analysis of policy it leaves the choice of tools for analysis of semiotic factors to the discretion of the researcher. For this dissertation, I will use Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fairclough (2013) follows the same distinction between construal and construction as Jessop (2010) in that everyone can construe aspects of the world, but

this does not necessarily mean that individuals' construals lead to the construction of the world. Fairclough (2013) advocates for a discourse analysis of both texts and wider aspects of discourse. Using CDA means that the relations between discourse and other objects are the focus of the analysis rather than discourse in itself (Fairclough, 2013).

Criticality is a crucial element of CDA. Fairclough (2013) states that it should focus on what is wrong with society and involve some element of social justice. Tollefson (2006) argues that for analysis to be considered critical it needs to meet 3 criteria. First, it should go against mainstream approaches; second, social change should be at the centre of the analysis; finally, it should be influenced by critical policy and through this the concept of power is central (Tollefson, 2006). Fairclough's (2013) clearly sits in the field of critical theory as power is a central focus of his approach.

3.2 Methodological Strategy

This dissertation will use the CPE framework to analyse LEP by separating discourse into variation, selection and retention. Variation in discourse will be completed using secondary analysis and other academics' work to analyse which discourses are present beyond that in policy. For the selection section of each country national level policy documents and government published reports have been chosen to highlight which discourse are privileged by the national government. Finally, for the retention of discourse regional level policy documents have been used for analysis in addition to studies which looked at the implementation of policy practices. Lipsky (2010) argues that teachers have discretionary power to implement policy as they work on the frontline of policy delivery. Although Hall and Hampden-Thompson (2022) suggest that this lack of conformity to policy may stem from pragmatic decision-making rather than the intention of changing the policy, this dissertation will still use the variation in implementation to show whether discourse has been retained in practice or not.

3.3 Discourse Themes

The discourse analysis will be considered using an extension of Valdez, Delavan and Freire's (2016) approach. In this approach the authors separate discourses in LEP into those with an equity/heritage (EH) theme and those with a globalised human capital (GHC) theme. They do this whilst using CDA and argue that by considering discourses linked to EH they are connecting with Fairclough's (2013) requirement to consider power imbalances in analysis. I propose taking Valdez, Delavan and Freire.'s (2016) discourse themes and expanding them.

Valdez, Delavan and Freire (2016) group equity and heritage into one category. They state that equity stems from the use of education policy to promote students' home languages in education to reduce the attainment gap. For the authors, heritage connotes the cultural identity of minority languages and is associated with rights. For this dissertation, the findings suggested that heritage and equity discourse were not always present concurrently, therefore, these have been divided into two separate types of discourse.

Dividing the term for discourse linked to economic benefits may also be appropriate. Valdez, Delavan and Freire (2016) coined this discourse as *globalised* human capital (GHC) discourse. This coinage can be retained as LEP does showcase this form of discourse; however, it may be necessary to create a new category of *nationalised* human capital discourse (NHC). NHC discourse would be used for discourse that focuses on LEP which is selected for the benefit of enhancing national economic opportunities, rather than international ones. In the context of highly linguistically diverse countries this type of discourse may be present.

The literature section highlighted that some LEP stem from political reasonings. For the context of countries in this dissertation social cohesion was dominant in the findings. This was present in two strands as assimilationist social cohesion (ASC) and multicultural social cohesion (MSC). ASC discourse indicates the need for minority groups to conform to the majority group. While MSC discourse indicates the construction of social cohesion through a multicultural strategy in which minority groups are recognised. MSC discourse differs from heritage discourse as ultimately the goal is national unity and social cohesion rather than the protection and cultural recognition of these languages.

3.4 Limitations

CPE and CDA do have methodological limitations. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) highlight that CDA can be used for analysts to put forward their own political biases and prejudices and complete their analysis from this perspective. A strength of CDA in its requirement to recognise power relations can also be a weakness. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) state that these power relations may also be viewed from political biases which are then reflected in the discourse analysis. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) further highlight that CDA can be criticised for not reflecting or recognising the context that discourse is surrounded in, I would argue that this critique is mitigated in this

dissertation due to CDA being situated within a CPE framework for analysis. CPE considers wider structural elements which should add more contextual understanding. Another limitation of CDA to be cautious of is that Breeze (2011) suggests that many researchers who say they are using CDA to not do so in a rigorous manner.

CPE has also been criticised by many scholars. Van Heur (2010) has criticised CPE on the basis that it is too focused on the extra-semiotic factors and that their method is reductionist. Sau (2021) takes a less strong approach but criticises CPE from opposite position of underpromoting the material interests. Sau's (2021) argument is based on the inability of individuals to resist power and that by focusing on struggles as being constituted discursively, structural elements that may create the subjectivities which lead to the discursive class position are not reflected within CPE. Sau (2021) states that due to the constructivist form of subjectivation other freedoms of individuals are not recognised including those outside the economic sphere. Sau (2021) argues that this can be mitigated by including social commentaries as well as discourse to expand the CPE approach, as this allows for a broader understanding of action and practices linked with other practices. Social commentaries help to link the broader political issues with the extra-semiotic factors without presupposing that they are simply down to economic purposes, this can help to explain nationalist or xenophobic policy which otherwise may not be considered in Jessop and Sum's original approach (Sau, 2021).

3.4 Positionality and Ethical considerations

In language policy analysis and broader public policy analysis there are numerous different approaches dependent on the motivation of the researcher and the questions to be answered (Lin, 2015). Lin (2015) states that it is therefore necessary that researchers clearly outline their motivations and what the impact their research may have as this should affect their approach. Lin (2015) highlights three forms of interest: the technical interest, the practical interest, and the critical interest. The technical interest fits within the positivist research paradigm and aims at finding universal laws to understand language policy (Lin, 2015). The practical interest fits within the interpretivist paradigm with a focus on sociocultural understanding and understanding communication between groups of people (Lin, 2015). My own interest falls within the critical research paradigm; I am interested in how values and beliefs within LEP have been shaped and I am particularly interested in the power balances that shape LEP. Completing a dissertation from a critical perspective means that I am interested in understanding how

the world works but also how my research can be used to change and impact the world (Lin, 2015).

