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## Cross-Cultural Attitudes in Foreign Language Programmes

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**Abstract**

One of the central goals of language education in the global context is the fostering of favourable intercultural attitudes. As the world gets smaller, as communication and interaction between peoples of different races, cultures and language backgrounds increase, so the need for that interaction to be harmonious increases. Most language policies and language syllabuses espouse improved cross-cultural understanding and more favourable cross-cultural attitudes as central goals. Yet there are relatively few empirical studies that demonstrate the effect of language learning on cross-cultural attitudes or identify the variables in the language teaching/learning process that influence cross-cultural attitudes or that can be most effectively utilised to foster more favourable attitudes. This paper reports a pilot study in Queensland schools examining the relationship between language learning, cross-cultural attitudes, and elements of language teaching methods. The paper reviews the literature, outlines theoretical and empirical arguments, reports the results of the study, and draws conclusions for language policy and language teaching methods in the context of the role of language teaching in the process of globalisation.

**I INTRODUCTION: AN ENIGMA**

This paper presents an enigma, an enigma that gets at the very heart of what language teaching is about. Most language teachers would agree that one of the central goals of

language education is the fostering of favourable cross-cultural attitudes. As the world gets smaller and as societies become more diverse, as communication and interaction between peoples of different races, cultures and language backgrounds increase,

so the need for that interaction to be harmonious increases. Most language policies and language syllabuses espouse improved intercultural understanding and more favourable cross-cultural attitudes as central goals. Yet there are few empirical studies that conclusively demonstrate that language teaching has a positive effect on cross-cultural attitudes or identify the variables in the language teaching/learning process that can most effectively be manipulated to foster more positive attitudes. This paper reports a pilot study in Queensland schools that sought to examine the relationship between language learning and cross-cultural attitudes and to identify what elements of language teaching methods might have been factors in influencing those attitudes.

Yet, there is an enigma. On the one hand, language policy-makers and curriculum designers seem to believe that the fostering of cross-cultural understanding and more harmonious intercultural relationships are central goals for language teaching but, on the other hand, a review of the research literature reveals at least as many studies that point to no decisive cause-effect relationship or even a negative one.

A great deal of the immensely successful and influential work of the Council of Europe's modern languages projects grows from a belief that language teaching and learning favourably influence intercultural understanding and attitudes. Recommendation R(82)18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe urges signatory states to implement its foreign language education policies which it justifies, in part, in asserting:

*... it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues*

*in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination; ... [Recommendation No. R(82) 18 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers]*

Amongst many others, the report of the Council's project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" re-states one of the aims of European language teaching as:

*...- to promote the personal development of the individual, with ... positive attitude towards other peoples and their cultures, free from prejudice, intolerance and xenophobia ... [Trim 1997: 5 – 6]*

The Council of Europe is not the only organisation that believes that language teaching can influence learners towards more favourable attitudes. The World Federation of Modern Language Teachers (FIPLV) cooperates with UNESCO which funds "Linguapax" workshops, the undoubted assumption of which is that language learning contributes to world peace through the fostering of better intercultural understanding and attitudes [cf. *FIPLV World News*, April 1995]. The report of Workshop Number 5, held in Australia in 1995, called for

*...language in education policies which aim at ... the development of the spirit of tolerance and the culture of peace. [Cunningham and Candelier 1995: 14]*

A special interest group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching focuses on "Global Issues in Language Education" with a regular newsletter on issues of language teaching that contribute to world peace, essentially through the fostering of improved intercultural attitudes. The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers

Associations has established a similar special interest group to pursue Linguapax objectives.

Most national or state language policies and syllabuses are no less explicit. One of the basic considerations in the 1998 advice of a "group of experts" mandated by the Swiss General Education Commission to develop a policy on the teaching of languages was that

*La connaissance des langues voisines ou partenaire permet non seulement une **communication transfrontalière**, mais contribue aussi et surtout à une **compréhension mutuelle** et à une **attitude de tolérance** à l'égard d'autres cultures.<sup>1</sup>* [Conférence suisse des directeurs cantonaux de l'instruction publique 1998: 4]

In Britain, the 1990 National Curriculum stated as one of the aims of foreign language teaching:

*... to offer insights into the culture and civilisation of the countries where the language is spoken ... to encourage positive attitudes to ... speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic attitude to other cultures and civilisations.* [Secretary of State 1990, cited in Morgan 1993: 63]

In Australia, successive national policy statements have strongly endorsed the fostering of more favourable cross-cultural attitudes and intercultural understanding as goals for language teaching either in the context of Australia's multicultural society or in the global context as a pre-requisite to improved economic performance. The Australian Language and Literacy Policy, for

example, adopted in 1991, accepted the view that

*... language proficiency improves social cohesion, communication and understanding throughout the Australian community* [DEET 1991a: 62],

and asserted that language teaching

*... can promote ... greater tolerance within the broader community of linguistic differences in Australia and internationally ...* [DEET 1991a: 63]

The foreign language syllabuses of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies all state as part of the justification for language teaching:

*In addition, learning a second language widens horizons and ... fosters cross-cultural understanding and empathy with people of other languages and cultures whether they be members of the multicultural Australian society or from other countries.* [Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Queensland 1995: 1]

## II RESEARCH OVERVIEW

For most language teachers such views are so fundamental to their beliefs in their professional activity as to be unquestionable; yet, the literature is at best ambiguous and the empirical evidence is at best equivocal and sometimes contrary. Wilkins, reviewing relevant research, concluded:

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<sup>1</sup> Emphases in the original text. In approximate translation: *Knowledge of neighbouring or partner languages allows not only communication across national borders but contributes also and especially to mutual understanding and an attitude of tolerance towards other cultures.*

*.. neither the empirical nor the theoretical research entitles us to make strong claims with regard to the possibility that the learner of a foreign language not only faces psychological demands but also gains psychological benefits ...*[Wilkins 1987: 32]

Ingram, from 1975 onwards, presented comprehensive theoretical arguments related to the nature of language learning and personality development and adduced empirical evidence to argue that foreign language teaching could have a decisive impact on cross-cultural attitudes provided that it was properly structured to utilise active communicative methods and, in particular, incorporated "community involvement" or interaction with native speakers of the language in real-life situations as a central principle of syllabus design and methodology. He also argued that, in attempting to effect attitudinal change, it was highly desirable for learners to exteriorise their intuitive responses and attitudes and subject them to rational consideration or "cerebration"; "community involvement" approaches enable learners to encounter native speakers as individuals within their own culture, they learn to see them as individuals with some features similar to their own as well as with cultural features that represent different views of the world and different ways of expressing similar needs and desires; "community involvement" approaches, it was argued, also enable teachers to take advantage of the "culture shock" that occurs in the course of students' initial interaction with other cultures in order to stimulate discussion on cultures, to try to explain and rationally change any of the students' adverse reactions and prejudices, and, in this way, to effect change in cross-cultural attitudes [see Ingram 1980, 1980a, 1980b, 1978, 1977, 1977a]. Ingram [1980b and 1980c] also provided empirical evidence that this approach could lead to changes in

attitudes and demonstrated that, in a short "community involvement" approach to the teaching of French at university level, significant changes in cross-cultural attitudes occurred both in attitudes to the target (French) culture and towards French speakers and to other cultures and people (including the Australian indigenous culture and peoples).

