

Greek Education in Australia

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente un portrait de la communauté grecque d'Australie et de son évolution à travers les différentes vagues d'immigration vers ce pays. La question de l'éducation hellénophone est abordée à travers les changements survenus au sein de la communauté, en particulier avec l'apparition de la deuxième et de la troisième génération de Grecs, dont la conception en cette matière n'est pas nécessairement la même à celle de leurs parents. En ce sens les problèmes de cette éducation ressemblent, en partie du moins, à ceux auxquels font face les communautés grecques du Canada et même des États-Unis. L'auteur présente les besoins tant des enseignants que des élèves dans ce nouveau contexte et souligne l'importance du programme *Paideia Omogenon* pour les combler.

ABSTRACT

This article provides readers with a well-researched portrait of the Greek experience in Australia. The author describes the various waves of immigration 'down under' and how the education system struggled to keep up with the demand. Problems of immigration and identity have forged the Australian Greek community into a strong, well-established group. Nevertheless, the current Australian situation resembles that of Canada and the United States in that second- and third-generation parents and children must adjust to maintain the Greek language and culture as the clientele for Greek education has changed dramatically. The author describes both student and teacher needs within the contemporary context as well as the importance of the *Paideia Omogenon* Program.

PART I: Greeks in Australia

1.0 Greek Migration and Settlement in Australia

From 1829 to 1974 approximately 300,000 immigrated and settled in Australia. The pioneers (1829-1880), were mostly bachelors, illiterate wanderers who endured hardships in mining camps and worked under

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strenuous conditions as peddlers in the urban centres, porters on the wharves and unskilled labour clearing vineyards and farms. Some of them decided to settle. They married local girls, primarily Irish, and became small farmers and graziers, while others moved towards the north of the continent where they were engaged in the sugar cane plantations. Some shortened their names in an effort to gain acceptance from the broader Australian community and were assimilated. They lived far apart from each other, employed in seasonal work or unhealthy jobs, which many Australians found too demeaning to perform. They often had to travel long distances to find work. In country areas they lived in improvised houses which were usually made of tin and hessian cloth, and were often cruelly exploited by their employers (Tamis, 1997).

Greek immigration to Australia until 1965 was male dominated. Some pioneers emerged as influential personalities and their role increased migration from their own region. The pioneer immigrants were predominately from 25 Ionian and Aegean islands, with fewer settlers from the mainland and the Greek lands under Ottoman rule. During the inter-war period and especially by 1924, due to the restrictions on migrant intake imposed in the USA and the political and demographic situation created in Greece following the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922), a mass exodus began from mainland Greece. The number of Greek settlers in Australia drastically increased with new waves of refugees from Asia Minor, Macedonia and the Peloponnese to reach over 15,000 by 1940. Many of these immigrants came from the large trading centres of Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria and Cairo.

Pre-WW II concepts regarding immigrants were based on fear, prejudice and ignorance, making white Australia liable to racial discord and bitterness. Intolerance was often manifested in reports and anti-immigrant Acts of Parliament. The antiforeign opposition was particularly high during severe national economic crises, and emanated from organized labour, the older immigrant stocks, and certain elements of the conservative media and the mainstream population.

The nature of chain immigration brought together settlers from the same villages and regions. The necessity to preserve the local customs, coupled with the tendency of the Greeks to accept mainly their fellow villagers and islanders considering any person from their neighboring village a *ksenos* (foreigner), triggered the establishment of a plethora of local brotherhoods

and societies (approximately 1000 by 2005) as early as 1912.

The earliest Greek Cypriot immigrants were attracted by the gold rushes of the 1850s in Australia. The massive exodus of Cypriots from their homeland continued throughout the 20th century for political and economic reasons. By 1928, Greek Cypriot settlers were responsible for the establishment in Home Hill, Queensland of the first Greek community. Pioneer Cypriots from Sydney in 1929 established the *Cyprus Brotherhood Evagoras* in support of new immigrants from the island. Three years later (1932) in Melbourne the Cypriots organised the progressive *Cypriot Brotherhood Zenon*, and in 1950, ideologically dissenting members of *Zenon* formed the conservative *Cyprian Brotherhood Troodos*. The two organizations followed their separate ideological principles until after independence, when they were unified into one entity (16 March 1961) to establish the *Cyprian Community of Melbourne and Victoria* (Michael and Tamis, 2004).

The zeal shown for the study of the parent tongue and the desire to maintain the Orthodox faith became the Greeks' prime concern. The Hellenic heritage, which "inspired the entire western world", ought to be preserved at any cost within the family environment and its social milieu, while Orthodoxy represented "the true faith". Following the establishment of the Holy Trinity in Surrey Hills, Sydney (1898) and the Annunciation of our Lady (1900) in Melbourne, the community schools began their operation employing the services of the first priests. Utilizing their churches, vacant stores, backyard sheds and the lofts of family run restaurants the first Greek communities provided Greek language and culture classes. Immigrant parents haunted by the unwillingness of their children to acquire or use Greek, often demonstrated harshness and irreconcilable determination. Those children who ignored strict parental instructions and used English at home frequently experienced deprivation of certain luxuries or were made to spend hours in solitary confinement.

Greek Orthodox immigrants received pastoral guidance initially from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, with the appointment of bilingual (Greek-Arabic) priest Athanasios Kantopoulos (1898) in Melbourne and Serafeim Fokas (1899) in Sydney (Tamis, 1997). However, following persistent intra-community strife, the Orthodox faithful of Australia were placed under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of Greece (1904) and twenty years later under the authority of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The role and

contribution of the clergymen was severely criticized by the people, who expected their priests to demonstrate compassion, high morality and a zeal for the preservation of Hellenism. The pioneer priests were criticized for their personal life, their indifference to teaching Greek, their public mode of behaviour, even for their style of attire. By the time the first Greek Orthodox Metropolitan, Christophoros Knitis, an Oxford University graduate, was appointed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate (1924) more than ten priests had been replaced in Melbourne alone. They were criticized for their failure to propagate the faith and deal with the needs of their congregation. The majority of the Greek settlers remained loyal to the Greek Orthodox Church, however, the long period of feuding influenced negatively the attitude of the people towards their clergy, while the image of the ecclesiastical authorities was reduced to a low point.

The bonds of friendship between the Australian people and Greek settlers were further augmented with the dispatch of 17,000 Australian soldiers to the Greek Front (January 1941) and more so with the return of Australian veterans from the fronts of Macedonia and Crete. The returning soldiers told stories of gallant sacrifices performed by Greek families to save Australian and New Zealand soldiers, placing their own children at risk. It was only then that the Australian people universally began to understand the Greek temperament.

The period of massive immigration coincides with the end of World War II and the absorption of a large number of political refugees from Eastern Europe. During this period the pre-War chain migration was replaced by mass migration. In addition to refugees, the Australian government actively recruited immigrants from all over Europe at this time for reasons related to security and economic growth. Australia's involvement in the war in South-East Asia and the Japanese invasion of Australian colonies in Papua New Guinea and attacks on Darwin and Sydney. The establishment of the Immigration Department (12 July 1945), with Arthur Calwell as the first Minister, aimed to increase the net population by 2% annually.

The relevant agreement with Greece was signed in 1952, triggering the transplantation of over 250,000 Greek and Cypriot migrants from Greece (1952-1974), Rumania (1952-1958), Egypt and the Middle East (1952-1952), Cyprus (1974-1984) and other politically turbulent countries of Eastern Europe and Latin America. After 1974, following the restoration of

democracy in Greece and the prevailing favorable economic situation, Greece stopped exporting migrants and received massive waves of repatriating Greeks from around the globe. During this period, the last wave of Greeks from South Africa settled in Australia (1992-2004) amid the instability and the persecutions following the post-colonial apartheid administration.