Although my research does not involve working directly with human subjects, taking an ethical approach is still important. As a native English speaker, I must be conscious in my research that my primary language will affect my understanding of the communities I am researching (Canagarajah and Stanley, 2015). As I am approaching this dissertation from a critical perspective it is important that I make my own values, ideologies, and experiences clear in this section (Canagarajah and Stanley, 2015). I am conscious that my own beliefs will shape my approach to research and, therefore, do not want to position myself as an anonymous, all-knowing authority on the topic of language education research. As explained in my limitations section I am a speaker of both English and Mandarin Chinese (普通话). I have predominantly lived in the UK but also lived and worked in China as an English teacher. My life experiences have been shaped from an English-speaking position and the role of the English language abroad. Through this dissertation I aim to balance my past experiences and values and to highlight when discussion is influenced by own beliefs.

Additionally, although I have previously lived in China, I would position myself as an outsider in all three countries and their contexts. As I am not completing primary research from an ethical point of view this may allow for analytical detachment which may provide a different insight into my dissertation, allowing for more separation and less emotions in the research (Canagarajah and Stanley, 2015).

4 Analysis

The analysis of policies in the two countries will be done by focusing on each country individually and using Jessop's (2010) terms of variation, selection and retention to analyse each country's LEP.

4.1 China

4.1.1 Variation

Verger, Fontdevila and Zancajo (2017) indicate that variation in discourse around policy can occur for numerous reasons such as external global pressure, and internal discontent. There are numerous streams of discourse surrounding LEP in China.

In China there is some evidence of discourse surrounding equity and heritage. As included in the literature chapter UNESCO has largely pursued an equity and a heritage approach. Xie and Zhang (2012) view the relationship between China and UNESCO as one of sharing and learning with China being increasingly involved with the institution from 1999. Furthermore, China is home to the East Asia sub-regional office of UNESCO and Chinese individuals have run for high-ranking positions in the organisation (Xie and Zhang, 2012); this indicates that the agendas UNESCO promotes are likely to feature in discourse in China.

More explicit influence from UNESCO may be seen through the 2010 Education reform and development plan which was published collaboratively by UNESCO and the Chinese central government. The plan contains one paragraph focused on languages and shows both heritage discourse and ASC discourse. The plan first highlights the need to "popularize the national common language [Putonghua] and writing system" and then immediately states that "Minority peoples' right to be educated in native languages must be respected and ensured" (Chinese Communist Party, 2010, p. 23). The use of "popularize" indicates the importance of assimilation to the majority language. While the juxtaposition of the two forms of discourse within in two consecutive sentences may suggest the attempt to merge two streams of discourse, one of which (heritage) is predominantly shown in the agenda of UNESCO alongside ASC discourse, which is favoured by the Chinese government.

Additionally, in 2018 UNESCO and China jointly hosted the planning meeting for the International Year of Indigenous Languages (Wang, Bahry and An, 2022). This meeting led to the Yuelu proclamation (Wang, Bahry and An, 2022). The proclamation is

focused on protecting and promoting linguistic diversity (UNESCO, 2018). The location of the meeting and subsequent proclamation imply some dissemination of UNESCO's preferred equity and heritage discourses within China.

Heritage discourse is also present in minority communities inside and outside of China. In 2010 following a reduction in the opportunity to study in their mother-tongue, Tibetan students publicly protested (Zhu, 2014). Further, in 2021 Mongolians living in Tokyo protested the reduction in availability of mother-tongue education in Inner Mongolia (Sato, 2022). These examples show some prevalence of heritage discourse within ethnic minority communities indicating a desire for mother-tongue education. There is also evidence in other areas of China that students find value in using their minority languages and that children take a less instrumental view in comparison to their parents (Yin and Li, 2021; Zhang and Yang, 2020; Ng and Zhao, 2015).

Within Han communities, there was only limited evidence of heritage discourse for minority languages. However, Li, Xu and Chen (2022) did find some evidence that young mandarin speakers were more open to the use of Hani language in the minority area they were living in and showed some consideration for the value of minority language. This suggests that there may be some public discourse in Han groups of the benefits of minority languages and the importance of maintaining them.

GHC and NHC discourse is also prevalent in discourse surrounding LEP. Numerous studies have been done assessing ethnic minority parents' language attitudes. Gao and Park (2012) found that Korean-Chinese parents viewed Putonghua as necessary to engage in the Chinese economy. Li, Xu and Chen (2022) argued that Hani speakers saw Putonghua as the most beneficial language to learn in for the education market. Zhang and Yang (2020) concluded that Tujia parents viewed those that spoke Putonghua to be better educated and that Tujia had little economic value as a language. Putonghua was viewed to be the most useful language by native Cantonese speakers on the mainland (Ng and Zhao, 2015). Additionally, Zhu (2014) found that in contrast to the students who protested a lack of access to mother-tongue education, many parents when given the option for their children to have bilingual education instead selected Putonghua only schools, believing that this would enhance their job opportunities. These views from ethnic minorities who are spread across China indicate that some proliferation of NHC discourse and the economic benefits of Putonghua.

While discourse present in ethnic parent discussions centred on the value of Putonghua, for Han parents discourse has pivoted to the value of English language education and its benefits from a GHC discourse perspective. Chao, Xue and Xu (2014) found that Chinese parents believed English to offer greater opportunities to children in the job market and with the ability to mix with those abroad. Hamid and Luo (2016) further found that discourse surrounding English education was related to the global bridging nature of the language.