Other studies cited extensively elsewhere [Ingram 1978, 1980b, 1999] also claim to have found or argued for a favourable impact of language teaching and learning on cross-cultural attitudes [e.g., Riestra and Johnson 1964, Gardner and Smythe 1975, Bartley 1969, 1970]. One of the most comprehensive reviews of the relationship between language learning and attitude change is that by Morgan [1993]. Morgan reviewed largely British and American literature going back as early as 1932 though much of the research she considered came from outside language teaching. In a comprehensive review of the research, she notes, *inter alia*, research on the effect of "externalising" issues for discussion and notes that longer term change is more likely to occur where affective reactions are complemented by "cognitive processing" in which learners identify and talk about their experiences and attitudes and concludes:

*What is clear...is that attitude change does not operate in isolation. In order for change to take place, some basic restructuring on a cognitive level with probable shifts in affectivity must occur.*  
[Morgan 1993: 72]

She also noted research that showed that role play, in which learners played the role of people in the target culture, was effective in having them understand the other culture and develop more favourable attitudes towards members of that culture. It was important, however, that role play be conducted in a non-threatening manner and this may lend support

to the view that community involvement in which learners interact with native speakers or their surrogates in real-life or realistic situations is most likely to be effective in fostering favourable attitude development when it is accompanied by considerable support from the teacher in preparing for the experience and, subsequently, in having learners talk about and come to understand what has occurred and their own reactions to it. She observes that

*In order for students to appreciate and understand new cultures, it is crucial for them to identify and voice their present thoughts and feelings about that culture and about their own culture.* [Morgan 1993: 74]

Morgan notes that in teaching cultural understanding it is necessary to alert students to the schemata and beliefs of their own culture and so to make them aware of the relativity of this particular pattern amongst alternatives (including the target culture). She cites research which endorses the importance of the opportunity for learners to re-conceptualise their prior experience through the new language, as a result of, for example, field trips and other activities which allow them to talk about and re-conceptualise their home environment in the target language [cf. Ingram 1978 and 1979].

Kramersch, in discussing the training of American businesspeople to interact more effectively with their foreign counterparts, notes that learning a language and learning to interact with other people leads one to better understand one's own identity, culture, and systems and to recognise that it is a particular

system different from but no more justifiable or unjustifiable than any other culture. She says:

*...As American students learn to understand rather than to judge other peoples' ways of viewing the world, they can better appreciate their own perspective in its global, historical, and social context and accept that perspective as one among many possible expressions of modern society.* [Kramersch 1993: 8 – 9]

It seems, however, that learning to understand must come as a result, at least partly, of interaction and contact with speakers of the other language or with other cultures. Knowledge alone does not seem to favourably affect attitudes. Ingram [1978, 1980b] adduced evidence for this and argued that knowledge alone leaves learners esconced in their own culture, looking out, often judgementally, at the other culture, observing its differences like walking through a museum. Jones [1996] reported on a study by the Australian Catholic University of more than 2,000 students in formal religious courses teaching about the different religions. The outcome was a worsening of attitudes and a conclusion that formal teaching about religion decreased tolerance and increased prejudice with those who had done more formal study showing the worst effects. On the other hand, Mantle-Bromley and Miller [1991] showed that in language classes that included "multicultural sensitivity lessons" more favourable attitudes were achieved than classes without such lessons [Mantle-Bromley and Miller 1991: 422 423].

Other studies have shown that the most important variables in determining cross-cultural attitudes are such "background variables" as common socioeconomic class, social attitudes and parental attitudes. Byram and Estarte-Sarries [1991] looked at the effect

of French teaching on students' knowledge of and attitudes towards French people but concluded that the most important variable was the students' backgrounds.

Other studies again have argued or claim to have shown that interaction is the critical variable in determining whether an educational experience will have a favourable effect on cross-cultural attitudes. Ingram's study of the effect of "community involvement" on the attitudes of university French students was very favourable [Ingram 1978, 1980b, 1980c]. Clement, Gardner and Smythe [1977] assessed the attitudes of Grade 8 anglophone students before and after a short trip to a francophone environment and found that the "high contact group" showed more positive attitudes towards French people and their language.

Mantle-Bromley and Miller [1991] also cite studies, some of which claim to show that contact with the target language group improves the cross-cultural attitudes of learners (with the frequency of that contact being significant) while others claim to show that "bicultural exchanges" did not achieve significant attitudinal change [Mantle-Bromley and Miller 1991: 418 - 419]. Similarly, Byram and Estate-Sarries [1991], as already noted, found that the experience of visiting other countries was less significant in determining attitudes than "background variables". Indeed, one might well point to the many conflict situations around the globe in which different ethnic groups have frequent interaction with each other, sometimes with extremely negative attitudinal outcomes [see also Jaspers and Hewstone 1983].

Most challenging to the belief that language teaching will favourably influence the direction of cross-cultural attitudes are the studies that claim to show that language classes actually create less favourable attitudes. Mantle-Bromley and Miller [1991]

cite a number of studies that show this adverse effect and, in their own study, attitudes became less favourable during the first semester of a language class. After a subsequent study, Mantle-Bromley concludes:

*... students' attitudes do not (as we might hope) become more positive merely by being in the language class. Mounting evidence suggests, in fact, that without teacher intervention, students become not more, but less positive about other languages and cultures after initial exposure to language study ... [Mantle-Bromley 1995 : 378].*

However, Mantle-Bromley did conclude from her study that, if there was appropriate intervention by the teacher, a decisive improvement in cross-cultural attitudes could be achieved. Significantly, this intervention took the form of discussions about attitudes, direct exposure to the other culture, discussion of the importance of intercultural understanding, and lessons which encouraged students to understand what caused and maintained their own attitudes [Mantle-Bromley 1995: 377 - 378].

In brief, despite the strong belief that language teachers, policy-makers and syllabus writers have in the beneficial effects of language teaching on students' cross-cultural attitudes, the evidence for or against this view is far from definitive. For this reason, a pilot project was undertaken to examine cross-cultural attitudes in Australian schools, to try to see whether involvement in foreign language learning was an influential factor in cross-cultural attitudes, and to identify what variables in the language teaching process might have contributed to the attitudes observed.