Greek and foreign shipping lines began to bring to Australia hundreds of Greeks sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Committee of European Migration (ICEM). Most of them (82%) were unskilled, unemployed laborers of the major urban centres of Greece and agrarians of the impoverished and neglected countryside. They arrived with no liquid capital and very limited education, victims of a traumatic post-civil war Greece. Many had left their families back home, borrowing the basic capital from their relatives, while many were compelled to sell their limited livestock for their migration expedition. Predominantly young, only a few had travelled far beyond their native villages. The unfamiliarity with the laws and tradition of the new country and the severe cultural differences gave them a feeling of insecurity. Yet these Greek immigrants were freedom-loving individuals and natural-born competitors with a determination to succeed, reconciling themselves to hard work. They cleverly assessed their social and economic position in Greece as redundant and emigrated. Driven by the desire to acquire wealth and status, they became receptive to the cult of success. Greek migrants, despite their peasant backgrounds and lack of experience, demonstrated an ability to adapt with energy and resourcefulness and to distinguish themselves from the very outset in business as well as in hard work.

Until 1975, their self-sufficient communities remained socio-economically insulated, relying on their intra-communal business resources and networks. Priority was given to the preservation of family and traditional values via the establishment of numerous Greek language schools, Orthodox Churches, brotherhoods and societies, including the male-only coffeehouses. Post WWII Greek immigrants were well aware that their generation had to be sacrificed to secure the advancement of their children. The vision of professional success for their children, despite the hardships endured in the process of reaching it, was overpowering. The multiplicity of Greek language newspapers and radio stations generated a feeling of security in intra-

community interactions, although very often controversies were inspired by some of their editors. On the other hand, the conflict between the leaders of the Orthodox Church and the communities generated confusion, dissension and the apparent lack of a coordinating authority to impose order.

The rise of the second and third generation of Australian Greeks to commercial, professional and intellectual prominence is part of the contemporary Australian success story. Lacking acquaintances and prominent connections within the broader Australian society, emerging from a humble and socially obscure immigrant environment, they climbed to influential positions via their determination and dedication. The will to succeed was imposed on them primarily by their Greek parents at a very early age. Hard work and assumption of responsibility were the values with which they were often admonished. Available statistical data attest that the ratio of Greek Australian youths entering positions of prestige in all professional disciplines is extremely high. It need only be noted that the percentage of tertiary students of Greek ancestry in Australia is the second highest (11.5%) after the Asian, among all ethnic groups. The professions of engineering, teaching, medicine and law were the most popular, while other professions began to appeal later on, especially in the area of the arts cinema, media and music. Success in these disciplines would secure a dignified life and in addition it would add prestige to the family and to the parents.

In 1892, an Orthodox Christian consortium composed of Greek, Russian and Syrolibanese settlers commenced negotiations with Russia, Greece and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to establish the first Orthodox Church in Australia (Tamis, 2000). Following seven years of negotiations, involving the Russian and Greek consular representatives, community leaders and the Anglican Church of Australia, their vision finally matured. On 22 August 1897 the leaders of the 100 Greeks in Melbourne, in collaboration with the Syrolibanese settlers, called a meeting and founded the *Greek Orthodox Church [Community] of Melbourne*. Greek and Syrolibanese Orthodox migrants in Sydney founded the first Greek Community at the beginning of 1896 and erected *Agia Triada* (Holy Trinity), the oldest Orthodox Church in Australia. The church was completed in 1898 with generous contributions from the Kytherian Greeks and its opening was celebrated with great splendour on 16 April 1899. During the pre-World War I era the majority of the Greek population in Australia was concentrated in Sydney

where the seat of the Archbishop (1924) and the Consul General of Greece (1926) was located. The numerical dominance of the Kastellorizians in Perth led to the establishment of the first regional Greek brotherhood in Australia in 1912, the *Kastellorizian Brotherhood*, with its main objectives being purely panhellenic. A strong community developed there with the contribution of generous offers of estates and bequests by 1920 as the *Hellenic Community of Western Australia*.

The Greek community in Adelaide remained small and politically unimportant until 1947. On 19 October 1930, thirty Greeks in Adelaide gathered at the *Panhellenion Club* and established the *Greek Community of South Australia*, electing businessman Constantinos Kavouras as their President. However, almost every aspect of community life in Adelaide, until 1940, experienced a decline. In 1933 an appeal began to raise money to purchase land and erect a church. The land was bought in 1936 and in November 1937 the foundation stone of the church of *Taksiarhes* was laid. Pre-World War II Greek communities were formed in the far north of Queensland and spread for two thousand kilometers with their main pursuit being the acquisition of sugar cane plantations. Greeks and Cypriots lived in the main towns of Babinda, Ayr, Tully and Home Hill, opening up their own restaurants, cafes and milk bars. Although the arrival of the first Greek migrant in Brisbane dates back to 1860, the *Greek Orthodox Community in Brisbane* did not begin to register members until March 1928.

Approximately 200 islanders settled in the tropical town of Innisfail after 1910 and by 1925 had organised a community. Many of the immigrants had been working at the sugar cane and banana plantations since the beginning of 1924. As a result of the settlement in Townsville, the *Greek Community of Townsville* was established and the parish priest G. Kateris was appointed to perform the religious services and to teach Greek to the children gathered in rural towns. He also conducted liturgies in the *Church of the Saint Theodore (Agioi Theodori)*, which was being built by the local community. Even though the first Greek landed in Tasmania in 1860 only a few Greeks, from Kythera, settled there prior to the period of massive Greek migration to the island as a result of the government works in the hydroelectric project. So it was not surprising that an organised community was not established until 1953.

The institution of the Greek *Koinotita* (Community) was the focal point of community life, the provider of Greek language education and the

custodian of the Orthodox faith for and on behalf of the entire Greek community, the *Homogenia*. They were formed during the late years of the nineteenth century in Sydney and Melbourne as governing bodies for those identifying with the Greek Orthodox faith. The communities had the mandate to administer the affairs of the entire group identifying with Greece, its culture and Orthodox faith, despite the fact that many members elected not to pay their dues and not to enrol in the community's register. The community's network was responsible for establishing the Greek language afternoon schools, erecting churches, administering funds, and employing priests, teachers and administrators. Their progress was seriously affected by antagonistic and divisive attitudes instigated by lay and clergy leaders seeking to impose their own opinion. The quarrels led to serious litigation that deeply affected the welfare of the members. On many occasions priests were expelled, leaders were outvoted, teachers were replaced and elections results were placed in doubt as a result of the political affiliations of rival leaders. The communities which commenced initially as church entities were after the 1950s transformed into community-wide organizations headed by a board of elected directors.

With the influx of Greeks after 1952, the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the endorsement of the Greek Government imposed a new program of community organization, establishing new suburban ecclesiastic [parish] communities with the participation only of approved laymen by the Church. This program aimed to decentralize the management of organised Hellenism so that the Church could benefit financially and in terms of power and authority. This policy was promoted as a major national case and was supported by the consular representatives of Greece during the following years with only a few exceptions. The dramatic culmination of the split between the Church and the communities came on 9 June 1960 when the Management Council of the *Greek Orthodox Community of Adelaide* (GOCA) decided to split from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. In February 1975, the election of the Titouliarian Metropolitan of Militoupolis Stylianos Charkianakis as the fifth Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia was announced. The contribution of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia has been important in the areas of spiritual and pastoral services and education. Orthodoxy as a faith, as well as a culture, acted as the common bond among Greek settlers and emerged as a source of language and cultural loyalty for Hellenism.

Greek migrants contributed substantially towards a European profile in Australia. They embellished Australian life with an efficient and effective network in marketing, building and development, as well as in academia and the service and hospitality industries. With the consolidation of the Greek community, the traditional suspicion of the local Australian society towards Greek migrants and their linguistic and cultural background evaporated. Suspicion gradually changed to cautious tolerance, and later acceptance. The unresponsiveness of many members of the broader Australian society to the persistent efforts of the smaller numbers of pre-War Greek settlers to integrate was challenged after World War II. Economic prosperity together with the professional achievements and successful social adherence of large waves of Greek migrants and their children began to win over the wider Australian community. The emergence of their Australia-born children, as successful professionals, technocrats, public administrators, merchants and business persons gave the Greek community prominence, a factor which seriously affected the entire society.