Discourse around English was more mixed in ethnic minority groups. Li, Xu and Chen (2022) found that relative to Putonghua, English had relatively little value amongst Hani adults. Whereas Zhang and Yang (2020) noted that Tujia adults place a reasonably high degree of importance on children learning English. This may suggest that NHC discourse around Putonghua has been purposefully disseminated amongst ethnic minority communities following a perceived lack of assimilation. It may also imply less need for NHC discourse focused on Putonghua in predominantly Han areas leading to the growth of GHC discourse around English to grow as parents focus on new ways of enhancing their child's human capital for future employment.

Liu (2016) conducted an analysis of pedagogical discourse around foreign language education in China. Liu (2016) highlights that the opening of China in the 1970s led to the reintroduction of English into the gaokao, with two subsequent reforms in 1986 and 1993 focusing on the use of language and communication skills. From this it may be inferred that a GHC discourse surrounding English as a language of communication for global work opportunities was created within China. As English persists in the gaokao today it seems that this discourse has continued within political spheres.

Lin and Jackson (2021) conducted a study of the Chinese government's promotion of Putonghua. They found that in 75% of document the promotion of Putonghua was done with the view of alleviating poverty and minority languages were in turn associated with poverty. This may suggest that NHC discourse in the promotion of Putonghua is situated within the development discourse which has been prominent since the 1980s as using education to improve quality and alleviate poverty in minority areas (Guo, 2008). Guo (2008) argues that ethnic minority groups in China were viewed as 'backward', a belief that Hoddie and Lou (2009) claim remains present in the media as minorities are seen as exoticized primitives by some in China. The surrounding discourse presents

Putonghua as a means of economic growth and highlights the existence of NHC discourse.

A final stream of discourse present is social cohesion and particularly ASC discourse. Yin (2020) argues that since the 1950s the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has aimed to create a collective identity of ‘zhongguo renmin’ which was used to help unify the country's multiple ethnicities. Phelan (2020) extends this view on China's national unity which he coins ‘big nationalism’; this contrasts with ‘small nationalism’ which is for individual ethnic group nationalism, which could be viewed as a form of MSC discourse. Big nationalism has been prominent since before the CCP as it was aimed at assimilating minorities into Han culture (Phelan, 2020). The goal of this form of nationalism is unity against foreign powers (Phelan, 2020).

O'Brien (2020) highlights Tibet and Xinjiang as contentious areas for ‘big nationalism’. O'Brien (2020) further states that ethnic separatism has been positioned as a threat to the nation. Originally, the discourse centred on the feudal past of the different ethnic minority groups (O'Brien, 2020), however, the ‘Global War on Terror’ and the 2009 riots in Urumqi expanded the discourse with Muslim minority groups being the focus of assimilation (Phelan, 2020). Using evidence from the White Paper *Historical Matters Concerning Xinjiang*, O'Brien (2020) found that there was evidence of ASC discourse related to the promotion of Putonghua language teaching amongst Uyghur people to strengthen their Chinese identity. Lin and Jackson (2021) also found evidence in news reports from government officials of the importance of creating a strong national identity.

4.1.2 Selection

The documents in this section have been taken from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China's (MoE) website and have been chosen as these demonstrate which discourses are being privileged by the State. Policy documents show the transformation of the selected imaginaries and are important technologies for understanding which discourses have been privileged by the state (Jessop, 2010).

The documents selected for analysis are the ‘14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Outline of Vision 2035’ (Chinese Government, 2021), the ‘Notice of the State Language Commission of the Ministry of Education on Printing and Distributing the “Thirteenth Five-Year” Development Plan for the National Language and Writing Industry’ (MoE,

2016), 'Opinions of the State Language Commission of the Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening the Language Work in Schools' (MoE, 2017) and 'Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening Language Work in the New Era' (MoE, 2020). All documents other than the 14th five-year plan were published on the Ministry of Education website, while the 14th five-year plan was published on the general government website. The 14th five-year plan was selected as it is the most recent medium-range plan published by the Chinese government, who typically produce outlines of their plans every five years (Zhu, 2019). The other three documents have been selected due to their explicit relevance to language in education.

For this dissertation it is also relevant to consider foreign language education as this may demonstrate other related discourses that are valued by the government. The most recent publication about foreign languages is the 'Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Actively Promoting the Opening of English Courses in Primary Schools' (MoE, 2001) and is over twenty years old.

MoE (2016)

The 13th five-year plan is the most recent extensive plan for LEP and highlights the main tasks and goals of language education. The first task is to popularize Putonghua and improve the level of language in "rural areas" to build a "prosperous society". "Prosperous" has economic connotations and can be categorised as NHC discourse.

There is also the presence of ASC discourse with language education needing to contribute to the "moral development" of students while conforming to "core socialist values". Positioning these two ideas next to each other may suggest that the MoE wishes to encourage the assimilation of beliefs to socialist ones indicating a goal of uniting the country under one cultural and moral position.

There are also indications of heritage discourse. The MoE states that they must "protect the languages of all ethnic groups" and that these are also an "important part of Chinese language and culture". This shows an awareness of the need to safeguard minority languages from extinction. Although this document has been published on the MoE website, this section has no reference to strategies for protecting these languages through education. This may indicate a weak commitment to heritage discourse as there is no clear strategy for this goal. Lin and Jackson (2021) also found that in government

statements the promotion of Putonghua had assimilationist undercurrents and that references to protecting minority languages were superficial.

MoE (2017)

This document is written with the goal of clarifying the views of the Chinese State's opinions on language policy in schools. The first section of the document is focused on promoting and popularizing Putonghua. By including the promotion of Putonghua in the first section it suggests that there will be limited focus on heritage discourse.

This document contains NHC discourse. Putonghua promotion is linked to improving the quality of "human resources", which may fit within NHC discourse as people are connected to their abilities as resources in as labour inputs rather than as individuals with rights. Speaking Putonghua is viewed as important for cultivating "high-quality talents", which again sits in a NHC discourse as people are viewed from their economic potential.

NHC discourse is also present in the document from the wider perspective of China's power.