### III DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

**III.1 Project Aims:** The main aims of the project were to

- review the literature on cross-cultural attitude change and language learning;
- develop and trial cross-cultural attitude assessment instruments;
- identify what effect, if any, foreign language learning has on learners' cross-cultural attitudes;
- identify the variables in language learning and teaching that influence cross-cultural attitudes (e.g., duration of learning, the language learned, proficiency level attained);
- identify the variables in language syllabus design and methodology that can be controlled to favourably influence learners' cross-cultural attitudes;
- assess whether there is any link between what teachers value and students' cross-cultural attitudes;
- assess whether personal and social background variables (such as socioeconomic class or home language) affect attitudes and override any influence from language programmes;
- make recommendations for syllabus design and methodology in order to favourably influence learners' cross-cultural attitude development;

### III.2 Method:

**Hypotheses:** Though the study raised many issues that could be explored, the central hypotheses tested in this study are these:

*Hypothesis 1:* That the responses to a cross-cultural attitude survey of students currently studying a foreign language will be significantly more positive than those of students who are not currently studying a foreign language (probability preset, *a priori*, at .05).

*Hypothesis 2:* That the responses to a cross-cultural attitude survey of students who have studied a foreign language for four or more years will be significantly more positive than those of students who have studied a foreign language for less than four years (probability preset, *a priori*, at 0.05).

**Project Design:** The original longitudinal design of the project became severely curtailed when the funding allocation announced was less than one tenth of that sought. Consequently, the project took the following form:

1. A review of the literature on the role of language teaching in effecting changes in cross-cultural attitudes
2. Adaptation of questionnaires designed to elicit students' cross-cultural attitudes
3. A small pilot survey to test the comprehensibility and manageability of the survey instrument with Year 9 and 10 students
4. Development of a short teacher questionnaire to elicit information on

- teacher values in language teaching programmes
5. Selection of schools to provide a spread of languages, durations of language learning, school types and probable socioeconomic classes
  6. Data collection in the schools using a set of attitude questionnaires with Year 10 students and an information questionnaire with their teachers
  7. Analysis of the results
  8. Preparation of the report.

**Timing of the Study:** The timing was both unfortunate and significant to the project in that, at the time the project was running, the election of a controversial Federal member of Parliament, Pauline Hanson, had not long occurred, a noisy public debate on the merits of immigration was in full swing, a debate which, in the eyes of many people, degenerated into a nasty debate on issues of racism, the merits of Asian (and other) migration to Australia, and funding to Australian indigenous persons. There is now strong evidence that the so-called Hanson-phenomenon will be short-lived: Hanson was heavily defeated electorally after one parliamentary term and electoral support for her party has dropped off dramatically from a peak in Queensland of some 25% to approximately 5% now. Nevertheless, at the

time that the survey was conducted, the debate was at its height and was a frequent topic of public discussion in the press and media and on talk-back radio.

**The Subjects:** The main subjects were 598<sup>1</sup> Year 10 *students* in Brisbane. The students and their schools were chosen to provide a cross-section of socioeconomic classes, a range of languages, and a range of language learning experiences.

It turned out that almost all the students had spent some time in language classes even though approximately 40% were not currently studying a language. Delays in obtaining approval to conduct the survey in State schools meant that the proportion of non-State schools had to be increased to enable the survey to be completed in reasonable time: the final distribution was 7 State High Schools and 10 non-State.

Of the 598 students who answered the questionnaire 57% (338) were female and 43% (255) were male<sup>2</sup>. Most (95%) were aged 14 or 15. Most were native English speakers with English the language spoken at home (87%) but another 25 languages were also spoken at home, the most frequent of which were a Chinese language (5.5%) and Hindi (1%). Almost half the students had learned or were learning Japanese with the next most frequent languages being French and German. These figures are shown in Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes students failed to answer particular questions and so, in the report that follows, numbers do not always add up to exactly 598.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the report of the project, where small discrepancies seem to occur in the numbers, it is because not all respondents (students or teachers) answered all the questions in their respective questionnaires.



The 24 *teachers* surveyed taught in the 7 State and 10 non-State secondary schools the students were in. Half (12) of the teachers taught Japanese, 4 were teachers of French, 3 of German, 2 of Indonesian, 1 of Italian and 1

of Chinese. Sixty-Five (15) of the teachers had taught for 8 years or more. Twelve (52%) had lived and worked for one year or more overseas but 11 (48%) had no overseas experience. See Table 2.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Students Surveyed**

<b>Total Student Numbers</b>		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Did not answer</b>				
598		255 (43%)	338 (57%)	5 (1%)				
<b>AGE</b>								
<b>13 years</b>	<b>14 years</b>	<b>15 years</b>	<b>16 years</b>	<b>17 years</b>				
3 (0.5%)	280 (47%)	288 (48%)	20 (3%)	1 (0.2%)				
<b>LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME</b>								
<b>English</b>	<b>A C h i n e s e Language</b>	<b>Hindu</b>	<b>Others</b>					
87%	4.5%	1%	7%					
<b>LANGUAGE LEARNING STATUS</b>								
<b>Total No. of students answering item</b>	<b>C u r r e n t l y studying a language</b>	<b>Not currently studying a language</b>		<b>Never studied a language</b>				
593	354 (60%)	230 (39%)		9 (1.5%)				
<b>Languages currently studied</b>			<b>Languages previously studied</b>					
Jp.	Fre.	Ger.	Ch.	Othe r	Jp	Ger	Fr	Other
156	77	68	12	41	156	63	30	19
<b>DURATION OF LANGUAGE STUDY</b>								
<b>4 or more years</b>			<b>Less than 4 years</b>					
73%			27%					

**Table 2: Teacher Characteristics**

<b>TEACHERS</b>		<b>SCHOOLS WHERE TEACHERS ARE TEACHING</b>						
<b>Tot. of Teachers</b>		<b>State High Schools</b>				<b>Non-State Secondary Schools</b>		
24		7				10		
<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS PER LANGUAGES TAUGHT</b>								
<b>Tot. of Teachers</b>	<b>Jp.</b>	<b>Fre.</b>	<b>Ger.</b>	<b>Indon.</b>	<b>Italian</b>	<b>Chin.</b>	<b>No Ans</b>	
24	12	4	3	2	1	1	1	
<b>TEACHERS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE</b>								
<b>Tchers</b>	<b>Loc.</b>	<b>0 years</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>2-3 yrs</b>	<b>4-5 yrs</b>	<b>6-7 yrs</b>	<b>8-8+ yrs</b>	<b>No Ans</b>
24	Aust.	0	1	3	2	2	15	1
24	O'seas	11	6	2	1 ( N o t t g)	1	2	1

**The Questionnaires<sup>1</sup>:** Because of the limited funding for the project, the original intention to develop and validate attitude survey instruments specifically for this project become impractical. Consequently, the researchers considered a number of existing survey instruments and their previous usefulness and modified them to better suit the project's aims and subjects [e.g., Ingram 1980c, Gardner 1985a, Gardner and MacIntyre 1993, Mantle-Bromley and Miller 1991, Mantle-Bromley 1995]. The student questionnaire was then briefly trialled with Year 9 and 10 students who were not to be included in the main project.