In 2005, the Greek Australian community was waging a strenuous campaign to mobilize its second- and third-generation to take an active role in community affairs. This is hardly surprising considering the aging of Greek migrants, who by the year 2020 will comprise less than 5% of the total Greek Australian community. Without any hope of another Greek migration, Greek Australians rely on their Australian-born generations to maintain the Greek cultural identity, manifested through the Orthodox faith, the Ancient Greek world, and strong influences of the European and Oriental worlds. They have taught them the art of political lobbying, mobilizing Australian public opinion behind domestic policies affecting their community in Australia as well as in the old country. They have taught them to realize the power of the vote, to be strong through education, influential through business, effective through public rallies and their own individual and communal affluence. The aspiration of Greek settlers arriving in Australia immediately after WWII was to establish their families, socially and politically, in a stable environment, to win Australian public approval through citizenship and the cooperation of influential segments of the society, to maintain a vigorous stand on issues affecting the mother country, and to contribute to the welfare and development of their new country. The future of their children was their main concern.

1.1 A Brief History of the Greek language Education

The educational activities of the Greek community during the first fifty years of substantial settlement in Australia (1900-1952) were inadequate due to demographic limitations and the nature of immigration, which remained entirely male-dominated until 1949. The number of families was comparatively small while concentrations of Greeks in large urban centres began only after 1935. These factors did not allow the operation of systematic schools, except in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

Greek immigrants were inspired by the diachronic continuity of Hellenic civilization and regarded their identity as the basic ingredient of Western civilization. Community-based schools operated in all major cities, sponsored by the Greek business community, mainly restaurant owners and small proprietors. Greek communities managed to employ qualified teachers of Greek with the appointment of Alexandra Vrachnas (1924) and Archimandrite Metrophanis (1931) in Sydney; Archimandrite Theophylaktos in Melbourne (1931); Archimandrite Germanos (1916) and Anna Perivolaris in Perth (1935); while the Greek Government appointed the first teacher to Perth in 1945. The services of the priests and certain female high school graduates were sought in most cases to act as classroom teachers, whose knowledge of pedagogy and English were very limited, often creating confusing experiences for students.

In Perth, in 1913, Archim. Germanos Iliou established the first part-time evening school named 'Pittakos', and in 1929 the first teacher to Australia was appointed there by the Greek government, receiving remuneration equal to a priest's from the *Hellenic Community of W.A.* (Western Australia). In Adelaide the first school operated systematically only after 1936. In Melbourne, although the GOCM had established the first evening school in 1898, it was not able to secure the consistent operation of a school until the 1950s. The generosity of the regional organizations, the good-heartedness of individuals, particularly businessmen, the conscientiousness of teaching staff and the anxiety of the parents saved the school from permanent closure. However, its operation was almost casual, as it was transferred from the mezzanine floor of restaurants to halls and its function was interrupted according to the economic situation of the community and whichever dispute was in vogue at the time.

In contrast, the educational services in Sydney operated methodically, perhaps due to the antagonism, between the GOCS and the *Council of the*

Cathedral of St. Sophia. Two schools were established and operated which were also used as power bases by the councils' members during their disputes and schisms, with the children's parents divided in supporting one or the other faction. In Brisbane and northern Queensland, where collective associations were formed by Greeks working in the huge sugar plantations of Innisfail, Babinda, Tully, Home Hill and Townsville, evening schools operated with clergy undertaking teaching duties. In Brisbane, the local community operated the first school with the Orthodox Rector Daniel Maravelis as its teacher in 1923 and in Innisfail and Townsville the first lessons began in 1928.

Metropolitan Theophylaktos (1947-1958) began a program of improving Greek education, which until that time had had no assistance or direction. His objective was for the Metropolis to take over and be responsible for the implementation of teaching programs in Greek language and culture to Greek children in Australia. Theophylaktos demanded the transfer of Greek teaching staff to Australia, the shipment of books and supporting material and financial support for the teachers. His request for free books was granted through the efforts of the *Australian Greek Association in Athens* who successfully organised the first shipment of educational books to Australia for the educational needs of community schools. A teaching grant from the Greek government was also approved in July 1948 and funds were made available at the start of the new school year of 1949.

The problem with the appointment of teachers from Greece to the Australian Greek community schools was essentially a financial one as community institutions were unable to take responsibility for the salaries and maintenance of these teachers. With the financial difficulties of the early post-war years, both the communities and the Church appeared cautious about undertaking responsibility for the ever-increasing salaries of the transferred teaching staff. For this reason, the communities were prudently constrained to employ only teachers who had already immigrated to Australia. In 1978, however, the Greek Government finally decided to introduce the institution of *Education Advisors* and one year later appointed hundreds of transferred teachers to all capital cities to serve in Greek community ethnic schools. Their contribution was substantial as they managed to revive Greek language teaching in many remote country towns, while they reinforced the ethnic school environment, assisting their Australian-born colleagues with their high language competence.

Until the 1970s, the system of the afternoon schools was ailing. The number of operating schools was minimal and the organization sub-standard. Children and parents showed the same indifference towards Greek language education and an unwillingness to attend consistently. In Sydney, for instance, the community was running eight schools with a total of 600 students for the needs of 40,000 settlers. The long distances that they had to cover to access their ethnic schools and the tiredness of children at the day school, the costs to families, and the discouraging policy of the Australian Government were some of the reasons for their indifference. Furthermore, attendance at school was not consistent as some parents used their children as interpreters, while ignorant mainstream teachers openly discouraged students of Greek from attending in preference to sport. The lessons of the afternoon school were until 1969 exclusively for primary school level. Certain problems emerging from the weekly teaching program included the variety of age groups and grade levels, and the disparity between the oral proficiency and literacy level of the students. There was also the issue of the passion and force of the ecclesiastic representative. Community confrontation further augmented these problems. The hierarchy of the church maintained close relations with successive post-WWII conservative Greek governments, ensuring the marginalization of their community opponents. Such antagonistic and acrimonious behaviour was detrimental to the development of educational programs.

Even though Australians' interest in the teaching of the Ancient Greek language was expressed as early as 1814, with the operation of the school, '*Reverend Henry Fyton's Classical Academy*', the teaching of Modern Greek was introduced into the educational system only from the 1970s. The introduction of Modern Greek at *New England University* in the country town of Armidale, N.S.W., drew favourable comments from the leaders of Hellenism in Australia who felt that the study of the language of the Greek migrants was a significant cultural achievement. A short time later, the *Universities of Sydney and Melbourne* (1974) followed the example set by *New England University*.

The idea for the establishment of Greek Orthodox Daily Schools, under the supervision of the Communities, was suggested initially by Metropolitan Timotheos Evangelinides in 1934, but became the Archdiocese's official goal in 1961 when Ezekiel proposed it at the *All Clergy-Laity Congress*. Having a good knowledge of the American school education system, Ezekiel regarded the afternoon schools as 'schools of need, where our children would be taught the

basic elements of a Greek Orthodox education'. After 1970, when the community organisations managed to clear their initial debts, they moved towards the purchase of buildings, which could be used primarily as afternoon schools and later as daily schools. On August 21, 1972 the *Community of North Carlton* in Melbourne bought the old Jewish School building to accommodate its afternoon primary school and its high school, giving it the title *St. John's Greek Orthodox College*. The same building would later accommodate the first Greek Orthodox bilingual school of Hellenism in Australia (1978).

The successful implementation of the institution of Greek Orthodox daily schools, initiated by Archimandrite Kourtessis in 1978 in Melbourne, was followed by the establishment of daily schools under the authority of the church-communities in Sydney, Adelaide and Perth, based on the concept of bilingual schools which would maintain the Orthodox tradition enriched with elements of Greek culture and traditional values. However, the main provider of Greek language education, throughout the second half of the 20th century remained the ethnic schools, administered by the Greek communities, the church and a consortium of independent individuals, settled primarily in Melbourne.

In 2005 there were approximately 40,000 students of the Greek language attending classes organised by 11 providers. It was estimated that almost 26% of those students were of non-Greek language background. Most of them (82%) attended government and independent daily schools. There were 194 government and 27 independent schools offering classes in Greek across the country. Courses in Greek language, culture and civilization were introduced as tertiary disciplines in the *Universities of Notre Dame, Adelaide, Flinders, Melbourne, La Trobe, RMIT, Macquarie, Sydney* and *N.S.W.*, attracting approximately 1000 tertiary students. *La Trobe University* in 1997, emerged as the most "Hellenized" university of the Diaspora, establishing in addition to the Greek Studies Program, the *National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research (NCHSR)*. The mission of the latter is to disseminate the Hellenic culture and civilization and propagate research and cultural activities related to Hellenism in Australasia. Incorporated *Societies of Friends of the NCHSR* were established in Perth, Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane to disseminate the objectives of the Centre and to assist with the implementation of its goals. *RMIT University* also administers an Archival Centre for the Greek community.