"Doing a good job in the language and writing work of schools is a key link to give the full play to the fundamental and overall role of the language and writing business"

This provides an explicit link to the role of language for business and economic purposes, strongly privileging NHC discourse. Language is seen as a method of building a "moderately prosperous society"; this shows the privileging of using language education to further economic and development goals.

The document also highlights the need to promote Putonghua in "ethnic areas" this may position ethnic minorities as 'others' and implicitly suggesting the presence of ASC discourse as it is a targeted policy. The document also states that the promotion of Putonghua should be done to promote the "outstanding Chinese culture"; this implies that only one form of Chinese culture is valued, and that language education is a tool for constructing social cohesion.

MoE (2020)

In this publication, language "is related to the improvement of national quality and the all-round to development of people, it is related to the inheritance of history and culture,

economic and social development, and it is related to national unity and ethnic unity”. Immediately the document appears to favour NHC discourses and ASC discourses regarding languages.

The document suggests promoting Putonghua to aid “rural revitalisation” in “ethnic areas”. The use of revitalisation has connotations of development and suggests that the state views Putonghua as a means of improving the economic and social development of these areas. This arguably positions minority languages as limiting the opportunities for economic development and suggests NHC discourse. The privileging of NHC discourse can also be seen in the connection of developing “vocational skills and Putonghua” training in ethnic areas. Vocational skills have implications of NHC as these skills are explicitly used in the labour force, placing Putonghua skills in the same sentence as vocational skills further positions language education in an NHC discourse.

Chinese Government (2021)

The 14th five-year plan contains only one paragraph related to language education. However, as this document shows the wider vision of the Chinese Government it may be useful to analyse it. The paragraph includes the phrase “insist on morality and cultivating people”, the use of the word morality suggests developing of people beyond the economic or academic sphere. This may suggest developing people for political goals which would situate the language in social cohesion discourse. The final sentence of the paragraph is the only one explicitly relevant to language education.

“Improve the quality and level of education in ethnic areas, and increase the promotion of Putonghua”.

By situating language within the context of improving the quality in these areas problematises the inability to speak Putonghua by ethnic minorities and implicitly suggests that language is important in discourses related ASC. Ethnic minorities are essentially singled out as the focus which suggests that they need to assimilate.

MoE (2001)

The document is focused on improving communication and pronunciation, suggesting an interest in facilitating communication with countries globally. This does not indicate any particular discourse is favoured; however, the document indicates that English has been introduced as a compulsory subject to ensure that education is “modernized,

world-oriented and future-oriented”. This is arguably a form of GHC discourse as it connects foreign language learning to economic development. The use of “world-oriented” is in contrast to the documents focused on Chinese languages which were more inward focused; “world-oriented” instead indicates an outward focus.

4.1.3 Retention

The retention of discourses can be seen as the realization of discourse in practice (Verger, Fontdevila and Zancajo, 2017). As explained in the methodology section this will utilize previous research on the implementation of policy as in China education has devolved elements and policy implementation may vary.

China has a bilingual education policy in minority areas which involves teaching in both minority languages and Putonghua (MoE, 2012). There are three options for implementation (MoE, 2012):

1. First model: Mainly teaching in minority languages with the addition of Putonghua courses
2. Second model: Mainly teaching in Putonghua with the addition of ethnic language courses
3. Third model: Some courses taught in Putonghua, some courses taught in minority languages

Rehamo and Harrell (2020) conducted a study in Liangshan autonomous prefecture which has a large Yi minority population. They found that the number of first model schools had declined since the 1990s with the amount of time spent on the Yi language, Nuosu, falling dramatically over time. Rehamo and Harrell (2020) suggest that the decline in Nuoso classes stems from instrumental perspectives. Nuoso does not contribute to points for the gaokao and one principal interviewed stated that studying in Nuoso would limit job opportunities. This demonstrates that NHC discourse remains prevalent in the education system and feeds into teachers’ actions and beliefs. The reduction in first model bilingual education shows the reduced value of heritage and equity discourses.

In a study of another area of Yunnan, Wang (2011) also found a decline in bilingual education beginning in the 1990s. Wang (2011) highlighted that there is some perception that the local language is not useful for giving better career opportunities, highlighting the sustained NHC discourse. However, Wang (2011) did find some

indication of equity discourse persisting with the local language being described as a ‘crutch’; this suggests that at the educator level there is some recognition of the benefits of learning through mother-tongue. This is further demonstrated by the increased likelihood of bilingual education in lower grade levels (Wang, 2011).

Zhang and Tsung (2019) found similar trends in Qinghai. They found that bilingual education had shifted towards the second model with Putonghua being the more common MoI. The researchers indicated that the cause of the shift is not the attitude of Tibetan parents as they found many preferred Tibetan language instruction as they believed children learn more effectively in Tibetan than Chinese. This indicates that an equity discourse has remained with parents despite not being privileged by the government. Instead, the reduction of first model bilingual education appears to be the pursuit of provincial governments.

Like other ethnic minority areas, Xinjiang also has a bilingual education policy in schools, but the preferred model of implementation is the second model (Gupta and Veena, 2016). Gupta and Veena (2016) highlight that this form of implementation is underpinned by the need to create ethnic stability. Zhang and Yang (2021) interviewed teachers in schools in Urumqi and found that teachers viewed Putonghua as important for future job opportunities, indicating a retention of NHC discourse. These schools were also subject to only using minority languages for 15% of the time during teaching. Zhang and Yang (2021) found that this rule was not well implemented, and teachers used minority languages more to aid learning. This suggests that although equity discourse is not present in the selection of policy, it is still retained by teachers on the ground where there is an understanding of the benefits of mother-tongue education.

The gaokao also shapes the retention of policy. Local languages are not viewed as useful due to their lack of presence in the examination (Wang, 2011; Rehamo and Harrell, 2020), reducing the retention of equity and heritage discourses. The gaokao also impacts the teaching of foreign languages. Yan (2015) found that although the English curriculum had changed to have a more communicative focus which would seem logical within a GNC framework, much of the language instruction in high school became focused on test-taking skills. Yan (2015) found that the focus on achieving good scores on the gaokao was centred on the college admission rate and improving student opportunities to progress in education. This may fit within NHC discourse as students

are pitted against each other in competition and need to maximise their skills within the country to achieve economic success in the future.