The *student questionnaire* contained eleven questions, each with a number of different component questions. They are a mixture of Likert Scale and other types. Question 1 mainly sought personal information about the students such as that shown in Table 1 above. Question 2 used Likert Scale items to elicit the students' attitudes to the learning of languages. Question 3 asked students to respond to common statements relevant to language learning and, especially, attitudes to migrants, other cultures and Australian multiculturalism. Question 4 was largely a set of distractor questions about their language classes and their learning strategies. Question 5 focussed on learning activities. Questions 6 to 10 used an identical set of semantic differential scales to elicit the students' attitudes to speakers of the language they are learning, to their fellow Australians, to Europeans, to Asians, to Australian indigenous peoples (i.e., Australian Aboriginals), to their language teachers, and to themselves. Question 11 sought

information on things that the students would like to see changed in their language classes. Together with Question 5, it reflects the students' preferred learning activities.<sup>1</sup>

The *teacher questionnaire* contained seven questions designed to elicit their values and teaching activities and to give some indication of the attainments of students at Year 10 level. Question 1 sought information on the language taught and their years of experience. Question 2 sought information on the language teaching goals that the teachers most valued while Question 3 asked them to list the typical activities used in their language classes. Question 4 asked the teachers to indicate assessment item types that they commonly used. Question 5 sought the names of the textbooks that were being used. Question 6 asked the teachers to rate the importance of some nine factors that might influence the design of work programmes. Question 7 asked the teachers to rate the typical proficiency level achieved by Year 10 students.

## IV OUTCOMES

### IV.1 Adequacy of the Questionnaires:

The student questionnaire proved to be reasonably satisfactory, the questions and their wording caused no significant problems, and the questionnaire proved to be statistically reliable with figures generally between 0.84 and 0.92 for Questions 6 to 10 though Question 11 was lower (0.64) undoubtedly because of the ambiguity over the "no" and "no change" options.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of their length, the questionnaires are not presented with this paper but are available on request from the authors.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the six options of the Likert-type scales in the questionnaire have, for the purpose of this report, been collapsed in the analyses into positive-negative. The principal reason for this, apart from providing an initial overview, was that the differences between groups were slight but it seemed informative to try to identify possible trends.

**IV.2 Student Attitudes: Cross-cultural Attitudes:** The main purpose of the study was to examine students' cross-cultural attitudes. Table 3 summarises the results<sup>1</sup>.

Overall, attitudes of Year 10 students to other cultural groups are quite favourable, certainly more positive than negative, and there was no significant difference in attitudes whether students were in a foreign language programme or not and whether they had learned the language for less than 4 years or more (the lack of significance being confirmed by *t-tests* of independent samples). However, when one looks more closely at the tables, some tendencies do appear. On the one hand, there is a tendency (just 4%) for those in the foreign language programme to be more favourably inclined towards the target language group than those who had dropped the subject (mostly eighteen months earlier at the end of Year 8). On the other hand, those who have been learning the language for less than 4 years show a very slight tendency (2.88%) to be more favourably disposed to the target language group than those who have been learning the language for 4 or more years. Their attitudes to Australians are virtually indistinguishable, as are attitudes to Europeans, except that those who have studied

languages for more than 4 years have responded slightly less favourably. It should perhaps be recalled from Table 1 that about half of the students are in Asian language programmes.

However, the scores for attitudes towards Asians are considerably and significantly lower than for Europeans and the target foreign language group and those towards Australian Indigenous persons are the lowest of all (see Tables 3, 7 and 8). Again, it is noticeable that attitudes of those who have studied a language for less than 4 years are slightly more positive towards Asians (by just over 5%) than are those of students who have studied the language for 4 or more years (and, again, one has to remember that about half the students were studying or had studied Asian languages). This again makes one question the hypothesis that language learning will produce more favourable cross-cultural attitudes. The fact that attitudes to Asians are lower than towards Europeans even though half the students were in Asian language classes also suggests that other factors, background variables, might have been influencing the students' attitudes more than the language teaching they were experiencing.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in all the tables, the numbers and percentages for those who are either in or not in foreign language classes relate to the whole cohort (see Table 1) whereas the numbers and percentages for those "Learning a Foreign Language for less than 4 years or 4 years or more" relate to those who are currently studying a foreign language (354, see Table 1).

**Table 3: Overall Attitudes to other Cultures/Races amongst Year 10 Students**

<b>Cult. Group</b>	<b>LG FL &lt; 4 yrs</b>	<b>LG FL =&gt; 4 yrs</b>	<b>FL in 1998</b>	<b>Not FL in '98</b>
1. Target FL	78.44	75.56	78.063	73.813
2. Australians	79.38	81.44	81.063	81.313
3. Europeans	79.44	75.5	80.063	81.375
4. Asians	71.13	66	68.438	65.5
5. Aus. Indigenous	51.75	53.56	53.375	55.5
6. Lang. Teachers	77.56	73.81	75.938	68.38
7. Self	87.75	86.75	86.13	88.313
<b>Attitude to other Cult. Groups (av. of 1, 3, 4, 5)</b>	70.19	67.66	69.98	69.05

(To calculate the figures in Table 3, the percentage of students giving positive responses was calculated for each item in each question and the average of all the items in each question calculated to give a measure of the overall picture that emerges from the complex of attitudes to that particular cultural group as manifested in each item-response.)

It is of interest to note that attitudes to language teachers (Table 9) are slightly more favourable (just under 4%) amongst those who have studied a language for less than four years than for those who have studied it for more. A greater and significant difference was found between those no longer in a language programme and those currently in a language programme, the latter yielding a score just over 7% more positive, (the difference being significant at the  $p < .05$  level). One has to surmise that students' perceptions of their teachers may be a factor in whether or not they continue with language study. Nevertheless, overall attitudes to language teachers by all groups are quite positive (certainly considerably more positive than negative) and most similar overall to that towards Asians.

Overall, one has to conclude that attitudes to other cultural groups are generally reasonably positive (certainly more positive than negative) though attitudes to Australian Indigenous persons were less favourable than to Asians, the target foreign language group, Europeans, or Australians (in that increasing order).

However, a more detailed study of attitudes as revealed by the items in each question (Tables 4 to 10) suggests that background variables, including especially the public discussion surrounding "One Nation" and Pauline Hanson, had some influence on student attitudes. The image presented of Asians by the racist propaganda at the time of the Hanson debate suggested that Asian immigrants were unwilling to integrate into Australian society, though it was not disputed that they worked hard, many brought substantial sums for investment as business migrants, and they did well in school and business, the propaganda often suggested that they stayed in their own groups rather than integrate with Australians, and that much of their wealth was repatriated to their country of origin. These false views, much trumpeted by One Nation supporters, seem reflected in the students' assessment (Table 7) that Asians have a relatively high level of prejudice, are secretive, and are different from Australians, being rated as less handsome, friendly, or honest but harder working than Australians and about as successful as them. It is also highly significant, and undoubtedly a reflection of the One Nation

debate, that Australians were rated by the students as very prejudiced and more so than any of the other groups. It is perhaps significant that the persons they saw as least prejudiced were, first, their language teachers and then themselves.