PART II: Greek Language Education in Australia

2.0 Introduction

Greek has been classified as one of the nine priority languages of wider use in Australia and is taught in all states and territories in a variety of systems and levels of education. Network analysis shows the importance of family networks in maintaining the core culture among members of the Greek community. The over-riding attitude towards education and culture dictates maintenance of Greek as a medium of communication or as a symbol of identity. Tamis and Gauntlett (1993) have argued that the significance of Greek for Australia derives principally from the established presence of a vast number of Greek speaking residents (estimated at 320,000) and of many more thousands of Australians with ancestral, sentimental, professional, cultural and intellectual ties with Greece and Greeks. Greek remains the sole modern descendant of the Hellenic branch of the Indo-European family of languages, in which fundamental texts of western civilization and Christian scripture were formulated and transmitted through the ages.

The vitality of the Greek language in Australia is determined by a variety of factors including the disposition of Greek community members towards it and their desire for continued distinctiveness as a group. Sociocultural factors include the existence of a large number of speakers, the creation of broad functional areas and an adequate community network which will develop language use outside and beyond the group controlled areas of home, church and ethnic school. Also important are the promotion of Greek to the broader society, the perceived prestige of the language, the ability to rally institutional support from the government, education policy, industry and media support, and demographic characteristics such as residential concentration, the birth rate, the rate of exogamy and the degree of interactional dynamics characterizing the Greek community. Greek Australians, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, display the strongest degree of ethnolinguistic vitality of all ethnic groups in Australia. Among the Greek settlers and their children exposed to a language-contact situation, the language loyalty towards Greek, at an inter-generational level, continues to be the strongest if compared with other ethnicities. The shift to English (currently 8% among 2nd generation) is determined by the steady

decline in the intake of Greek migrants from Greece since 1974, the inter-ethnic marriage patterns especially in areas with low concentrations of Greeks and the attenuating effects of multiculturalism, which, although it promotes the maintenance of diverse cultures, compels the use of one common linguistic medium among the various ethnic groups.

Greek serves a wide range of purposes in Australia from the strictly utilitarian (communication for domestic and professional purposes) to cultural and ethnic identification. Some of these are open to both Greeks and non-Greeks. Thus in the educational context, objectives can include acquisition of practical fluency skills, knowledge of the cultural context of the language, developing a sense of cross-cultural tolerance or simply development of the intellectual and linguistic capacity of the student. Greek has three main functions in Australia: (a) that of a community language employed by members of the Australian Greek community in a communicative and symbolic role, (b) that of a second language of socio-economic and political significance for Australia and (c) that of the modern sequel to the tradition of Hellenic Antiquity which is perceived to have particular cultural significance for Australia and the West as a whole.

Other factors conducive to the retention of Greek include the social isolation of large numbers of Greek immigrants and the Greek experience in Diaspora. Greek culture is different from Anglo-Australian and tends to insulate Greek immigrants, even when their children have socially integrated into the mainstream society. Recent evidence (Tamis, 2002) suggest that approximately 30% of Greek immigrants do not mix socially with any other ethnic group in Australia. They form relationships more readily with southern Europeans with whom they share similarities in culture. Large proportions of the world's Greek-speaking population have been living outside the Greek nation-state since antiquity and thus have a long tradition of loyalty to Greek language and culture. Greek is not just a medium of communication for expatriate Greeks, but a social symbol and a key ingredient of ethnic identification. The vast majority of Greek settlers (96%) believe that people of Greek descent living in Australia should have knowledge of Greek. Reasons closely linked with preserving the heritage, culture and ethnic identity account for almost 61% of the responses, whereas practical and linguistic reasons comprised 34%. Second generation respondents proportionally outnumbered their first generation counterparts in suggesting cultural values as the main reason for language loyalty to the mother tongue.

2.1 The Structure and Organization of the Greek Language Education

In 2005, Greek is taught throughout Australia in all States and Territories in a wide variety of systems and levels of education. Greek is offered at over 500 educational establishments in total, ranging from primary and secondary schools to tertiary institutions, state bilingual schools, independent Greek daily schools, evening colleges, community and Greek Orthodox Church organisations, language insertion classes, independent colleges of the Anglican and United Churches and independent ethnic schools.

The rationale and the orientation of the teaching varies from school to school and from approved authority to authority. Greek is offered as a bilingual program, as a mother tongue development program, as a cultural awareness program, as a second and foreign language program and as a combined language program selecting from the above.

Australia is the only country with a multicultural setting which has a national policy on languages. Its States and Territories, in theory at least, advocate the importance of teaching of a Language Other than English (LOTE) to all primary and post-primary children. Since 1987, all four major States, with the exception of Queensland accelerated efforts and produced formal policies with clear implementation strategy plans in support of the LOTEs. To judge by the LOTE implementation plans of the various states, Greek is a priority language only in South Australia (SA), Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) in spite of its claim to be the strongest maintained language, the language with the highest retention rate in education, the language with the highest number of post-graduate students at tertiary level and the language with the strongest ethnolinguistic vitality in Australia.

In 2005, Greek is offered as a mother tongue or as a second or foreign language development program in over 25 pre-school institutions in Australia. Bilingual pre-school and childcare programs in Greek operate in NSW, Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Western Australia (WA) and Victoria. In three pre-school language programs operating in Victoria and NSW almost half of the teacher-student contact takes place in Greek. Students are introduced to letter drafting, story reading and art and craft in Greek and are involved in various language activities, including narrative stories, songs and games. The popularity of the classes especially among second and third-generation parents is demonstrated by the sharp increase in the number of students attending these schools.

The teaching of Greek in government primary schools has expanded considerably since 1982, however during the first five years of the new century there was a decline in the number of students attending classes for mother tongue maintenance and development. Greek is not offered in any independent systemic primary school in Australia, other than those administered by the Greek community and Church and the International Grammar School in Sydney. Greek is staffed in Australian government primary schools in three ways: supernumerary (when the Greek teaching staff is appointed in addition to the general teachers), insertion and self-funded.

With the increase in the number of students emerging from Greek households where Greek is not spoken at home, the variety of streams of Greek language programs offered, depending on the state, the socio-cultural characteristics of the student population of each school, demand and the school's philosophy was restricted to the following¹:

- The Greek as a second language acquisition program offered in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria whereby Greek is offered as a second and/or foreign language, with emphasis on developing communicative skills of the students.
- The bilingual program offered only in Victoria (Lalor North Primary School), whereby instruction is provided through the medium of both languages, one for certain subjects, the other for others.²
- The Greek as a cultural enrichment subject, or as a language awareness program, whereby Greek is offered to substantiate and enrich cultural and linguistic understanding.

The most popular Greek programs offered in Victoria, Adelaide and Sydney are those involving second language programs, attended by 47% of the students.

2.2 The Providers of Greek language education

In 2005, over 36,000 students attended classes in Greek provided by the state and territory governments (primary, secondary, distance education centres, Saturday schools of modern languages), the independent denominational

schools, the Greek daily schools, Greek community schools (organized by the Greek Communities, the Greek Orthodox Church and independent educational entities, especially in Victoria) and private multilingual centres. An additional number of 1150 students are enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate Greek studies in ten tertiary institutions, both state universities as well as the Catholic University of Notre Dame in Western Australia.³

Greek language programs at both primary and secondary levels varied substantially in nature, objectives and intensity across Australia, depending upon the provider and the student composition. Government schools in SA and NSW are the strongest providers of Greek language education in these States catering for the 73% and 46% of the total number of students attending classes in Greek, while in Victoria ethnic schools organised by community and independent sources are the strongest providers (47%). The most popular Greek programs offered in Adelaide and Sydney are those involving foreign language programs. The combined mother tongue development and second language programs are most popular in Victoria.

Information provided by State Departments of Education reveal considerable increases in the number of students enrolled in Greek classes organized by government primary schools in South Australia and New South Wales, with parallel marginal decreases in all other States, including Victoria, despite the variations in the size of primary school language enrolments between States. For example, in 2005, South Australia was the State with the largest number of students attending Greek in government schools (5718) of whom 78% were of non-Greek background (NGB), while Greek was offered to 5426 children attending government primary and secondary schools in NSW, of whom 68% were non-native speakers. In Victoria the number of students attending Greek classes in 2005 in government schools was 4,068. Greek is also the language studied by most primary school children in NSW, attracting approximately 25% of the total number of students enrolled in the LOTE programs, while it is the second most preferred language of primary school children in SA. In government primary schools Greek is offered usually for 90 minutes in non-instructional time, that is, it is treated as a specialist area subject, while in secondary education there are normally 135 minutes of teaching.

In the last five years (2000-2005), the number of primary schools offering regular Greek language programs decreased in Victoria, in agreement with the comparatively low overall number of primary schools providing language

programs. Of the approximately 210 schools offering a LOTE in Victoria of the 1320 government primary schools, only 19 schools offered language program in Greek, while in NSW there were only 37 and in SA 36. This could be interpreted that despite suggestions that the optimum age for language learning was the primary school age, the number of primary schools offering courses in Greek was low. In 2005, most of these schools in Victoria, SA and NSW were offering Greek as a second language acquisition activity. The problem that most primary schools face is the inadequate training of the teachers of Greek and lack of continuity of their programs at post-primary level. There are certain deficiencies in key areas such as teaching material and staffing arrangements with the primary schools offering Greek as a second language. Most teachers teaching Greek at primary schools are Australian-born with limited proficiency in Greek. Particularly in schools which provide language programs from within their own staff, teachers tend not to be trained in Greek. The reliance of numerically small schools on specialist staff, e.g., supernumerary teachers, often has adverse effects as these teachers are seen by the students and the generalist staff with some bias. Currently, the best qualified teachers are in the schools with supernumerary staff.

The function of the language programs in Greek at primary level is reported to have changed, as the Greek community with the twenty-first century entered its last phase of settlement circle, that of citizenship and experienced the emergence of the third and fourth generation of Greek Australians. The strong tendency of the 1970s and 1980s towards mother-tongue development programs in primary schools have been replaced over the last ten years with programs towards second and foreign language, attracting great numbers of students of non-Greek background. From 1990, the number of students of non-Greek background attending Greek in government schools surpassed the number of students who had a home background in Greek in all states, standing in 2005 on an average of 75%. The changing function of Greek is reported to have eased the difficulties of the curriculum with the application of a more simplistic and constrained syllabus, alleviated the competition in class between Greek-speaking and non-Greek background students, which acted as a disincentive for second language learners, and led to the sharp increase of the number of students taking Greek. Greek is not offered in government primary schools in Queensland, Tasmania and Northern territory (NT).

**Table I: Number of students undertaking studies in Greek in Australia
(Primary and Secondary)**

State	Provider	Primary	Secondary	Total	
Vic	Government	2822		1246	4068
	Day Greek	893	666	1559	
	VSL		746	360	1106
	Independent	120	340	460	
	Ethnic	4215	1815	6030	13223
NSW	Government	4314	1112	5426	
	Day Greek	1218	1083		2301
	VSL	301	301		
	Independent	70	140	210	
	Community	3200	659	3859	12097
SA	Government	4861	887	5748	
	Day Greek	380	258		638
	Community	1235	430	1675	8061
WA	Government	0	0	0	
	Day Greek	270	217	487	
	Community	482	276	758	1245
QLD	Government	0	48	48	
	Community	588	216	804	852
TAS	Community	136	59	195	195
N.T.	Community	165	38	203	203
ACT	Community	180	0	180	
	Daily	28	0	28	208
GRAND TOTAL					36084

Lack of continuity into post-primary schools is a major problem and disincentive. There is a clear under provision of Greek language programs in secondary schools drawing from feeder primary schools (see *Table I* above). Even in South Australia, the State with the longest history of teaching Greek in its primary schools, during the post war period, paid no real attention to the issue of continuity from primary to secondary, nor to the appointment of full-time supernumerary specialist teachers of Greek in specific primary schools.

Greek is offered at secondary schools since the beginning of the 1970s in government schools in Victoria, South Australia and NSW, including Distance Education Centres (Correspondence Schools) and Saturday schools of Languages. Since then, the number of students attending classes in Greek rose and declined, mainly because Greek enrolment patterns in government schools are determined mainly by the policy of the individual schools on language programs beyond Years 9 and 10, as evidenced by the fact that the secondary schools which provide a continuous language program in the Eastern States from years 7 or 8 to 12 do not exceed 15% of their total number. The decline in the number of students taking Greek in secondary schools is most pronounced at the end of Year 8 and Year 10. Greek is not included in the “core” curriculum of any secondary school.

Greek is amongst the seven most frequently taught languages in government secondary schools in SA, Victoria and NSW, attracting approximately four per cent of the enrolments in *Languages Other Than English* (LOTE). Reinforced by the prevailing demographic characteristics, Greek reached its maximum enrolments in secondary schools in 1985, before its slow, but consistent decline, from 1993 onwards. Available data suggest that there are no gender differences in Greek enrolments at least up to Year 9. However, differences between the numbers of male and female students begin to emerge from Year 10, reaching its climax by Year 12, where female enrolments are more than double the male enrolments (74%) in all States where the subject is taught.

**Table 2: Number of students attending Greek in Victoria,
NSW, SA and WA (1998-2005)**

State	Provider	1988	1992	1998	2005	% of NGBS* (2005)
Vic	Gov. Primary	3929	4265	2784	2822	77
	Gov. Secondary	3837	4012	1572	1246	21
	Daily Greek	1633	1840	2107	1559	21
	Community	11,657	12,779	7700	6030	2
NSW	Gov. Primary	2351	3581	3312	4314	79
	Gov. Secondary	3164	2850	2280	1112	29
	Daily Greek	320	1004	1988	2301	8
	Community	5345	5299	3476	3859	3
SA	Gov. Primary	4327	4956	5342	4861	81
	Gov. Secondary	1313	1326	893	887	23
	Daily Greek	112	185	477	655	9
	Community	1985	2131	1824	1525	3
WA	Gov. Primary **	0	897	1005	0	0
	Gov. Secondary	30	43	0	0	0
	Daily Greek	0	68	163	487	89
	Community	280	367	300	758	2

*NGBS= *Non Greek background Students.*

** *All Greek primary classes in Greek were offered as insertion classes in WA administered by the Greek Orthodox Community of Evangelismos.*

Despite the serious reduction in the number of students undertaking Greek at HSC level (Year 12) during the last ten years (1994-2004), in 2005 there were over 2000 students studying Greek at matriculation level (Years 11 and 12) in Australia, while certain Universities were awarding 10% bonus mark for those students undertaking a LOTE at matriculation. The decline is partially justified by the policy of many government schools not to offer Greek as part of the normal teaching program at this level. Despite the unfavourable trends, Greek continued to be one of the most popular languages at Year 12 level, attracting over 1200 students in Victoria, NSW and SA. The status of Greek, its syllabus and its assessment must be

improved especially amongst NGB students for the subject to attract healthier numbers at this level. Currently only a three per cent of NGB students and “false bilinguals” manage to reach the matriculation examination in Australia. NGB student enrolment will only rise substantially with the introduction of extended programs designed to cater for the needs of students with no previous or limited knowledge of Greek. This program should be enlarged to widen the catchment area within the Greek community to include students of Greek background with a non native-like command of Greek.

The average weekly teaching time for Greek is 135 minutes at Year 7 in most secondary schools, rising to 220 minutes for the linguistically elite students reaching Year 12. All secondary schools offering Greek require a minimum of two years study of the subject. Current conditions on the frequency, extent and consistency of teaching do not allow for a positive linguistic proficiency and the improvement of language skills of their students. Parental support for the teaching of Greek in government primary and secondary schools is moderate to almost non-existent. Furthermore, as it was already noticed, there is a lack of any real and essential co-operation, and thus continuity, between feeder primary schools and the prospective recipient secondary institution. Many Greek programs at secondary schools operate in regions with no substantial number of feeder primary schools offering the subject, or in suburbs, which used to have concentrated numbers of Greek settlers in the 1970s and 1980s, prior to their internal immigration into developing suburbs in the 1990s and 2000s.