4.1.4 Summary

The variation of discourse in Chinese LEP is diverse with ASC, NHC, GHC and heritage and equity discourses present in various forms. However, from government documents there appears to be a privileging of NHC discourse, with ASC discourse also present. Older documents suggested some heritage discourse, however, more recent documents did not. Therefore, it is not surprising that policy implementation reflects ASC and NHC discourse. However, those working directly with students also showcase the retention of NHC discourse. But equity discourse is also retained, even more so than it is selected by government.

4.2 Australia

4.2.1 Variation

Australia has limited documents produced at a federal level, therefore, relevant documents, media publications and academic papers of both language education and general language views are used for this section

Heritage discourse has long been present in the Australian context. In 1987 Lo Bianco published the National Policy on Languages for the Australian Government. Although, this document is over 30 years old it may still be relevant as no document has been produced by the Federal Government to replace it. Lo Bianco (1987, p.5) states that Australia should “recognize, value and take action” to ensure that the Aboriginal languages of Australia survive. This sits within heritage discourse as indigenous languages are recognised as being at risk of extinction and in need of support. Further, there is an even stronger heritage discourse as Lo Bianco (1987, p.5) asserts that an “appreciation and awareness” of these Aboriginal languages should be promoted amongst non-Aborigines. The use of “appreciation” and “awareness” also fits within heritage discourse as these languages are not being valued for anything beyond their cultural and historical purposes to non-Aborigines.

When considering language education, Lo Bianco (1987, p.16) again highlights the need to develop a “language awareness program” which focuses on “Aboriginal language issues” which include “socio-linguistic and cultural questions”. Again, the use

of “awareness” in combination with the terms “socio-linguistic” and “cultural” suggest a clear positioning of Indigenous languages of having heritage value.

However, Manon and Hajek (2020) arguably found a decline in heritage discourse in the period of 2007-2016. They completed an analysis of language and language education ideologies in Australian media. Manon and Hajek (2020) found that only 30 of the 261 articles were referencing indigenous languages; this contrasts with references to Chinese (163 times) and Japanese (132 times) Additionally, of the 43 articles which referenced bilingual education, only 6 were focused on indigenous language bilingual education (Manon and Hajek, 2020). This suggests a reduced relevance of heritage discourse in more recent years in media.

But beyond the media, heritage discourse has been increasing. In 2019 the UN held the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (IY2019). As part of this year the Australian Government produced The National Indigenous Languages Report (Australian Government, 2020), as well as other documents. IY2019 documents are in the Office for the Arts in the Australian Government website, rather than the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. In the report teachers are highlighted as key players to ensure languages are “passed on” (Australian Government, 2020); this is a clear form of heritage discourse as education is positioned to protect and ensure the continuation of some languages. Further, the report states that indigenous language use helps to raise “community pride in the local Indigenous culture”, sitting within a heritage discourse due to its focus on cultural aspects.

The report also contains equity discourse in relation to indigenous language education. The report states that using indigenous languages in school result in better engagement, higher achievement and more cognitive flexibility (Australian Government, 2020). This reflects discourse linked to the educational benefits which can be achieved through LEP. Additionally, the report includes a short discussion of the benefits of mother-tongue education for transitioning to second-language delivery. This situated indigenous language education in equity discourse as it is seen as a tool to aid education.

Australia has a history of policies which can be seen as promoting assimilation. Thomas (2022) states that prior to the 1950s these forms of discourse were dominant with policies aimed at removing Aboriginal children from their families to grow up within a European culture instead. Papademetre and Routoulas (2001) found that some Greek immigrant parents did not wish to send their children to ethnic schools because they saw

this as segregation and marginalising. This indicates that an ASC discourse was still present in Australia in the early 2000s. More recently, however, discourse related to social cohesion through assimilation is less present. The Australian Government (2017, p.13) published its multicultural statement in which it highlighted the role of English as a “critical tool for migrant integration”. This suggests that there is still some ASC discourse present in language education in Australia. However, the document includes a case study which references the strength of communicating with people in “their first language” and this is connected to the “social fabric of... communities” and “economic prosperity”. This use of first language suggests some degree of MSC discourse as cultural diversity is championed within language. Further, there is a suggestion of an NHC and GHC discourse as language is connected to economic opportunities.

Human capital discourse is present in other areas of language education in Australia. NHC discourse is prevalent in discussions on English as a MoI, while publications related to foreign language education have undercurrents of GHC. A prominent document on foreign language education is the Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG) 1994 report ‘Asian Languages and Australia’s Economic Future’. From the title of the report languages in Asia are clearly viewed through an economic lens and their position of increasing the level of human capital in the country.

Asian language skills have been linked to export opportunities since 1969 (COAG, 1994), which is a clear economic strategy. The report analyses which Asian countries have the largest export markets and in turn connects these countries with the languages of focus. East Asian people are described as “affluent” and “middle class” and are expected to have “higher disposable incomes” in the future (COAG, 1994, p.iv). The connection of East Asia with descriptors only related to financial terms shows that the focus on Asian language education is of encouraging capital from Asia to be brought to Australia, fitting within GHC discourse. This discourse is reinforced by stating that the “economic success” of Australia is “contingent” on Asian language skills. Contingent suggests that there is no other option than Asian languages suggesting the dominance of GHC discourse around second language learning.

The GHC discourse can be further seen by the suggested scale for proficiency. This scale is proposed for high school level language (COAG, 1994, p.xi). The scale is as follows from lowest level to highest level:

- “survival proficiency”

- “minimum social proficiency”
- “minimum vocational proficiency”
- “useful vocational proficiency”

The scale uses the term “vocational” for the top two levels of proficiency; this is positioning the use of language in work environments as the highest level of proficiency available, which strongly suggests that language is only useful in its position in generating income through working. This is a form of GHC discourse.