The students' self-esteem seems to be high, with very positive attitudes towards themselves (see Table 10). It is curious, however, that those studying a language in Year 10 and those who have studied a language for 4 or more years believe themselves not to be as clever as do the other two student groups. In fact, it is commonly

believed in Australian schools that students who continue with language studies tend to be more able. One might surmise that excessive emphasis on formal accuracy and the struggle to communicate with limited resources convinces language students that they are not very clever. Significantly, the teachers rated grammar exercises and formal grammar teaching very highly as preferred activities.

Overall, though the difference between groups is slight, one can at least conclude that the evidence does not exist to say that language learning itself produces significantly more positive attitudes.

**Table 4: Q6. Attitude to Speakers of Target Foreign Language  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)**

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. <b>not</b> studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	81	82	82	69
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	55	61	58	61
Clean - Dirty	86	76	82	78
Handsome - Ugly	61	55	58	58
Colourful - Colourless	83	69	75	72
Friendly - Unfriendly	81	82	82	79
Honest - Dishonest	80	79	80	77
Clever - Stupid	79	81	92	77
Kind - Cruel	76	81	81	72
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	80	79	80	75
Polite - Impolite	83	79	80	78
Successful - Unsuccessful	88	87	87	81
Reliable - Unreliable	86	77	82	76
Hardworking - Lazy	87	83	86	86
Civilised - Uncivilised	88	85	86	83
Open - Secretive	61	53	58	59
Overall	78.44	75.56	78.06	73.81

**Table 5: Q7. Attitude to Australians**  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. not studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	85	85	86	91
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	29	34	32	35
Clean - Dirty	89	87	89	86
Handsome - Ugly	91	89	91	89
Colourful - Colourless	88	91	90	89
Friendly - Unfriendly	94	95	94	92
Honest - Dishonest	83	79	81	78
Clever - Stupid	70	77	74	72
Kind - Cruel	87	78	88	88
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	73	77	76	72
Polite - Impolite	78	83	81	82
Successful - Unsuccessful	85	89	86	87
Reliable - Unreliable	77	82	80	82
Hardworking - Lazy	63	70	67	80
Civilised - Uncivilised	90	96	92	89
Open - Secretive	88	91	90	89
Overall	79.38	81.44	81.06	81.31

**Table 6: Q8 (i). Attitude to Europeans**  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. not studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	87	90	89	89
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	38	39	38	42
Clean - Dirty	85	75	85	91
Handsome - Ugly	85	86	86	82
Colourful - Colourless	77	76	66	86
Friendly - Unfriendly	76	85	86	84
Honest - Dishonest	84	84	84	84
Clever - Stupid	73	76	75	71
Kind - Cruel	81	83	82	85
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	87	88	88	84
Polite - Impolite	80	87	84	90

Successful - Unsuccessful	91	92	92	85
Reliable - Unreliable	85	81	84	83
Hardworking - Lazy	81	83	83	88
Civilised - Uncivilised	91	90	90	86
Open - Secretive	70	69	69	72
Overall	79.44	75.5	80.06	81.38

**Table 7: Q8 (ii). Attitude to Asians  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)**

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. not studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	68	65	67	67
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	52	48	50	49
Clean - Dirty	65	59	62	58
Handsome - Ugly	49	40	45	43
Colourful - Colourless	64	62	62	65
Friendly - Unfriendly	76	68	72	66
Honest - Dishonest	73	65	68	65
Clever - Stupid	84	78	81	80
Kind - Cruel	76	73	74	65
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	71	68	69	72
Polite - Impolite	76	70	73	68
Successful - Unsuccessful	85	82	84	85
Reliable - Unreliable	85	73	78	65
Hardworking - Lazy	89	84	87	81
Civilised - Uncivilised	83	79	80	78
Open - Secretive	42	42	43	41
Overall	71.13	66	68.44	65.5

**Table 8: Q8 (iii). Attitude to Australian Indigenous Persons  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)**

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. not studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	71	69	70	77
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	48	40	42	38
Clean - Dirty	42	42	42	46
Handsome - Ugly	33	34	39	43
Colourful - Colourless	68	69	79	70
Friendly - Unfriendly	71	73	71	67
Honest - Dishonest	56	61	59	61
Clever - Stupid	50	48	49	52
Kind - Cruel	67	71	69	73
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	35	32	34	39
Polite - Impolite	55	61	58	60
Successful - Unsuccessful	32	37	34	46
Reliable - Unreliable	50	57	53	54
Hardworking - Lazy	45	51	47	52
Civilised - Uncivilised	43	48	45	48
Open - Secretive	62	64	63	62
Overall	51.75	53.56	53.38	55.5

**Table 9: Q9. Attitude to Language Teachers  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)**

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. not studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	68	65	67	54
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	75	75	75	53
Clean - Dirty	84	86	85	74
Handsome - Ugly	60	45	52	40
Colourful - Colourless	71	65	68	68
Friendly - Unfriendly	83	75	79	68
Honest - Dishonest	85	88	87	78
Clever - Stupid	79	84	82	74
Kind - Cruel	75	71	73	76
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	75	72	73	67
Polite - Impolite	84	82	83	70



Successful - Unsuccessful	77	73	76	83
Reliable - Unreliable	80	72	78	72
Hardworking - Lazy	85	77	81	77
Civilised - Uncivilised	85	81	83	80
Open - Secretive	75	70	73	60
Overall	77.56	73.81	75.94	68.38

**Table 10: Q10. Attitude to Self  
(Percentage of students giving positive ratings)**

Positive to Negative Continuum	Students studying FL < 4 years	Students studying FL = or > 4 years	Students studying FL in Yr 10, 1998	Studs. <b>not</b> studying FL in Yr 10, 1998
Interesting - Boring	91	85	87	89
Unprejudiced - Prejudiced	64	71	68	65
Clean - Dirty	97	96	97	96
Handsome - Ugly	72	72	72	77
Colourful - Colourless	90	85	88	89
Friendly - Unfriendly	98	95	96	98
Honest - Dishonest	91	93	92	94
Clever - Stupid	88	78	72	85
Kind - Cruel	93	94	93	97
Sophisticated - Unsophisticated	89	94	85	88
Polite - Impolite	96	83	95	94
Successful - Unsuccessful	88	94	87	91
Reliable - Unreliable	90	85	90	90
Hardworking - Lazy	76	88	78	83
Civilised - Uncivilised	98	80	96	97
Open - Secretive	83	95	82	80
Overall	87.75	86.75	86.13	88.31