In 2005, Greek courses are offered only in the School of Languages of NSW and Victoria, in an attempt to supplement the mainstream provision of Greek in each of these States. Greek and Italian remain the most popular languages in terms of the number of providing centres in the Victorian School of Languages and are offered by more than 61% of both metropolitan and country Centres.⁴ These schools offer 90 instruction hours in Greek during the year, outside regular school hours, usually on Saturdays. Although the majority of Greek enrolments are in Years 7 to 12, language instruction is available from Year 1 to 12, while is the third major provider of LOTE at matriculation level after the Greek community based schools and the systemic government schools. During the last four years the number of students attending the Victorian school of Languages continued

to rise from 942 in 2000 to 1106 in 2004.

The Independent Greek Daily Schools commenced their operation in 1979 with a transitional bilingual program founded by St. John's Greek Orthodox College in Melbourne. Since then, another 10 Greek daily schools have been established in four States, of which eight continue their services, catering for a total of over 5000 students. Two of them (St. Andrew's Grammar in Perth and Alphington Grammar in Melbourne) appear to be broad-syllabus-centred and operate on a secular non-ethnospecific basis, drawing their clientele from the mainstream society.⁵ One of them (St. Anargyroi College in Oakleigh) is administered by the local Greek community of Oakleigh, another one (St. John's Greek Orthodox College has been purchased in 1992 by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese), while the remaining five⁶, although they have been established by local laity communities are more exposed to Church authority.

Greek Independent Schools offer their Greek language programs to students of all ability levels resulting in high retention rates amongst even NGB students from Years 1 to 10 (approximately 85%) as well as at matriculation levels amongst Greek background students. Surveyed teachers of these schools claimed that their schools were founded with a view to improving, via enhancing teaching of Greek, family cohesion and self-esteem. Alphington Grammar portrays itself as a non-denominational school and offers a second and foreign language program in Greek as a core subject. All of them, despite their intra-group politics are independent from higher authority, be that of Church or Government, and to a significant extent, maintain their autonomy. The Greek Government contributes substantial assistance to these schools by means of language teachers and resources but does not exercise control over their administration. The number of teaching periods in Greek varies from school to school, depending on the school philosophy and the objectives of the approved authority. Classes in Greek are offered from a minimum of five periods per week to a maximum of seven to beginner, intermediate and advanced groups

Overall enrolment numbers have significantly declined only in St. John's Greek Orthodox College of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese from 704 in 1992 to less than 500 in 2005, while all other daily schools considerably increased their numbers. Available data reveal that the number of NGB students attending the independent Greek daily schools will continue to rise,

with a parallel increase in the number of these schools.⁷

LOTE programs are not developed nor encouraged in many independent schools to judge by the fact that over 40% do not offer a LOTE. The teaching of Greek has been eradicated in recent years in independent schools despite a growing interest in cross-cultural education. There were only two schools in Victoria and one in Sydney offering Greek to 280 students at secondary level. No primary school offers Greek. Most independent colleges employ two curricula, separating beginners from advanced students, and working in composite classrooms. Greek is not taught in Catholic education, despite the enormous number of students of Greek Orthodox background attending both primary and post-primary catholic schools in Australia. However, the Ancient variety of Greek is taught to over 700 students in Melbourne and Sydney, administered in nine prestigious Independent Colleges.⁸

A major contribution to language loyalty efforts of the Greek community and Greek teaching is made by the substantial number of part-time community based ethnic schools which operate in all states and territories throughout Australia, administered by the Greek Communities, the Orthodox Church and individual educators. The main objectives of these schools include the maintenance of the mother tongue, the development of cultural awareness and the support of family cohesion and ethnic identity. Available data suggest that almost 16,000 students study Greek in more than 300 after-hour community schools in Australia, comprising approximately 41% of all Ethnic schools operating in Australia and catering for 51 LOTEs. With the exception of Victoria, almost all Greek Ethnic schools are community-based establishments, administered by local Greek communities and the Church. In Melbourne, many schools are organised by individuals and organizations without religious affiliations, administered by an independent school body and an executive board of directors. A rather substantial number of students (proportionally averaging 4%) attend private classes in Victoria and NSW. In fact, since 1984 the number of students enrolled at independently run community schools in Victoria was higher than all other providers together.⁹

The structure of Greek ethnic schools differs from a single teacher schools set up at the request of a community group or a brotherhood or at their initiative of an individual, to more complex establishments which may retain

their autonomy or depend on intermediate community authorities which carry responsibility or act as the approved authority for a greater number of schools operating in different suburbs. Most community groups (70%) in all states and territories have their own buildings and facilities which are utilized as ethnic school classes, however, most independent Greek ethnic schools (95%) hold their own classes in Government and Catholic schools. Many school councils impose excessive hiring fees, restrictions and conditions which could not be met by the directors of the Greek afternoon schools forcing them to change the venues for their classes regularly.

The lack of an official policy securing the registration of the Greek ethnic schools to an educational authority should be viewed as the major reason for the absence of proper accreditation and accountability and the low prestige that they enjoy, particularly by professional educators. However, the existence of over 180 parochial Greek Communities and parishes and over 600 brotherhoods and associations in Australia makes the notion of accountability complex and subtle. Greek ethnic schools have an open admission policy and accept all children and adults regardless of ethnic background. Available data reveal that almost 78% of all students at Greek ethnic schools use Greek at home, compared with the average 53% for other LOTEs.

Children enrolled at the Greek ethnic schools range from native speakers to those with practically no knowledge of Greek. In the intermediate level there are passive bilinguals, those with a monolingual family background and those with a bilingual, those with both parents of Greek origin and those children of mixed marriages. The most serious difficulty that many ethnic schools face is to grade together students of different ages and mixed abilities, without regard to their varying cognitive development, causing embarrassment, lack of interest, infrequent attendance and therefore progressive shift to English. This is exacerbated in some cases, particularly in WA, Queensland and NT, by the lack of professionally trained and qualified teachers and scarcity of teaching material.

There is a growing support for ethnic schools by community members and parents arguing that they not only supplement the formal schools system, but also fulfil a more important and unique role: they reinforce the sense of identity. Support for ethnic schools was also expressed by the Government recognizing their role in language teaching as a supplement to the language offered in formal education. Since 1990, the state governments recognized

the ethnic schools as eligible to offer accreditation for internal assessment of matriculating students.

It is necessary to bear in mind the lack of language methodology options within Greek teaching at ethnic schools given the limited resources. The methodology used in these schools depends on the training, age and place of birth of the teachers-in-charge and the provider. Australian-born teachers with formal qualifications employ a functional approach (65%), based on activities aiming at developing the communicative skills of their students rather than at understanding individual grammatical structures. Depending on the level of education (primary – secondary) and the actual year level of their students, they rely heavily the last five years on resource material developed by the *Paideia Omogenon* Program of the University of Crete (67%), other imported text books (18%), as well as their own (15%).

2.3 Issues in Teaching Greek

2.3.1 Greek Language Teachers

Available data indicate that most teachers of Greek in secondary government schools are dissatisfied with the support that they receive from their own school and the Departments of Education. They claim that their status in the school is low because Greek is offered only as an elective, often competing in a group with non-language subjects and they suffered from the insecurity of their position within their own school. Furthermore, they are under continuous pressure to maintain their student intake in a “viable state”, without receiving support from the parents or the school community.

The increasing emphasis on the development and attainment of proficiency in students necessitates that teachers of Greek must possess the highest level of linguistic competence themselves and perhaps the competence of an educated native-speaker. Most of them suggest that Australian-born teachers of Greek be encouraged to complete either a fourth year of Greek studies concentrating on the language in Australia or attend an additional year of studies in Greece. It has been generally accepted, however, that many teachers are not adequately prepared and they do not meet students’ expectations. Many primary teachers of Greek did not major in Greek or were not properly qualified to teach the subject. Most of them

obtained their education in Australia, with limited postgraduate studies and few had regular in-country experience.

Surveyed Greek teachers in government schools claimed that while literature has a legitimate place in the school curriculum, the emphasis should be placed on practical communication skills, together with an understanding of the range of different aspects of the Greek culture, given the constant changing function of Greek and the emergence of the third generation of Greek Australians in schools. Most of them expressed the need for brief in service programs at the tertiary level for their professional developments or proposed the establishment and operation in tertiary institutions of intensive language courses during the period of vacations. The professional development issue is very pressuring amongst educational circles as many teachers continue to employ very traditional and inflexible approaches in teaching Greek. Tertiary institutions have taken positive initiatives to upgrade the skills of practicing teachers. They organized, with the assistance of the Federation of Ethnic Schools and the state governments specially designed teachers training courses in Victoria, South Australia and NSW lasting for one semester, offering award certificates. Furthermore, tertiary institutions have also introduced courses designed to provide practicing teachers of Greek with additional or supplementary qualifications in Greek. For example, the Greek Studies program at La Trobe University offers subjects such as *Issues in Teaching Modern Greek*, *Greek in Contact with English* designed to enhance the language competence of prospective teachers of Greek.¹⁰

As the Greek community (ethnic) schools are not formally registered, their directors select teachers on the basis of their linguistic competence, their loyalty to culture and to a lesser extend on their formal training and qualifications. The majority (70%) preferred to engage teachers with Australian teaching qualifications, but with a linguistic proficiency obtained in Greece. Most teachers employed by Ethnic schools receive remuneration which does not commensurate with the award rates of the teachers engaged in other systems of education. This is explained partially by the fact that most perceive their engagement as part-time and sessional. As the Greek community is entering its forth generation since the government controlled massive immigration began in 1950 and almost two generations with no new immigrants since 1975, it becomes apparent that the language profile shifted from language maintenance of the mother tongue to language

maintenance or teaching of a second language. Consequently, teachers' profile is changing sharply. Greek-born teachers are gradually being replaced by Australian-born who comprise already the vast majority. Therefore, the need for linguistic competence of these teachers in Greek is more demanding. It is noted that old rivalries between ethnic school teachers and those employed in government schools have been eradicated, following the pressures exerted by the changing structure and function of Greek teaching and the utilization of the same teachers from both sectors.

2.3.2 The Syllabus of Greek

The teaching of Greek in government and community schools involves a wide range of syllabus types depending on the teacher and the provider. The majority of the teachers with overseas qualifications, employed in community schools are inclined to use grammar-based syllabus. The emphasis for them is to cultivate and develop all four language macro-skills. Australian-born locally trained teachers adopt more generally the functional and/or notional type of syllabus with less intensive grammatical analysis. They focus mainly on the listening and speaking skills of their students. Most government primary school teachers select a wide and innovative range of syllabus for their beginner and intermediate classes, including issue-based, situational, genre and activity-based (e.g. role play, description sessions, speaking to describe, speaking to inform). While they use a functional-type language assignments in advanced classes.

It is broadly accepted that the organised syllabus by both the government and community schools is not oriented to cater for NGB students. This is especially true with the matriculating students of NGB, who refuse to undertake Greek because the designed syllabus is extremely difficult for their level of language competence.¹¹ However, there are many teachers who believe that making the courses in Greek easier will not enlarge the clientele base.¹² They argue that the syllabus must be attractive and relevant to students needs and Greek courses must treat Greek language both as a skill as well as a gateway into the culture and civilization. The Education Departments in NSW and SA adopted two different types of syllabus for matriculating students to comply with the changes in the teaching of Greek: (a) the extended syllabus for beginners and "false bilinguals" and (b) the specialist syllabus for the advanced learners. Furthermore, in all States and Territories of Australia Greek beginner courses in secondary schools are in

their infant stages with inadequate resources in the area of curriculum planning and development.

Audio-visual material on cultural and historical background is also inadequate. Many reference sources are grossly outdated in their representation of Greek society and culture, dwelling on the image of poverty-striven villages, the donkey-riding peasant, which do not portray a realistic picture of contemporary Greece. Some important texts continue to employ obsolete vocabulary and prescriptive grammar, which are seen by the students as unattractive, boring and irrelevant to their needs.

The student clientele of Greek is changing sharply in Australia. Almost all students now entering secondary education are Australia-born, while the vast majority of their parents are also born in Australia, thus the linguistic ability of these students is expected to continue to weaken and undergo attrition. It is therefore necessary for the Greek curriculum to employ more enjoyable techniques breaking away from the traditional methods that are often tedious and do not have any positive feedback and by gearing properly designed resources towards NGB students.

In the past, State government initiatives have provided funding for large-scale syllabus development for primary school students in Victoria and SA Australia without the expected results.¹³ Until 1998, most Greek language teachers in Australia were improvising in their effort to attract and encourage their students in second and foreign language learning, as there were no systematically designed, motivating teaching material to take Greek language students from the preparatory stages to proficiency. Teachers were complaining of the complete absence of teaching materials relevant to the needs of their students. Most textbooks produced by the Greek Ministry of Education were anachronistic, suitable for the needs of students living in Greece, while those locally produced¹⁴ had only a restricted regional and peripheral use.

For a range of reasons the cost of books published overseas (mainly USA, Greece and UK) has increased prohibitively. The situation acted until 2000 as a disincentive particularly for the establishment of small courses in Greek and/or new courses in Greek, which at their initial stages were not expected to attract high student numbers. Serious deficiencies were reported in the range (Tamis *et. al.* 1993:88 ff.), accessibility and adequacy of teaching

materials used and the resources. Practicing teachers in all states claimed that beginner groups in Greek are severely under provided with appropriate course books. In addition, the allocated budget did not provide for adequate library facilities and advanced teaching material. The situation was more critical in secondary schools where Greek competes with other better-equipped and more reliably financed languages, namely Japanese and Indonesian.

2.3.3 Teaching Material for Greek

During the last six years (1999-2004), the teaching material produced within the framework of the *Paideia Omogenon* Program administered by the Centre of Intercultural and Migration Studies (E.DIA.M.ME) of the University of Crete¹⁵ is now used almost exclusively in South Australia and NSW and the majority of the government and community schools in other States. The *Paideia Omogenon* funded by the European Union and the Greek Ministry of Education produced separate books catering for students learning Greek as second language as well as a foreign language for both Greek-speaking and non-Greek speaking beginners and false bilingual students. Certain books were also produced depicting basic characteristics of the Greek civilization and the historical and cultural characteristics of Australia, thus providing the students, through the genre, with a familiar environment and well accustomed traditions and practices.

Over the last five years more than 300 teachers of Greek were exposed to special awareness seminars. The seminars were organised in Australia by the Scientific Committee of the Program in Australia¹⁶ in collaboration with the Educational Consuls appointed in the Greek Consulates and the Advisors of Greek studies assigned by the Departments of Education in South Australia, NSW and Victoria.¹⁷

Most teachers who adopted, tested and used the teaching books of the *Paideia Omogenon* Program assessed that the teaching material produced is close to the students' cognitive needs, attractive and relevant to their expectations, structurally applicable to the curriculum restrictions, aesthetically innovative, fulfilling the cultural and the social criteria and the objectives of their lessons. Most language co-ordinators argued that the books of the program are also closely related to the set pedagogical criteria and the geographic and socio-cultural framework of their syllabus. Particularly popular were with the students those books depicting the unique

cultural characteristics of the Australian environment, as they tend to identify with the practices described in these books. The books included motivating activities encouraging student participation and creativity and the themes were developed in a logical and systematic approach satisfying the learning procedures. Most teachers are also satisfied with the special teaching kits prepared by the *Paideia Omogenon* Program for those beginners and “false bilinguals», praising their systematic communicative approach and the originality of the themes.

However there were also certain reservations expressed regarding some books of the Program, emerging mainly from the difference between the linguistic ability of the students and the targeted language level objective of the text. For example, the series of books entitled *Πράγματα και Γράμματα* (Pragmata kai Grammata) designed for primary students are used by secondary school students in government and community schools. Lack of resources and adequate finance do not allow schools to apply realistic streaming of their students according to their competence in Greek. The plethora of levels in linguistic competence makes the universal use of the text in a class situation inaccessible to some students. Therefore, most teachers decide to implement those series which are creative, linguistically less cumbersome, and culturally more tempting, irrespective of their anticipated language level, e.g. the culturally oriented *Εμείς και οι Άλλοι* (Emeis kai oi Alloi) is arguably the most popular book, together with the series entitled *Margarita* in government and community primary schools. The book that is almost universally used by students reaching matriculation is *Ο Κόσμος της Ελληνικής* (O Kosmos tis Ellinikis), while equally universal is the usage of the series *Μια Φορά κι Έναν Καιρό* (Once Upon a Time).

Many teachers expressed the view that the emphasis on grammatical and syntactical activities ought to be limited allowing for more audio-lingual activities, enriched with recreational games, which could enhance both the entertainment and participation of the students, but also could be proved useful for their expression and lexicon. The wide use of all books emerging from the history and civilization of Greece, including *Στη Μυθολογία με τα Φτερά του Πήγασου* (*In the Mythic country with the wings of Pegasus*) and *Ιστοριοδρομίες* (*History-races*) as well as the most recently produced *Από την Ζωή των Ελλήνων της Αυστραλίας* (*From the Life of the Greeks in Australia*). Broadly speaking, the

teaching books prepared by the *Paideia Omogenon* are being used with a discretionary intervention on the part of the teacher, as indeed the high expectations of the linguistic proficiency of students versus a pragmatic concept of linguistic adequacy based on the prevailing Australian environment.

2.3.4 *The Epilogue*

Until 1973 the teaching of Greek in Australia was confined within the community network and its scope did not extend over the practical and sentimental value of the intragroup needs. The main objective of the Greek community leaders was to maintain the mother tongue, given the time and psychological constraints under which Greek was taught to their Australia-born children, in order to ease their communication barriers with the broader Australian community. Some were prepared to recognize sentimental values, acknowledging that the teaching of Greek would generate feelings of satisfaction to the elderly members of the community and maintain the sentimental bonds with the old country.

Non-Greek students of Greek propose a wide range of purposes for the study of Greek depending on the Age and the level and the nature of study. In early school years students select Greek because of educational and intellectual values; whereas, at the secondary level, Greek is offered as a second and foreign language and, therefore, the objectives to the limitations of intercultural understanding and the development of certain cognitive capacities. Adult students express utilitarian reasons for learning Greek, claiming that the acquisition of the language is important for its practical application, e.g., employment consideration or an effective informal communication with their in-laws and friends following an inter-ethnic marriage or simply travelling overseas. Some, mainly those involved in the area of social work, develop sensitive and tolerant cross-cultural attitudes. Many with a background in classical studies express the opinion that they wish to develop an understanding of the modern Greek language and culture or to develop a linguistic capacity because Greek provides the key to antiquity and the civilizations which exerted a profound influence on the Western tradition. Within these different contexts, the teaching objectives of Greek have changed over the last ten years in Australia, from linguistic to academic, cultural and vocational.

NOTES

1. In 1992 according to Tamis and Gauntlett (1993) there were six streams, incorporating in addition (a) the partial immersion programs in Victoria and SA where instructions commenced in Preps through the medium of Greek for subjects covering 70% of the curriculum and 30% through the medium of English, only to be reversed in Year 6, and (b) the combined bilingual program.

2. In 2005, the Lalor bilingual program in Melbourne operates its language immersion program for its 57 primary students commencing with 14 contact hours in Greek from Preps to Grade 2, reduces the number of hours to 12 for Grades 3 and 4 and to nine for students in Grades 5 and 6. The school offers all subjects in Greek and English, with the exception of Mathematics, which is offered exclusively in Greek up to Grade 4. Greek is alternately used with English in reading and writing sessions, in head writing, word study and the process-writing session, which is conducted, in both languages, on rotating basis.

3. Greek studies are offered in the universities of Notre Dame in WA, the University of Flinders, which also administers a Greek studies program in the University of Adelaide and the University of Darwin, La Trobe University, which also administers a Greek studies program in the University of Melbourne, the RMIT University, the University of Sydney, Macquarie University, the University of New South Wales, while the New England University terminates its Greek Studies program in December 2005.

4. The Victorian School of Languages, previously known as Saturday School of Modern languages, was established in 1935 and is currently the largest provider of LOTE in the Victorian Government school system, incorporating approximately over 500 sessional instructors. The Saturday school of Community languages of NSW began operation in 1978 in six centres in Metropolitan Sydney offering programs in 16 languages.

5. Currently Alphington Grammar has a NGB student intake of 69%, while St. Andrews Grammar has an even greater (83%).

6. Reference is made here to the following schools: All Saints, St. Euphemia and St. Spyridon (NSW) and St. George and St. Spyridon in SA.

7. In 2005, in South Australia the local Greek communities operate two Independent Daily Schools, St. George's is administered by the Greek Orthodox Community of Thebarton and St. Spyridon's by the Greek Orthodox Community of Unley.

8. Ancient Greek courses are being offered amongst the most prestigious colleges in Sydney and Melbourne, including Pymbles Ladies College, Caulfield Grammar,

Xavier and Scots Colleges.

9. The largest ethnic school in Australia is Omiros College operating in Victoria and catering for over 1000 students in 12 school units.

10. Most surveyed teachers of Greek in the Teachers' Training Seminars organised by the National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research, La Trobe University during the years 2004 and 2005 argued that the popularity of Greek and the level of support that students receive from the general school environment to pursue Greek studies depended on the success of the teacher. Most of them complained that only a small number of Greek teachers attend after hours teacher network in-services to develop further their standing.

11. Most languages, including Italian are offered as foreign languages, thus, the curriculum structure is designed to incorporate mainly beginners and foreign students. Their curricula are easily accessible, easily planned and easily learned. Therefore, students prefer to learn Italian, French or Spanish rather than Greek which is very demanding and planned to receive those students from mainly a Greek cultural background.

12. The German syllabus for matriculating students of German appears to be even more difficult than the Greek one.

13. Reference is made here to the combined Victoria and South Australian Syllabus Committee, which in fact planned and prepared a series of readers for the primary school students of Greek.

14. Reference is made here among others to Psaltis in SA (1972), M. Kasapidis and A. Tamis (1973), M. Maheras-Douvardidis (1989), D. Gruz (1985, 1989), Giota Krilis-Kevans (1983-1985), P. Liveriadis (1980), E. Glaros (1992), N. Foster (1992), A. Theodosiadis (1989), as well as the books produced by the Inter-Departmental Curriculum Committee of Modern Greek of the Victorian and South Australian Ministries for Education involving amongst others K. Kyprianou, B. Athanasiou and J. Burke.

15. A full list of (a) the printing, audio-visual, electronic and soft ware teaching material and (b) the theoretical studies compiled for the Greek language education in Albania, Australia, Canada, Germany, South Africa and the Hellenic Diaspora, incorporating also theoretical and applied approaches in education as well as the Minutes of International Conference on the Greek education in Diaspora, organized by the EDIAMME appear in a special volume.

16. The Scientific Committee of the *Program Paideia Omogenon* for Australia is comprised of Professor A. M. Tamis (La Trobe University), Assoc. Professor, M.

Tsianikas (Flinders University), Dr. P. Nazou (Sydney University), Mr. S. Papasavvas (Notre Dame University), K. Kyprianou, A. Koveos, M. Maheras-Douvartzidis and D. Koutsouvelis (Victoria), E. Glarou (South Australia), M. Conomos (NSW).

17. Reference is made here to the seminars organized to increase teachers' awareness on the benefits to be derived from the use of the teaching material produced by the *Program Paideia Omogenon* of the University of Crete. The seminars were attended by practicing teachers of Greek and were conducted by the following entities: the National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research, La Trobe University, the Advisors of the Ministry for Education in SA and Victoria, Eleni Glaros and Costas Tripolitakis, the area of Greek Studies in RMIT University, the Consuls of Education in Victoria and NSW, Dina Amanatidou and Dr. Maria Agathangelidou, the Greek Community of Melbourne (involving Kypros Kyprianou and Anna Hatzipanagiotidou), the SA Ministry of Education and Flinders University (involving H. Glarou, Prof. M. Tsianikas and A. Hatzipanagiotidou).

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