Furthermore, Manon and Hajek (2020) found that in the media, languages were viewed as enhancing “career prospects” and enabling students to be more “competitive”, as well as promoting “economic prosperity”. These terms all fit within GHC discourse. Competitiveness is clearly linked with neoliberal thought related to markets and suggests that the media perceives language education through a GHC lens.

Additionally, in Australia English is essentially the official language (Lo Bianco, 2009). NHC discourse can be seen in the wider media in relation to English as the language of instruction. Waller (2012) found that prominent actors criticised the poor outcomes of English education in some areas as limiting children’s opportunities. Waller (2012) argues that the media allowed the rise of conservative commentators who viewed indigenous languages as disadvantaging children particularly as indigenous education is perceived as a failure in the media. This positions English through its instrumental value in enhancing employment opportunities via the degradation of the perception of indigenous languages.

4.2.2 Selection

For this dissertation the focus is on explicit language education documents. Therefore, the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (Dawkins, 1992) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (Education Council, 2015) have been selected. These documents are some of the only documents produced at a federal level with an explicit focus on LEP, rather than language policy in general.

Dawkins (1992)

Dawkins (1992) privileges GHC discourse in the policy. Dawkins links language and literacy skills to “communication” skills and these skills to the ability to “compete in world markets” (Dawkins, 1992, p.1). The use of the word “compete” reflects the neoliberal beliefs and the need to develop human capital to optimise economic growth.

Further he adds that those with low levels of English competence are more likely to be unemployed, again connecting language skills with employment opportunities and the economic consequences of language skills.

The focus on learning of languages other than English also reflects a privileging of GHC discourse in language education. Dawkins (1992, p.15) states that priority in second language education should be subject to the “broader national interest”; this term could reflect numerous discourses, however, in the following paragraph Dawkins (1992, p.15) indicates that the proximity to Asia-Pacific and “overseas trade” should be viewed as a factor. This strongly suggests that he believes the national interest of Australia to be economic growth, reflecting a GHC discourse.

The policy is not confined to GHC discourse. Dawkins (1992) reiterates the national goals at the time which include the development of English competency to allow for participation in Australian society. This may position English as a marker of entrance to Australian society indicates ASC discourse and the need for some degree of assimilation. Competency in English is also of “obviously necessary for an individual to participate as fully as possible in Australian society” (Dawkins, 1992, p.iii). The use of “obviously” suggests a common-sense notion of the need to be competent at English to be fully Australian, emphasising ASC discourse. Additionally, Dawkins (1992, p.5) argues that English literacy skills are essential for “vocational development” and are necessary for the “world of work”, this suggests that English is the key language for employment which suggests the presence of NHC discourse.

Additionally, Dawkins (1992, p.4) does indicate the presence of heritage discourse. One of the key national goals is to maintain and develop “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages which are still transmitted”. The term maintain implies a need to continue the language for the sake of the languages itself which reflects EH discourse. Furthermore, Dawkins (1992) views Aboriginal languages as tools for “conservation” and as a “symbol”, again positioning indigenous languages in a heritage discourse frame.

It is worth considering that when this document was published the department was named the Department for Employment, Education and Training and has since been renamed to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. The department still connects education with employment highlighting the prevalence of human capital discourse in Australia education even after its renaming.

Education Council (2015)

The strategy is a form of policy agenda which is a technological tool used by the Australian government to privilege its chosen discourse (Jessop, 2010), therefore, even though it is not a formal policy, its publication by the Education Council highlights the privileged discourse. The document makes limited reference to language; however, the selected discourses can still be inferred from this.

There are two streams of discourse relevant to language education present in this publication: heritage and NHC. The Education Council begins the document by stating that:

“Governments across Australia affirm the right of Aboriginal and Torres Islander people to maintain languages and cultures...”

The key word in this segment is “right”; this suggests that the Education Council recognises the existence of language rights for minority groups. By using the word “affirm” the Education Council implies that action and deeper support beyond recognition should take place to aid these language rights, as this is published by the Education Council it would be assumed that this would be through education. This sentence demonstrates heritage discourse present in Australian Government discourse. However, beyond this statement the rest of the document takes a much weaker stance. The document states that the languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be “acknowledge[d]”, “reflect[ed]” and “respect[ed]”. The Education Council does not explain how these languages should be used or enhanced but merely that they should be recognised by the Australian people, indicating a weak heritage discourse on deeper inspection.

An NHC discourse occurs through the strategy’s approach to English education. Indigenous children must develop their English literacy to improve “life choices and options”. This positions English as the means of enhancing opportunities following education, which can be inferred from other elements of the document to mean work opportunities. This demonstrates an underlying privileging of GHC discourse in relation to language education choice for Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

4.2.3 Retention

GHC was the prominent discourse in foreign language education selection. Therefore, the analysis for retention is focused on the implementation of foreign language education and regional policy strategies.

In 2014 the Asia Education Foundation published a report on the status of languages at the Senior Secondary level. The report found that even though the government had aimed to boost languages the number of students taking languages had not increased (Asia Education Foundation, 2014), indicating that the GHC discourse around foreign languages has not been retained at the ground level. The Asia Education Foundation (2014) found that the business sector did not view language skills to be essential to recruiting employees and this affected education choices; this again further indicates that the GHC discourse is not retained in practice.

Oldfield (2022) highlights that in Australian testing the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is used to assess achievement in language skills for students. Oldfield (2022) suggests that this is the retention of NHC discourse as it shows the instrumental value of English and invalidates students' minority languages. This discourse is further stated by the perception of those not doing well on exams as deficient (Oldfield, 2022). Macqueen et al. (2019) found further evidence for the reduced retention of heritage discourse at the teacher level as they cited one teacher as calling the impact of NAPLAN as being “destructive” to bilingual programmes.

Australia consists of 6 states and two territories, their policies may reveal which discourses have been retained from the federal level.