***Perceptions of Classroom Practice:***

Information was sought on **students' attitudes** towards ten aspects of teaching methods. Though the question was partly a distractor, it also provided useful information on the

activities that students value, activities that largely seem to contrast with the responses of teachers when they were asked about the goals and activities that they value. The following observations are noteworthy:

**Table 11: Q11. Percentage student response choices for classroom practice changes**

<i>If I had the opportunity to change the way language was taught in our school, I would:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No change required</i>	<i>Order of student priority for change</i>
<i>(a) spend more time reading and writing</i>	25	25	50	10
<i>(b) spend more time talking with native speakers of the language</i>	69	16	15	2
<i>(c) spend more time learning about the culture</i>	59	20	21	4
<i>(d) focus more on accuracy of pronunciation</i>	39	24	37	6
<i>(e) focus more on accuracy of grammar</i>	38	28	34	7
<i>(f) use the internet more to communicate with students in countries where the language is spoken</i>	76	15	9	1
<i>(g) play more language games</i>	62	20	18	3
<i>(h) listen to more songs in the language</i>	36	41	23	8
<i>(i) focus on language used in the job I want to do in the future</i>	48	26	26	5
<i>(j) use the language in studying other subjects in school</i>	27	47	26	9

- Three of the four items in which a majority of students sought change involve more active use of the language, the top two, which scored 76% and 69% respectively, involving interaction with native speakers through the internet and face-to-face. Clearly students want their language classes to be more oriented towards real-life communication and contact with native speakers.
- The fourth area in which a majority of students (59%) wanted to see increased attention was in the teaching of culture.
- It is significant that those activities which the students most want to see increased are also those which, it is believed, are the ones most conducive to favourable attitude development but which, we shall see, were also relatively low on the teachers' list of priorities.
- Students seem not to want an increase in reading and writing, the two

activities which traditionally have taken up most class time.

5. Though a majority of students (62%) want to have more opportunity to play language games, most (65%) do not want more songs in the language. In the context of the students' demand for more communicative activities involving native speakers, language games are probably seen as involving more active and realistic use of the language in contrast to the more formal activities which were rated lower. It is curious that most did not want to see more language songs since, traditionally, songs have been used a great deal in the foreign language classroom but it is probable that students do not see them as very conducive to increasing their communicative ability (on which they clearly place considerable value) and probably do not see them as important elements of the target culture which they also value. This may, of course, reflect students' adverse judgements on the generally trivial nature of the songs that language teachers have traditionally used with their classes.
6. Approximately two-thirds of the students did not want to see any greater focus being given to formal accuracy in pronunciation or grammar. Again, this matches with their preference for a focus on real-life communication activities.
7. In recent years there has been a great increase in the number of immersion programmes in Australian schools but the student responses here do not provide much support for this. Only about a quarter (27%) wanted to see an increase in the teaching of other

subjects through the language. Even though such programmes increase the practical use made of the language, it seems that students probably see it as more school-based language use whereas what they are seeking is more real-life use of the language in interaction with native speakers.

8. In the same mood, a small majority of the students (52%) did not want to see an increase in the vocational emphasis in language teaching activities even though, in the long term, one might think that this would lead to more use of the language in interaction with native speakers. The students' focus seems to be more on social interaction. This observation is also of interest in the context of Australian language policy since, in recent years, there has been a greatly increased emphasis on the economic and vocational justification for teaching languages and it is commonly believed (and backed up by popular opinion surveys) that many parents want their children to learn a language because they believe it will help them get a job.

It is useful to compare these student observations with the **teachers' responses** to their own questionnaire.

In their second question, teachers were asked to prioritise some possible goals for language teaching. In fact, they found it very difficult to do so, some commenting that they were all important. In addition, though only half the teachers gave a rating for *(f) Students will gain positive attitudes towards language learning in general*, those who did so rated it highly, providing a mean score of 9.6. The overall order of priority for the other goals is shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Q2. Teachers' Priorities for Selected Goals of Language Education**

Order of Priority	Goals of Language Education	Mean
1	To communicate orally with native speakers using the LOTE.	7.6
2	To learn about the culture of native users of the LOTE.	7.2
3	To gain positive attitudes about native speakers of the LOTE.	7.1
4	To enable students to evaluate their own cultural preconceptions. To enable students to learn how to learn languages effectively.	7
6	To communicate orally with the teacher using the LOTE.	5.95
7	To communicate through writing in the LOTE.	5.5
7	To read fluently in the LOTE.	
9	To use the LOTE accurately across the four skills.	5

The teachers' ratings of the goals (Table 12) would seem to be eminently appropriate in the light of modern views of language teaching and seem to match the students' preferences. The first two goals, if realised in appropriate activities, are appropriate to language teaching oriented towards more positive cross-cultural attitude development (the third goal). However, goals are probably the ideals that teachers might like to work towards but they do not necessarily reflect what teachers actually do in their daily classroom activities and, in fact, the teachers' preferred activities do not place much emphasis on the high priority goals.

The preferred activities are "communicative activities", "student to student conversation", and "directed tasks" followed by formal grammar learning activities (see Table 13). The last contrasts with the relatively low priority accorded the goal "to use the LOTE accurately across the four skills", which was, in fact, ranked last as a goal (see Table 12). Furthermore, those activities that would give an opportunity to use the language for real student-initiated and informal communication and could be planned to involve and give opportunities for interaction with native speakers appear very low in frequency of use, in particular "interaction with native

speakers", "language evenings", "language camps" and "language clubs" have frequencies of 22%, 4% and 0% for "Often" and "Very Often" and 22%, 13% and 0% if "Sometimes" is added. Electronic activities (internet and email), which facilitate interaction with native speakers even if there are none in the school's immediate community, also rank very low at 21% and 4% for "Often" and "Very Often" and 50% and 26% if "sometimes" is included. Again, this contrasts starkly with the changes that students want to see in their language programmes. In terms of developing cultural understanding, only 12% of teachers said that they used "projects about culture" "often" and none "very often" and only 65% used them "sometimes" or "often"; yet cultural understanding is essential in the development of the meaning system of the language, cultural knowledge and understanding make important contributions to the development of cross-cultural understanding and positive attitudes, and some 59% of students called for more culture teaching (Table 11).

These observations are further supported by Table 14, summarising the teachers' responses to Question 6, which asked about the factors that influence the design of their courses. In particular, cross-cultural attitudes ranked 5 out of 7 in importance and "the contact students

could have with the language outside of school occur) is ranked last out of the 7 factors.  
time” (when interaction is more likely to

**Table 13: Q3. Percentage of Teachers by category of Frequency of Use of 22 Specified Teaching Activities**

Teaching and Learning Activity	Very Often (VO)	Often (O)	Sometimes (Stms)	Rarely	Never	O + VO	O + VO + Stms	Rank <sup>1</sup> O + VO	Rank <sup>2</sup> O+VO +Stms
Role Plays	21	29	41	8	0	50	91	6	5
Plays/Playlets	4	4	50	41	0	8	58		
Pronunc. Drills	4	37	29	26	4	41	70	8	
Jigsaw Rdg	4	4	34	40	8	8	42		
Student to student conversations	33	42	24	0	0	75	100	2	1
Projects about culture	0	12	53	22	13	12	65		
Translation exs.	4	40	34	18	4	44	78	7	8
Rote memorisation of vocabulary	16	16	34	30	4	32	66		
Story writing	0	22	50	12	16	22	72		10
Interaction with native speakers	16	21	42	21	0	37	79	10	7
Communicative activities	35	57	8	0	0	92	100	1	1
Grammar games	12	29	34	21	4	41	75	8	9
Formal grammar teaching	12	41	38	9	0	53	91	5	5
Grammar exercises	4	58	34	4	0	62	96	4	3
Directed tasks	14	55	27	4	0	69	96	3	3
Free reading	4	8	38	34	16	12	50		
Language evenings	4	18	0	35	43	22	22		
Language camps	0	4	9	17	70	4	13		
Language clubs	0	0	0	26	74	0	0		
Songs	4	12	50	30	4	16	66		
Activities using Internet	8	13	29	21	29	21	50		
Communication via email	0	4	22	26	48	4	26		

<sup>1</sup> Ranks 1 to 10 only.

<sup>2</sup> Ranks 1 to 10 only.

The teachers' responses to the question on assessment (Question 4) are not reported here. However, one point to note of particular relevance to the current discussion is that "projects on cultural items/issues" ranked last in frequency of use of all the approaches listed with 65% of teachers saying that they "rarely or never" used them and confirming the observation already made that systematic culture teaching seems to be largely neglected.

One might surmise that the reason for teachers' placing most emphasis on the formal and controlled activities and least on the informal activities, especially involving interaction face-to-face or via the internet

with native speakers, is that they do not believe that Year 10 students have sufficient proficiency to cope with such activities. However, all but one or two teachers say that the average Year 10 student is at ISLPR 1 or 2 (see Table 15). At ISLPR 1, they are capable of holding simple face-to-face conversations at ISLPR 1 but produce and understand more complex utterances and personal opinions at ISLPR 2. Clearly, if the teachers' proficiency ratings are accurate, the students would be capable of holding conversations with native speakers, even if at a fairly simple level, and so student proficiency is not the reason for the teachers' failure to provide interactive activities.

**Table 14: Q6. Importance Teachers attach to nine factors in Foreign Language Course Design**

<b>Order of Importance *</b>	<b>Factors in Foreign Language course design</b>	<b>Mean Score **</b>
1	The interests of the students. The ability of the students.	5.2
2	The previous language learning experiences of the students. The set syllabus.	5
3	The everyday lives of the students.	4.7
4	Your own interests that you can share with students.	4.6
5	The attitudes of the students to native speakers of the LOTE.	4.2
6	The reasons why the students have chosen the particular LOTE.	3.9
7	The contact the students have or could have with the LOTE outside class/school time.	3.8

\* 1 is most important

\*\* Rated from "extremely important" (6) to "not at all important" (1).

**Table 15: Q7. Teacher ratings of the Proficiency of Year 10 students**

Proficiency Level		Macroskills	
Ques. Scale	(ISLPR)	Speaking	Reading
5	(3)		1
4	(2)	10	11
3	(1)	11	6
2	(0+)	1	2
1	(0)	0	
Range 2 to 4 on Ques. Scale		1	1
		Listening	Writing
5	(3)	1	
4	(2)	9	9
3	(1)	11	11
2	(0+)	0	1
1	(0)		
Range 2 to 4 on Ques. scale		1	1

(The figures show the number of teacher ratings at each proficiency level. There were 24 teachers in the survey though only 21 or 22 responded to this question.)

In brief, the priorities teachers accord in their choice of teaching activities, match ill with their stated preferred goals, match ill with the students' desire for change in their language programmes, and match ill with what is known about the development of more favourable cross-cultural attitudes. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that such large numbers of students drop out before Year 10 and that there is little evidence of a significant relationship between learning another language and more positive cross-cultural attitudes.

## V DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study reported in this paper has a number of important limitations, being based around a

single survey rather than being longitudinal and the survey having been undertaken at the time of an intense public debate highly relevant to the issue of cross-cultural attitudes. Nevertheless, there are a number of implications that can be drawn for language teaching especially when taken in the context of the other research referred to earlier.

1. The study was intended as a pilot project leading into a major longitudinal study and it raises a number of issues worth pursuing in *subsequent research*:

- First, it would be interesting for social, political and educational reasons to see whether, now that the "One Nation" issue and the immigration debate have faded in

Australia, students' cross-cultural attitudes have changed and whether background variables continue to overwhelm any possible attitudinal effects of language learning.

- A longitudinal study may provide time for more sophisticated attitude elicitation procedures to be used so as to more precisely differentiate student attitudes and their causes.
  - In a larger-scale study covering more schools, it may be possible to include a larger number of students who have not studied a language and compare their attitudes with the possibly changing attitudes of students in long-term language programmes.
  - In a longitudinal study involving a larger number of schools in different States and following different language syllabuses, it may be possible to identify different teaching styles and methods or to structure the study so that different schools or different teachers use contrasting methods including features such as native speaker interaction and "celebration".
2. As uncertain as the effect of language teaching on cross-cultural attitudes might be, in societies characterised by cultural and racial diversity such as Australia and in all countries in the context of increasing globalisation, it is vital, as those parts of the world torn apart by such atrocities as "ethnic cleansing" and intercultural warfare tragically demonstrate, for *education* systems to consider their *role* and to do all they can to fit each generation for life in a multicultural and increasingly global society. Not least, it is essential for language teaching, the element of the curriculum most immediately concerned with cross-cultural communication, to consider its goals and methods and ensure that they are as compatible as possible with this urgent need.
  3. It is probable that such intervention will be more effective if it occurs before attitudes become less malleable with the stabilisation of personality through adolescence and, hence, it is desirable that *foreign language teaching* commence early *in Primary School* and that it envisage from the start in both its goals and its methods the development of positive cross-cultural attitudes.
  4. If language teaching is to take up the challenge of trying to influence students' cross-cultural attitudes, there are important implications for *teacher education*: teachers will need to be trained to realise such goals through their methodology. A necessary starting-point if teacher education programmes are to take on these tasks is to specify the sorts of skills and attitudes, or "competencies", that language teachers require [cf. Australian Language and Literacy Council 1996: Chapter 5]. A project undertaken by the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages in 1994-95 drew up a set of language teacher competencies in two parts: the first provides a specific purpose language proficiency scale for use with language teachers, essentially a special purpose version of the ISLPR [Wylie and Ingram 1995]; the second identifies the professional skills that teachers require and, in particular, identifies cross-cultural attitudes that teachers should show and the teaching skills they require to enable them



to develop appropriate attitudes in their students [Commins 1995].

5. In language teaching designed to effect positive influence on cross-cultural attitudes, it seems probable that a number of aspects of *methodology* are important though it has to be conceded that the literature is not wholly convincing and further research is required. Wilkins' conclusions in 1987 remain pertinent:

*A more complete theory of language, taken with theories of learning and of social behaviour would show that if the potential benefits of bilingualism are to become available to the individual language learner, it will only be through a language learning experience that has a strong communicative orientation. ... Far from being in conflict with wider educational aims, it seems highly probable that communicative language teaching is necessary to their attainment. ...*

*Little is known about the effects on the individual of different learning activities ... [Wilkins 1987: 32 – 33]*

Issues of methodology have been elaborated in earlier papers [e.g., Ingram 1978, 1980b, 1980c, 1995] but, as uncertain as the research might be at the present time, the evidence points to the probability that the following principles of methodology are pertinent and warrant further investigation and elaboration:

- First, interaction or "community involvement" should be the basic foundation on which language teaching operates; that is, as the central learning activity, learners

must be given continual opportunities, both formal and informal, face-to-face and over the internet, to interact with speakers of the target language and to use the target language for real communicative purposes and hence for the purposes of normal social interaction. "Community involvement" not only practises the language but it also enables learners to experience the other culture at an individual level and to start to perceive through personal experience the universality of human needs, emotions and interests that permeate the diversity of cultural expressions [see especially Ingram 1980, 1980b and 1980c where the forms of "community involvement" are elaborated and illustrated].

- Second, learners need the opportunity to develop profound cultural knowledge and understanding, not just of the gimmickry of other cultures but of the personal culture that governs the daily lives of the speakers of the target language. For this to occur, the target culture must be taught both as an integral part of the language and systematically so that the inherent logic and rationality of the culture is evident. For this, it is useful to find a systematic path into the culture as may be provided by teaching some other subject (e.g., social studies, music or other school disciplines) through the target language whether as one

component of a regular language course or in a partial or full immersion programme. In particular, it is through interaction with native speakers that learners come to realise the individuality that exists within the universality of a culture and can come to perceive the essence of the culture rather than just be amused by what may otherwise be seen as the gimmickry (the jingly songs and monuments or superficial eating habits) that too often form the essential stuff of cultural elements of foreign language teaching programmes.

- Third, not least so as to realise the almost adventitious nature of cultural systems, learners need the opportunity to re-conceptualise their experience. Hence, in addition to learning about the target culture and the country of origin of that language, learners should be encouraged (both in the course of interaction with native speakers in the students' own community, in exchanges with native speakers in the target country or over the internet, and in more formal activities) to talk and write about their own environment and their own everyday experiences and, in particular, to discuss them with native speakers of the target language [again this issue is elaborated and illustrated in Ingram 1978, 1980b, and 1980c; see also Morgan 1993].
- Fourth, what has been called "cerebration" is vitally important

since it is through "cerebration" that learners apply their own rational processes to understanding and modifying their own entrenched attitudes and intuitive responses. This is especially appropriate to language teaching because it is that element of the curriculum most immediately involved with cross-cultural communication and because interaction or "community involvement", if it is included as a part of the language teaching programme, is likely to stimulate minor or major "culture shock" responses that bring out for discussion and rational examination the students' learned or intuitive responses to cultural differences. In addition, in the controlled situation provided by a language programme, a properly trained teacher is able to manage the discussion and the students' encounters with their own reactions and attitudes and is well placed to help students avoid the retreat into egocentric shells, which can be one of the reactions to culture shock, and to guide the students' "cerebration" process [see also Ingram 1978, 1980b, 1980c; see also Mantle-Bromley 1995, Triandis 1971].

## VI CONCLUSION

The enigma presented by the study in this paper and by the literature has salutary lessons for all those language policy-makers, syllabus writers and language teachers who believe, undoubtedly like most of us, that language teaching is the element of the curriculum that

is best able to effect positive cross-cultural attitude change in students. Language teaching does not automatically achieve such effects and, even at best, will not do so without significant attention to methodology. After all, if language teaching is little more than the presentation and manipulation of rules and verbal symbols, there is no reason to believe that it will be any more successful in changing cross-cultural attitudes than is algebra; if the prime focus of language teaching is on the manipulation of words to carry out tasks unrelated to real-life communication need between people, there is no reason to believe that language teaching should be any more effective in changing attitudes than is cryptography. The survey in this paper and the many studies in the literature suggest that language teaching will not automatically have positive effects on cross-cultural attitudes either towards the target culture group or more generally towards other cultures and races and, in fact, in some circumstances, it can demonstrably have a negative effect. If language teaching is to play an effective role in generating more positive cross-cultural attitudes conducive to life in multicultural societies and in the global village, it must be structured specifically to do so, incorporating in the normal methods applied in language classrooms those activities that, on the best evidence available, are most conducive to effecting positive cross-cultural attitude change. Such activities are not, in fact, contrary to those needed to maximise proficiency development, the language teachers' traditional principal goal, but are in fact identical to the best of them. In particular, appropriate activities include effective and progressive communicative language teaching [cf. Wilkins 1987: 32], interaction with native speakers, thorough knowledge and understanding of the target culture (not the pseudo culture of gimmicky songs and stone monuments) but the culture of the people, their

way of thinking, feeling and viewing the world, a culture that learners can best sense as they interact with native speakers both face-to-face and through modern technology. In addition, the teacher has to be aware that interaction may lead to more positive or more negative attitudes, that some form of culture shock (which it is part of the teacher's role to help the students to manage) is an integral part of attitude development, and that learners need the opportunity to engage in "cerebration", to think about the issues of cultural and racial relations, to monitor their own learned or intuitive reactions in the face of cultural difference, to understand those reactions and the reactions of others, and, when necessary, to subject their own intuitive responses to reasoning and correction.

Language teaching, language learning and bilingualism do not inevitably produce more positive cross-cultural attitudes or else wars would not take place in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere and elections would not be won and lost on immigration and racial issues in countries like Australia. If an education system wishes to ensure that the unique advantages of language teaching in fostering more positive cross-cultural attitudes conducive to life in multicultural societies and conducive to a successful life in the global society are realised, then it must ensure that language teachers understand how their teaching activities can best be structured to have a positive effect on their students' cross-cultural attitudes. Finally, the diversity of results that have come from studies of the relationship between language teaching and cross-cultural attitudes suggests that that relationship and the factors that determine it are far from being fully understood and much more research is required, not least focussing on longitudinal studies observing attitude change over courses of several years' duration.

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