Lee-Hammond and Jackson-Barrett (2019) highlight that in the Northern Territory bilingual programs have existed since the 1980s. However, more recently funding to indigenous schools has been reduced in this area (Oldfield, 2022). Mahboob et al. (2017) similarly found that funding was not high for indigenous languages across Australia, with more funding available for indigenous arts than languages. The reduced funding may indicate a decline in equity and heritage discourses being retained.

Gleeson (2021) further highlights the limited retention of heritage and equity discourse in language education. She states that teaching standards contain no reference to respecting the language background of students. Gleeson (2021) found that relative to New Zealand, there was more guidance and resources available to schools for students

who speak English as an additional language or dialect. The greater number of resources available may suggest that English is being promoted in schools highlighting that ASC and NHC discourse is retained over heritage and equity discourses.

The promotion of English also appears to be retained by teachers (Watkins, Lean and Noble, 2016). In a survey of multicultural education undertaken by Watkins, Lean and Noble (2016) English proficiency was viewed as an important requirement, with teachers believing it would increase social access. This may be related to social cohesion and would therefore suggest the retention of ASC discourse.

4.2.4 Summary

Australia shows a diverse presence of discourse at the variation level. Within foreign language education GHC discourse appears to be prominent, particularly within discourse surrounding teaching Asian languages. While with discussion related to indigenous languages there is some presence of equity and heritage discourses, particularly stemming from the influence of international organisations such as UNESCO. The media in Australia, however, appears to show the persistence human capital discourses with English medium instruction connected to NHC discourses. In selection the Australian government appears to privilege GHC and NHC discourses within its policy documents. Heritage and equity discourses do remain present but at a more superficial level. From a retention perspective heritage discourse appears to have been eroded in practice with reduced funding to indigenous languages. Similarly, GHC discourse also appears not to have been well-retained with no significant increases in the study of Asian languages. The main discourses retained appear to be linked to the importance of English education suggesting ASC and NHC discourses are the main discourses retained in Australian language education.

5 Discussion

5.1 Comparison of Australia and China

Australia and China both showed a tendency for GHC and HNC discourses to be selected, however, NHC discourses appeared to be better retained. In China, the state heavily promotes Putonghua and published documents with strong undercurrents of NHC. Putonghua is suggested to be essential for future economic and job prospects. Similarly in Australia, English the unofficial national language is heavily linked to NHC discourse, and this is retained at the teaching level. Both countries at the state level also make use of tools including high stakes testing to guide educators to coalesce with these views, in Australia this is through NAPLAN, while in China the gaokao guides teachers.

Both countries' governments also favour GHC discourses in foreign language education. The two countries highlight the need for competitiveness at the international level and that a workforce who can speak a foreign language is crucial to this. In Australia this is done through the promotion of Asian languages whereas in China this is primarily through the promotion of English. However, during the implementation stage this discourse does not appear to be retained. Australia has seen limited increases in the number of students studying Asian languages (Asia Education Foundation, 2014). However, in China although English is studied, the focus of communication appears to be lost by the end of high school. The focus on gaokao studies and subsequent college entrance exams (Yan, 2015) arguably strengthen NHC discourse because the focus on interactions globally is less prevalent. In both countries GHC discourse does not appear to be retained in implementation.

The need to speak the national language is suggested by both countries' governments to be a factor in achieving social cohesion. At the wider policy level Australia there appears to be a small presence of MSC discourse but ASC discourse is central in LEP and is retained in practice. O'Keeffe and Nipperess (2021) state that although multiculturalism was promoted in the early 1990s, between 1996-2007, assimilation was promoted which appears to have continued to the present. O'Keeffe and Nipperess (2021) argue that this assimilation discourse is linked to migration and the need for those who are resettling in Australia to integrate well in the country. However, from the analysis of policy in this dissertation the privileging of English through ASC discourse

appears to have impacted Australia's indigenous languages and eroded their presence in the country.

In China, however, ASC discourse does not appear to stem from the threat of migration. Clarke (2017) argues that the Chinese government has had a fear of separatism from Tibet and Xinjiang, two regions with large minority populations. This fear combined with anti-terrorism discourse post 9/11 and following terror attacks in Western regions of China led to a policy of assimilation (Clarke, 2017). The government's perceived threat of terrorism and extremism in these two areas is highlighted by the above average per capita spending on security, which is more than 3 times the national average in Tibet, and 4 times the national average in Xinjiang (Godbole, 2019). The perception of internal dissonance between some minority groups and the majority Han population may provide some explanation for the presence of ASC discourse in language education.

In both countries there was the presence of heritage discourse to the policy level, however, in practice this did not appear to be a factor in the implementation of policy. Both countries acknowledged the need for language minority rights to be protected but, few policies had been implemented. In China bilingual education policies in ethnic minority areas largely privilege Putonghua over minority languages. Australia also saw reduced implementation of bilingual programmes for indigenous languages in the Northern Territory. This suggests that heritage discourse is only at a superficial level and may be stemming from pressures from international organisations like UNESCO, rather than as a governmental goal.

Australia appeared to have more prevalence of equity discourse at the variation and selection levels. But in China although there was limited presence of equity discourse in policy, in implementation teachers in China appeared to be more aware of the benefits and need to teach through mother-tongue (Wang 2011; Zhang and Yang, 2021) than in Australia where there appeared to be less presence of equity discourse at the classroom level. However, it should be recognised that the retention analysis used secondary sources, and some equity discourse may be retained in implementation in Australia but there has just been limited research in this area. As highlighted in the variation section discourse amongst Han teachers in minority areas regarded Putonghua as superior to minority languages (Zhang and Yang, 2021), whereas Bahry (2012) found that minority teachers were more likely to support minority languages.

5.2 China and Australia compared to global trends

Australia and China do not appear unique in the discourses present that shape their LEP with similar findings in other countries.

In wider global discourse, GHC discourses are prevalent. Fortes (2017) found that in Brazil the growth of Portuguese-English bilingual schools could be viewed as an implication of globalization and the need to adapt to the global market. Likewise, in South Korea, Park (2022) highlights the domination of English in foreign language education as a direct consequence of neoliberalism and the need for South Korea to work with global market, again indicating the strong presence of GHC discourse. Additionally, Poudel and Choi (2021) identified the promotion of English as a foreign language to GHC discourses focused on job prospects and social mobility. These three examples demonstrate the prevalence of GHC discourse related to English as a language of study, aligning with the Chinese analysis.

Meanwhile, in countries which essentially have English as the national language there appears to be some GHC discourse in foreign language education like in Australia. Parrish (2021) argues that although England has seen a reduction in foreign language study the government plans to increase the number of Mandarin learners, with the view that this Mandarin proficiency will enable future business opportunities; this sits within an economic frame and GHC discourse.

US foreign language education policy also sees the presence of GHC discourse. In Utah, Valdez, Delavan and Freire (2016) categorise the policy of dual language education within GHC discourse. The authors found that policy documents for the dual language programme heavily privileged GHC discourses over equity discourses and the goal was fundamentally economic. Cervantes-Soon et al. (2021) also found that in Georgia and North Carolina GHC discourse was prevalent for dual language programs with programmes focused on increasing economic opportunities for white students. Additionally, in the US it seems as though GHC in foreign language education is replacing equity and heritage discourse by the appropriation of programmes in favour of white native students (Valdez, Delavan and Freire, 2016; Katznelson and Bernstein, 2017). In Australia and England foreign language education policies appeared to be more separate from policies which may be targeting minority language students.

Additionally, like China and Australia, the trend for equity and heritage discourse to be present at the policy level but not retained also occurs in other countries. In Nepal, there

has been some promotion of equity and heritage discourse through the implementation of mother-tongue education at the beginning of primary school, however, Poudel and Choi (2021) argue that this is not privileged as the government has not restricted English-medium instruction which is continuously expanding. This would suggest that although, there is the presence of heritage and equity discourse, ultimately GHC discourse is favoured; this remains in line with the findings on Australia and China.

This weak implementation of heritage and equity discourse which is then overtaken by GHC discourse may also be seen in policy in other countries. In India, a tripartite language system is used, Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013) argue that mother-tongue education is used in the early years of schooling or equity, however, a transition to English is done for economic reasons in later education stages. This clearly sits within a GHC discourse; but it arguably provides stronger support for equity and heritage discourses at early language stages than Australia and China who do not offer universal mother-tongue education.

ASC discourse is also a discourse underlying several countries' LEP. Jankiewicz, Knyaginina and Prina (2020) argue that the increased marginalization of minority languages in Russia in favour of the Russian language in education stem from assimilationist goals. Additionally, Weber and Horner (2010) found that Luxembourg's LEP has an ASC discourse underlying. Weber and Horner (2010) state that the use of a three-way LEP using the country's three official languages is done to maintain the status quo and that other languages present in the country are neglected. This reflects the findings in Australia and China.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This dissertation used a CPE approach to conduct an analysis of Australian and Chinese LEP. The dissertation separated discourses thematically to understand Australia and China's goals with language education, but also recognised the importance of implementation to understand discourse retention.

This research highlighted that discourse in language education is not static and the predominant discourse types in variation, selection and retention are not always the same. This suggests that it is important to analyse policy beyond just policy documents, but to consider wider influences including media, as well as how discourse is retained through implementation.

Although Australia and China appear different, their language education policies follow similar discourses. Australia and China both attempted to privilege human capital discourses. However, in both countries only NHC discourse was well retained with GHC largely being discarded during the implementation of foreign language education policies. Additionally, ASC discourse was privileged by both countries and was retained to some degree in implementation. These findings largely fitted within global trends, suggesting that countries globally are using LEP to improve social cohesion and achieve economic growth.

Furthermore, although equity and heritage discourses were present in both countries' variation of discourse particularly following UNESCO's influence, at the selection and retention stages this was largely lost. Borjian (2014) had argued that organisations such as UNESCO had high degrees of influence on LEP. However, this dissertation found that UNESCO was less influential in LEP and that its favoured discourses (equity and heritage) were reduced at the policy selection and retention levels. This may suggest that China and Australia engage with UNESCO at a superficial level and do not reflect this in their policy or in practice.

6.2 Recommendations

Future research may focus on why discourse changes between variation, selection and retention. This may include addressing why GHC discourse is lost in retention during policy implementation even though it is privileged at the government level. Australia and China both showed evidence of this with foreign language education. It may be

worthwhile to explore further the discrepancies between foreign language education policy and implementation and whether GHC discourse is retained between these stages. This research may be relevant across countries because as shown in the discussion GHC discourse is prevalent in LEP globally, but there is less research into the implementation of these policies and their effectiveness.

Another area of research may be on UNESCO's influence on LEP globally which may offer insight into the reduction of equity and heritage discourse after the variation stage. This may help to guide UNESCO and other organisations advocating for equity and heritage benefits of indigenous languages to better support for their agendas

Finally, this dissertation highlighted that there may be some variation between how minority and non-minority teachers valued minority languages (Bahry, 2012). This dissertation found that China appeared to retain some equity discourse at the classroom level. However, in Australia there was less evidence of this due to a lack of current research available. Further research on Aboriginal/ethnic minority teachers in Australia and China may help to explain differences in the retention of equity discourse. This may also help to guide countries policy strategies if they aim to create more equitable outcomes for minorities through language education.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Abbreviations

ASC	Assimilationist social cohesion
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPE	Cultural Political Economy
EH	Equity/heritage
EMI	English as a medium of instruction
FCPNM	Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHC	Globalised human capital
ILO	International Labour Organization
IY2019	2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages
LEP	Language education policy
LHR	Linguistic human rights
MoI	Medium of instruction
MoE	Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China
MSC	Multicultural social cohesion
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NHC	Nationalised human capital
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization