

○ LANGUAGE, FAITH AND IDENTITY: A HISTORICAL INSIGHT INTO DISCOURSES OF LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND PLANNING BY THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Anikó Hatoss *University of New South Wales*

Anikó Hatoss is a Senior Lecturer in Linguistics in the School of International Studies, University of New South Wales. Her research is focused on language and migration, discourse and identity, micro-level language planning and language maintenance and shift in immigrant contexts.

a.hatoss@unsw.edu.au

While most language-planning and policy (LPP) studies have focussed on language decisions made by government bodies, in recent years there has been an increased interest in micro-level language planning in immigrant contexts. Few studies, however, have used this framework to retrospectively examine the planning decisions of religious institutions, such as “ethnic” churches. This paper explores the language decisions made by the Lutheran church in Australia between 1838 and 1921. The study is based on archival research carried out in the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide, South Australia. The paper draws attention to the complex interrelationships between language, religion and identity in an immigrant context.

KEY WORDS: language and religion, language ideology, language maintenance and shift, German as an immigrant language, German Australians, language planning, Lutherans

INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been an increased interest within the field of language policy and planning in the role public institutions (other than educational institutions) play in meso- and micro-level language planning (Baldauf, 2006; Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008). While there is still considerable doubt amongst experts regarding the question ‘Can language be planned?’ (see e.g. Kaplan, 2005; Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000), most scholars agree that language maintenance in immigrant communities can, to some extent, be influenced by deliberate language policy and language planning activities. These activities are typically conducted and coordinated from top-down by various government bodies such as ministries of education (Kaplan, 2005). However, such ‘language management’ (Spolsky, 2009) can also happen on less official, less formal so-called ‘grassroot’ levels (Hornberger, 1996). Baldauf (1994) and Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) summarise these planning activities under three main headings: macro-, meso- and micro-level planning. The language planning decisions by the

Lutheran Church in Australia presented in this paper provide insights into micro-level language planning activities in the context of German language in Australia.

The complex relationship between religious, ethnic and national identities has attracted much research in anthropology as well as in sociolinguistics. Religious identity in some contexts has been shown to be a unifying, while in others a dividing force (Joseph, 2004). Ram (2008) has highlighted the shifting interrelationships between secularism, religion and nationalism in Israel. In the context of language maintenance and shift Nahir (1998) discussed the revival of Hebrew a century ago showing that religion had a key role to play in the total shift of pre-Israel Palestine's Jewish community from Yiddish to Hebrew as an all-purpose language.

THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS PAPER

Despite the well-established research tradition in the study of national and religious identities in sociology and anthropology, there has been little attention on relevant language matters. Therefore, as Omoniyi and Fishman (2006, p. 13) have put it, 'the onus remains with sociolinguistics [...] to fill the current gap in the disciplinary neglect of the language variable in the field of the sociology of religion'. This paper aims to make a contribution to the research by providing an example from the context of the Lutheran Church in Australia and to explore the Church's decisions in language choice. It is hoped that the historical perspective will enhance current understanding of the language maintenance and shift factors as well as the micro-language planning motivations in immigrant contexts. I also aim to highlight complex interrelationships between language, religion and identity. The historical viewpoint allows for a much needed "perspectival view" of language decisions in the past. As Omoniyi and Fishman argue, sociology of language research needs to consider the constantly changing dynamics of many interrelated factors:

Race, ethnicity, nationality constantly shape the framework for sociology of language projects, anchored to the themes of individual or group identity, micro- or macro-level politics motivation of control and access in formal and informal spheres (Omoniyi & Fishman, 2006, p. 2).

Much of the current discussion on the topic of language and religion is within the context of 'ethnic churches' and is often based on the concept that religious communities can be clearly identified as unified and homogenous groups with a strong social and 'ethnic' solidarity. There is also an underlying common belief that there is a simple connection between ethnicity, religion and, often, language. This paper, however, demonstrates that such views are rather stereotypical and superficial as the interrelationship between ethnicity, religion and language is highly complex and equivocal. The discussion here is set in the context of Lutheran immigrants in Australia who do not fully represent the German Australian community. This 'sub-community' within the German Australian community is characterised

by distinctive attitudes and affiliations to Lutheranism as their religion, to their ethnicity, nationality and German as their mother tongue.

The scope of this paper is historical with a specific focus on three main eras: (1) The early history of the church; (2) The 1913 ‘language question’ and (3) the impact of WWI. These periods were selected as they represent some of the key turning points *vis-à-vis* the language of the Church. The paper, however, does not provide a comprehensive review, but rather it aims to highlight the Church’s rationale in its language planning decisions and the complexity of tensions shaping the German-Lutheran identity in Australia.

LANGUAGE AND RELIGION IN SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND LANGUAGE PLANNING CONTEXTS

In sociolinguistic studies religion has been shown to be a significant factor in the continuity of immigrant languages (Fishman, 2000). The domain of church has been shown to foster internal community networks; and, therefore, assist the survival of a minority language (Fishman, 1991). Since language has numerous functions beyond communication, there are several reasons why the language-religion nexus is of interest in sociolinguistics. Language controls reality and reaches the supernatural, e.g. the language of prayers; it is a vital tool for reaching God, has a strong symbolic power and is a tool for expressing identity (see e.g. Woods, 2004). Religion and language can be important national identity markers, and are essential components of ethno-national identity, along with presumed historical continuity and culture (Safran, 2002, p. 154).¹ Still, national and religious identities do not always go hand in hand as this paper will demonstrate.

Sociolinguistic studies have also shown that religion often leads to diglossic situations in immigrant communities. Diglossia, following Fishman’s definition, is a ‘cultural posture whereby one language is reserved for one set of ethnoculturally approved and essentially self-regulated functions (e.g. outside relations) and another language is reserved for another set (e.g. inside relations)’ (Fishman, 1991, p. 357). This functional compartmentalisation can facilitate intergenerational mother tongue continuity in immigrant contexts and is, often, the key to the survival of traditional high varieties, such as Classical Arabic. The language choice of an ‘ethnic church’ has a major role in the development of such diglossic situations.

Since verbal communication between God and His followers is an essential part of most religions, most churches adopt a covert or overt ‘language-religion-ideology’ which can be theorised as a continuum between a strong and a weak language-religion relationship (Woods, 2004). The term ‘language-religion-ideology’, therefore, appropriately describes a denomination’s actions, attitudes, traditions, and official/unofficial policies which pertain to language (Woods, 2004, p. 41).

Motivational models of language planning (Ager, 2001) have highlighted the role religion plays in influencing the language maintenance of immigrant communities. Ager defines language planning as ‘the ways in which organised communities, united by religious, ethnic, or political ties, consciously attempt to influence the language(s) their members use’ (Ager, 2001, p. 5). This definition recognises religion as a one of the main identity factors which play a role in community relationships and, therefore, in language planning and maintenance in immigrant contexts. In Karan’s (2000, p. 68) motivational model religion is one of the four key motivational factors which determine language choice in immigrant contexts (the other three are communicative, economic and social factors).

Germans have been described as occupying a medium ground in language maintenance and shift in Australia (Smolicz, 1981, 1999; Smolicz & Lean, 1980), but as Clyne (1988) has noted some of these generalised rankings were based on stereotypical views, ignoring some of the variation within the ‘ethnic’ group.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF GERMAN MIGRATION AND THE HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Essentially there were four main motives that drove German immigration to Australia: religious, economic, political and social (Meyer, 1990). While to some degree these motives overlapped, the initial and most crucial factor was religion. In the 1830s the so-called “*Altlutheraner*” (Old Lutherans) faced persecution in Europe (Prussia) which was the result of their rejection of the forceful attempts by the King of Prussia to exercise state control over all churches. All Lutherans who resisted the King’s attempts faced persecution and traditional Lutheran services were declared illegal. Priests were imprisoned or had to seek refuge elsewhere (Leske, 1996). The main issue for the Lutherans was the wording of the worship book, as Leske explains:

The Lutherans who had a deep appreciation of their heritage could not accept a worship book which left out characteristic Lutheran emphases in the orders for holy baptism and holy communion, and which blurred some other teachings such as God’s grace offered to all people through the gospel (Leske, 1996, p. 17).

The Old Lutherans issued a petition which claimed an independent status for the Lutheran Church based on seven principles, including the conduct of strictly Church-related matters independent of state control, but bound by the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions. They also demanded the right to teach according to the Bible and the Confessions and to choose their own school teachers and leaders. At the same time they recognised the ultimate authority of the state in all civic and legal matters (Leske, 1996). As their demands were not met, the only solution was to leave their country and seek religious tolerance overseas.

Religious problems aside, rural communities faced harsh economic conditions in Prussia. The years 1844 and 1846 saw a disastrous grain and potato harvest, which contributed to some Old Lutherans’ desire to emigrate in search of better opportunities, religious freedom and more favourable economic conditions (Leske, 1996, p. 17). Unimpeded emigration by religious dissenters was enshrined in the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Based on these rights, twenty Old Lutheran families applied for passports from the Prussian authorities in 1835, and by 1838 two Lutheran missionaries had arrived in Australia from the Dresden Mission Society (Leske, 1996, p. 21).

Settling down in a new land in Australia was not without difficulties. First of all there was the question of where to settle. Lutherans in Prussia heard about the free British colony developing in South Australia and they were convinced that this new land would provide everything they were hoping for: ‘freedom of worship, freedom of choice of teachers and teaching content in schools, freedom to practice Lutheranism without governmental directives or control’ (Leske, 1996 p. 21). This strong desire to pursue their faith is well documented in the farewell address of the leaders of the Catharina party as cited in Leske (1996):

Why do we leave our native land? We are not seeking the freedom of this passing earthly life. Convinced that only the truth in Jesus Christ can make us eternally free, our sole reason for emigrating is this: so that we can remain a truly evangelical community, basing our freedom not on human permission, but on the authority of spiritual truth (Leske, 1996, p. 32).

After the 1848 revolutions in Europe, political factors led to a new wave of German immigration to Australia. The majority of immigrants at this time were farmers, rural labourers and trades people. By 1860 almost 8,800 German immigrants had come to South Australia. They were strongly bound by their convictions and by their common language, German. Based on the Research and Statistical Unit of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (n.d.), Table 1 shows the demographics of the German-born population of Australia for the historical period in question including the early years of German settlement in Australia. The figures in Table 1 show all those born in Germany, therefore these figures do not reflect the exact number of Lutherans. Still, this demographic information provides a picture of the general German migration trend which peaked around the late 19th century. German migration was, then, put to a halt during WWI.

Table 1
German-born Australians according to Census years

Census year	German-born
1881	37,384
1891	45,008
1901	38,352
1911	32,990
1921	22,396

Lutherans were quick to organise their congregations upon settlement in Australia. They held their first convention at Glen Osmond as early as 23-24 May 1839 and the first Lutheran churches were built shortly thereafter. They were churches with German trained ministers of religion and most importantly the language of the church services was exclusively German in the early years (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2004).

It is also critical to note that the Lutheran congregations were far from being homogenous entities. In fact, the history of Lutheranism in Australia during the 19th century was characterised by numerous schisms. On the one hand some congregations united under the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia (ELSA). On the other hand, the Immanuel Synod and other congregations merged in 1921 under the name of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (UELCA) (Fischer, 1999). These two Lutheran synods merged in 1966 at the Constituting Convention at Tanunda under the name of the 'Lutheran Church of Australia' (LCA) (Pfitzner, 2009). In this paper, therefore, "Lutheran Church" has multiple meanings. It is used as a generic term to refer to the various Lutheran congregations in Australia. Where appropriate, this generic term will be replaced with the specific terms of the two synods such as UELCA and ELSA.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

The discussion in this paper is based on archival research which was conducted in the Lutheran Archives and the National Archives of South Australia. The Lutheran Archives is located in Adelaide and is the official repository of historical material relating to the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). It holds records of the present LCA, as well as records of the earlier Lutheran Synods in Australia such as UELCA and ELSA. The study sought to identify language decision motives of the Lutheran Church and to explore the relationships between religious, secular and national identities.

The method applied was a qualitative analysis of religious and other historical documents relating to language use in the church and language ideology as represented in church periodicals and other print media. The study sought to identify excerpts dealing with language and identity. These excerpts were then critically reviewed and conclusions were drawn based on the Church's explicit positionings towards German-ness, as well as German and English as the working languages of the church. The database for this study comprised of the church periodical titled '*The Australian Lutheran*' published between 1913 and 1921 and a small collection of letters and newspaper articles held at the National Archives of South Australia. In addition, parish papers, synod records and school timetables were also studied for obtaining background information on major events in the Lutheran congregations. In summary, the approach taken was to combine historical ethnography with a sociolinguistic enquiry based on discourse data. Taking a retrospective view was an opportunity to explore what can be learnt from language planning motivations of the past and how these motivations

and ideologies might be relevant in contemporary “ethnic” and “religious” schools and communities. Secondly, the focus on one ‘sub-segment’ of the German Australian community reminds researchers of the variability within immigrant communities.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

THE EARLY YEARS AND THE LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

From the early years of settling in Australia, the Australian Lutheran Church had a major role in the education of children. Lutheran schools were crucial fortresses of the intergenerational continuity of the German language (Clyne, 1968, 1970, 1988, 1994, 1997). Yet, it was evident that the schools mainly served religious purposes, as Brauer has stated:

The Fathers’ main object was the religious instruction of their children. [...] they invariably placed the main stress on the religious factor... [...] Quite naturally they also wished their children to remain acquainted with the German language, but that was secondary consideration’ (Brauer, 1956, as cited in Volk, 1962, p. 2).

The teaching in these schools was conducted mainly in German, and elementary schools particularly had the triple aim of religious education, language maintenance and general education (Schule der Deutschen Sprache e. V., 1991, p. 12). While in the 1850s most of the schools were monolingual German schools teaching English as a second language, gradually all the schools became bilingual. By the 1870s they generally taught in German in the morning and in English in the afternoon. The subjects taught in German were catechism, Bible, Reformation history, German grammar, dictation, reading (with German cultural content), writing (Gothic script – German proverbs were often used as copying material), translation from German into English. The subjects taught in English included arithmetic, English grammar, translation from English into German, reading, geography (Australia and the World), singing and drawing (Schule der Deutschen Sprache e. V., 1991, p. 13). The dual emphasis on German and English reflected a dual loyalty to their religion, and to the British Commonwealth and Australia. In 1895, one of the teachers’ magazines emphasised the importance of German as ‘the mother tongue’ and as a useful for ‘practical life’ and English as a language of the ‘citizen(s)’ of this country’ (Australia) without which they cannot do.

After biblical history and catechism, German language is the most important subject in our schools’... ‘because German is our mother tongue it takes the first place in our practical lives... But it is of great harm to a citizen of this country not to have learned the English language of the land sufficiently.... In no way of life can the citizen of this country do without the English language (Schule der Deutschen Sprache e. V., 1991, p. 13).

By 1916 there were 60 bilingual German-English schools run by Lutheran Churches, including 49 in South Australia, 10 in Victoria and 1 in New South Wales. These schools, however, had been under pressure from inside and from outside at the same time and gradually they had shifted more and more towards English as the language of instruction (Volk, 1962). One of the internal challenges was to supply teachers to the schools who were proficient in German. This was a major task, on the one hand, due to the language shift that had occurred in the new generation of Lutheran Germans and, on the other hand, due to the government's policy to reduce teacher training institutions. Pressure was exerted by the Commonwealth and state governments to conform to Australian monolingual English education. These covert policies led to a gradual decrease of German in the schools, as school timetables from this period demonstrate. A South Australian timetable from approximately 1896 shows a breakdown of two-fifths of the day in German, three fifths in English, while other syllabuses from 1910 to 1914 show lessons in German only before the morning recess, while the rest of the day was conducted in English (Volk, 1962, p. 5). These issues will be discussed later within the context of WWI and the closure of the Lutheran Schools, but before we come to that it is necessary to discuss the Church's position on the language question in 1913. This was the time when the first English language church paper (The Australian Lutheran) appeared to replace the old German-language *Christlicher Volkskalender für Australien* published between 1886 and 1918. (For a list of all Lutheran papers in Australia see <http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1453>). The decision to publish the church periodical in English was a significant micro-level language planning act by the church, but as we will see it was mainly motivated by religious rather than linguistic or national motives.

THE 1913 'LANGUAGE QUESTION'

The language question became a high priority agenda item for the Church in the early 1900s and it was the main topic of the first English language edition of *The Australian Lutheran* (1913). According to the Church statistics of 1913, at this time the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia (ELSA) comprised 188 congregations with 15, 266 souls, 9,619 communicants and 3,341 voting members, 59 pastors, 38 male and 20 female teachers and 1,598 children who attended Lutheran church schools. *The Australian Lutheran* (1913) noted the multilingual and multicultural character of the Lutheran church in America where their sister synod was preaching the Gospel in 22 different languages. In the city of Chicago alone, as the periodical explained, the Lutheran brethren were preaching in 17 or 18 different tongues (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 7). By contrast, there was an increased rate of using mostly English in the Australian congregations. For example, the church paper noted that 'all work in church and school at the Koonibba Lutheran Mission Station, near Denial Bay, SA, [was] carried on in the English language.' Another example was the Brisbane Mission at Kangaroo Point, Queensland, where services were 'conducted in English,

Scandinavian (sic), and German' and the Lutheran Young People's Association held its meetings every alternate Thursday; and in the rural areas 'Active Inner or Home Mission' was carried out in the English language in the Lockyer district, and regular English services were conducted at Hessenburg, Mt. Sylvia and Helidon, especially for those not conversant in German. It was a successful mission bringing back Lutherans who had been 'drifting away' from their Church (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 8). For example,

[T]he Hessenburg congregation has been rapidly increasing since work in English has been taken up here. The youth at these places are receiving religious instruction in English as German, under present circumstances would be of no avail (*The Australian Lutheran*, 1913, p. 8).

The Church recognised that transition from the German language to English was setting in and English was increasingly becoming the language of young people 'despite all efforts, entreaties, and admonitions to the contrary' (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 2). In its first edition *The Australian Lutheran* raised an essential language-related moral question: 'Does the appearance of "*The Australian Lutheran*" require an apology for printing in English instead of German?' The Church's answer was 'no'. The paper gave an explanation for choosing English by referring to young people's tendency towards using and liking English more:

While the great majority of our people still cling with characteristic loyalty and passionate devotion to their German mother tongue, there is no denying the fact that numbers of them are adopting the English language and are already more conversant with English than with the language of their fathers. Even when the young have learnt, at home and in the parochial school, the German language tolerably well, the plea is not infrequently heard that they understand or like the English better (*The Australian Lutheran*, 1913, p. 2).

Consistent with this observation, the periodical also reported a rapid language shift in the congregation of Taabinga (South-East Queensland). The report stated that although the congregation was bilingual served by a pastor alternately in German and English, some of the young members were 'quite unacquainted with the German language and [therefore the] first confirmation pupils [were] being instructed in English' (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 2).

The discourse of the church periodical reflects the Church's view that language shift in the younger generation was a relatively 'natural' phenomenon. The periodical makes references to the changed circumstances given in the new country of settlement and states that language shift among the younger generation 'is principally due to their surroundings, to the conditions under which they live, and which influence their lives and characters, their likings and tastes' (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 20). However, the Church was openly concerned about one particular aspect of the gradual loss of the German language in the community. As *The Australian Lutheran* stated there was 'danger ahead':

The period of transition from German to English will, [...] be attended with constant danger, be fraught with many trials and temptations. There is a danger of losing one's Lutheran consciousness of an unscriptural fraternalisation with those who differ from us in doctrine... [...] there is danger of reducing Lutheran principles and practices to the low level of some non-Lutheran denominations (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3).

As this quotation exemplifies, the Church's main fear was that Lutheran beliefs and the faith could not be fully expressed in English and therefore, language shift was seen as leading to a shift away from true Lutheran values. On the other hand, the church paper emphasises the superior qualities and suitability of the German language. It states that German 'contains a wealth of theological lore, devotional writings, and hymns, not to be found in any other tongue' also 'translations seldom do full justice to the original', they 'do not, as a rule rise above mediocrity' and they are 'not pitched in the right key' (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 2). These statements reflect strong language ideologies which resonate with the fact that German was always seen by Lutherans as the only true language of Lutheranism as it was the language of Luther and his Bible. In summary the Church was mainly concerned about the shift to English due to a fear of 'loss in translation'. For Lutherans, no language other than German could express the theological and spiritual subtleties required of the Scriptures.

While shifting to English in the liturgy was clearly seen as a weakening of the religious expression, the Church accepted the situation as there were other vital issues at stake. The ultimate concern for the Church was the potential loss of the younger generation. The Church's message to the congregation clearly identified the duty of the Church to respond to the needs of younger members. *The Australian Lutheran* posed the following question:

'What is the duty of the German Church as regards those of her children who are adopting the English language to the more or less complete exclusion of the German? Is she to throw them overboard or is she to hold them and minister to their spiritual wants in the language they are adopting?' (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 2).

The paper goes on to posit that the hazard of the language shift is the 'danger of losing one's Lutheran consciousness' Church authorities feared that Lutherans would leave the congregation thereby weakening the Church. The loss of German, thus, was not seen as of any concern in the daily life outside the religious practices.

In its first edition in 1913 *The Australian Lutheran* states that the Church must choose between (1) preventing the Anglicising of the speech of all her children; or (2) ignoring 'the fact of the transition and letting the Anglicised portion of her children pass over to the sects surrounding them'. The second option is the least preferred as this action 'would not only be the height of folly, but also criminal negligence'. The loss of younger Lutherans as well as potential followers of the church due to the language barriers was against all intentions of the

church as this ‘would find no countenance in Holy Scripture’ (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3).

Consequently, the ‘only correct thing to do’ was ‘to face the fact of the coming transition of many of our people from German to English with far-sighted discrimination and to make provision for supplying their spiritual wants in the language they are adopting, thus holding and retaining them in the Church of their fathers.’ (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3). The role of *The Australian Lutheran* was to:

lend a helping and guiding hand, [...] provide spiritual nourishment and advise and assist them in their adjustment to their new environment in adapting their polity, their plans and methods to the peculiar condition of their new surroundings, so that they may not lose or let go the noble heritage of their fathers, and may act as a leaven among their English speaking fellow citizens’ (*The Australian Lutheran*, 1913, p. 3).

So the Church opted to support the acculturation of its younger generation into Australian society, but remained strongly committed to keeping them in the Lutheran congregations. Teaching the Lutheran faith was the most essential task and could not be compromised by language. On the contrary, the use of English offered an opportunity to reach a broader audience: those of non-German background. As *The Australian Lutheran* states:

The Lutheran Church has been the greatest teacher of the Word in the German language, and there is no reason why she should not be an equally successful teacher to hundreds of thousands in the English language. ‘The Australian Lutheran’ believes that when our forefathers determined to flee from persecution at home to seek safely in exile abroad, the hand of God led them to Australia, in order that our Church might here extend her borders and propagate her faith also by means of the English language, among generations then yet unknown (*The Australian Lutheran*, 1913, p. 3).

The transition from German to English was necessary, ‘not only on account of the Anglicised children of the Church’ (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3), but also because intermarriage had become a common phenomenon and the English-speaking partners showed a ‘desire to affiliate’ with the Lutheran Church (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3). The periodical argues for an inclusive church policy in which all English-speaking members would be welcome to join the Lutheran congregation, urging Lutherans not to build a “Chinese Wall” to isolate themselves from their English-speaking friends or relatives. In summary, discourses of inclusion were used to justify the use of English and the spreading of the Lutheran faith beyond the German ethnic community.

The church periodical provides further arguments for the shift to English through lessons of history from other geographical locations – the Lutheran Church in Northern Ireland and the French Huguenots. In the Irish context, just fifty years after the establishment of Lutheran

colonies in Northern Ireland, ‘they were already in a state of decline, because of the dying out of the German language’ (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3). The children of Lutherans ‘became Anglicised in their speech’ and as there were no English-speaking Lutheran pastors ‘to minister to their wants’, children became ‘affiliated with Churches whose language they understood, and so the Church of their fathers became extinct when the fathers were laid in the grave’ (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3). The paper warns of a similar fate in store for Australia:

It needs no prophetic eye to see that the fate of the Lutheran Church in Australia would be similar to that of the Lutheran Church in Ireland, if we neglect to provide religious services in English for those of our young people who become Anglicised. The teachings of history are plain, and have long since settled the question of language. And the settlement is this: That a foreign language does not, as a rule, permanently survive in a land in which another language is the language of the country. (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3).

The paper also draws on the example of the Huguenots. The Huguenotsⁱⁱ left France fleeing religious persecution, settled in Germany, and their ‘descendants are to be found in the Church of their fathers, but their church services are held entirely in the German language’, and ‘very few parishioners now understand[ing] a word of French’ (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3). The upshot is clear:

to neglect the indoctrination of the young through the medium of the English language, where necessary, to neglect the introduction of English church services, where necessary, is simply to commit gradual, but certain suicide as a Church body (The Australian Lutheran, 1913, p. 3).

This, and similar statements clearly reflected the Church’s priority on spreading the Lutheran faith over protecting the German language. Language shift was seen as necessary for broadening the Church’s audience.

In summary, the discourses of *The Australian Lutheran* demonstrate that the language decision to shift from German to English was a decision made by the church in response to the rapid language shift that occurred in the broader German-background community and specifically in the Lutheran congregations. As the younger generation shifted to English, the church shifted its services to English also, in the hope of keeping upcoming generations as members of the Church. This priority of the Lutheran faith rather than an attachment to the German language was consistent with the general stance Lutherans took in Australia. For them, it was more critical to keep the Lutheran values than to keep the German language and consequently lose the next generation.

German was solely a means to keep the Lutheran faith and Lutherans were not attached to German as the language of their ethnic or national identity. This was explicitly stated in 1913, when The pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church rejected the request by the German Consul in Brisbane to establish a 'German Language Society':

[W]e enjoy all rights and privileges of British subjects, and therefore believe to owe complete and undivided patriotism to the Government... As for the proposals regarding the creation of a German Language Society, we also regret not to participate... we are not as often alleged missionaries of German culture (Kultur), but we keep up the German language with all our efforts, but only, and as far as it serves our purpose, for that reason to explain the Gospel to our German citizens (AA Qld, BP 4/1, item 66/4/286, as cited in Fischer, 1989, p. 23).

Despite such explicit statements of loyalty to Australia and distancing themselves from German nationalism, several Lutheran pastors were interned along with thousands of naturalised German Australians during WWI (Fischer, 1989). The anti-German sentiments of World War I did not escape those who followed the Lutheran faith, even though the Lutheran church never emphasised German identity and German as the language of national union. In the next section I will turn to the events during WWI and discuss the factors which played a role in the closing of the Lutheran Schools. This phase in the history of the Australian Lutherans further highlights the complexity of religious, national and ethnic identities and the tensions between self-ascribed identities and identities ascribed by others.

THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I AND THE CLOSURE OF THE LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

While most early Lutherans in Australia kept their traditional values and customs, they did not maintain patriotic or political ties to Germany (Leske, 1996, p. 145). Instead, they were loyal to their new country, a loyalty which was promoted by their faith. According to the very first Lutheran doctrinal statement, the government of a country was 'ordained by God and demanded respect, loyalty and obedience' (Leske, 1996, p. 145). Despite their loyalty, they did not escape the 'tragic war hysteria' of World War I during which they became targets (Leske, 1996). Australia, as part of the British Empire, was committed to the war against Germany and Australian-Germans became seen and treated as enemy aliens (Fischer, 1989). During this period the Church continued to emphasise an Australian identity and distanced itself from the national identity of 'German-ness' so as to affirm their loyalty to the British King and their new country, Australia. The ELSA president in his letter to the prime minister wrote:

The ELSA is an Australian and not a German Lutheran denomination. Although the German language is still used in the service of our congregations, we do not want to be regarded as a German church (as cited in Leske, 1996, p. 150).

Despite the Lutheran Church's clear position on their loyalty to Australia, anti-German sentiments became strong and, as a result, all Germans including those born in Australia became a target of hostility. Doubts about Lutheran Germans' loyalty to the British and Australia are exemplified in the following quotation which blatantly accuses Lutheran pastors of propagating against Australia:

The pastors never lose an opportunity of sowing seeds of disloyalty to the British Crown among Australian Germans... The German pastors are the emissaries of sedition and rebellion. The reason for the retention of German schools in South Australia is because German influence can be exercised over children by these German pastors (The Hon J. P. Wilson, 1916, as cited in Volk, 1962, p. 26).

As a result of these sentiments, in 1916 the State Parliament of Victoria decided, 'in deference to the popular prejudice and clamour occasioned by the war' (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, p. 31) that the English language must be the only medium of instruction in all schools. In 1917 forty-one Lutheran Schools were closed by an act of parliament in South Australia. German literature was also severely impacted: the government banned the importation of all printed matter from Germany, prohibited the publication of German-language papers and magazines in Australia and the use of German language in church and community life came under threat (Leske, 1996, p. 155).

German schools were attacked for fostering 'Germanism' which was believed to lead to segregation from mainstream Australian society. The Lutheran schools were accused of keeping the Lutheran people in foreign communities where the children were discouraged to regard themselves as 'thoroughly British' (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, p. 19). During the debate over the 'German schools' in parliament, a member made the following statement:

Many of us supported the proposal to allow German to be taught for a limited time in the schools, and now we see it as neither fair to the German children themselves, nor to the children born of British parents, because it will continue to foster racial differences that should not be allowed to exist (Allen, 1916, as cited in Volk, 1962, p. 24).

To these segregation arguments the Church's response was that 'there are no people who so rapidly assume the nationality of the country to which they emigrated as the Germans' (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, p. 19). In 1920 ELSA issued a publication in response to the inquiries of the Australian government regarding the character of Lutherans and Lutheran schools. In this publication the Synod aimed to clarify its relations and attitude to German identity and the German government. The Church emphasised that in the Lutheran schools the German language was taught 'as an aid to the teaching of [...] religion, and not for secondary purposes (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, p. 7). The paper dismissed claims that 'the Lutheran Church in Australia used no other

language but German in its church services', and affirmed that '[The] Synod began to introduce English services many years ago', and that 'at some places English is the only language employed in divine service, while at others both English and German are being used, the one or the other predominating, according to the needs of the people' (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, p. 12). The publication reiterated the Church's position on the language question as primarily a religious matter as follows:

We do not regard the German language as essential to the maintenance of our church.

We realise that as we are in an English-speaking country, the church must eventually use the English language only (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, p. 12).

The use of German during church services due to 'pragmatic' rather than symbolic considerations was further explained as follows:

[...] many of our members do not understand the English language sufficiently well to be able to follow an English sermon. They can speak and understand English well enough in ordinary conversation, but as they received their religious instruction in German, and from their childhood have always sung and prayed in German, they derive little benefit from a service in English (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920 p. 12)

In summary, by 1920, the Lutheran Church implemented five major language planning actions as part of its micro-level language planning agenda. Firstly, wherever possible they introduced English-language church services. This meant that the language of the church swiftly shifted to English and left German to the older generations' private domain practices. Secondly, this language shift from German to English was overtly reiterated in 1913 when the Church began to publish its official periodical in English. Thirdly, the Australian Synod compiled its own book of English liturgical forms, published in Australia. Fourthly, for thirty years the Church had had its own Australian Lutheran Seminary where pastors and teachers were trained for the work of the church. This institution was the Concordia College. The paper also explains that the majority of teachers came from the US, not Germany. Fifthly, although ELSA never portrayed itself as a German church and used German as well as English according to the needs of its members, by 1920 the Synod was clearly in a state of transition from German to English (Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, 1920, pp. 12-13). The current ethnic diversity of the Lutheran congregations bears testimony to the Church's ongoing policy of accepting anyone under the Lutheran faith regardless of their background.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the Australian Lutheran Church's language decisions during a period when language issues provoked controversy both in the secular world as well as in the Church's long-term vision of how to keep the Lutheran faith alive. It was a time of a unique

juxtaposition of factors in which a large portion of the second generation of Australian-German Lutherans had begun to feel at home in English while others were deeply concerned about the loss of German as their 'pure' language of worship. At the same time, any attempts to cling to German were seen by outsiders as anti-Australian in the sensitive wartime political climate.

What should the church have done? The attitude that the Australian Lutheran church had toward the German language, in some ways was 'the right thing to do' as it avoided further complications and tensions within the congregation. As Fishman (1991, p. 352) argued 'language planning efforts of various kinds must be oriented toward being problem solving and must guard against becoming [...] problem creating'. From the historical events, it is evident that the Australian Lutheran Church was under the shadow of a German identity. Despite being loyal citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia, they were accused of conspiring with the German government and fostering 'Germanism'. This accusation seems ironical in light of the fact that the Old Lutherans left their 'fatherland' to settle in Australia as a result of not conforming to the authority of their own state. In Germany they were persecuted for being Lutheran, while in Australia they were persecuted for being German. The desire to keep the Lutheran faith was stronger than that of keeping the German language. While the German language was the preferred language of liturgy and sermons, the church made deliberate micro-planning efforts (to the detriment of German) to ensure that the new generations of German-Lutherans who had shifted to English were not lost to other congregations. This study has demonstrated that language planning decisions were influenced by ideologies and ethnic boundaries (Barth, 1969) from 'within' and from 'without' (Isajiw, 1974).

Today, the Lutheran church in Australia is one of the most multicultural churches and continues to recruit members through the English language irrespective of language and ethnic background. While Fishman has argued that churches based on nationality typically find it difficult to 'become entirely denationalised and equally open to all comers' (Omoniyi & Fishman, 2006, p. 21), the Lutheran Church in Australia has done exactly this. The findings of this research enhance current understanding of the complex relationships between language planning decisions and religious identity. The paper has shown that the Lutheran churches in Australia were characterised by a low-level link between their 'ethnic' language and religion (Woods, 2004, p. 1263). The conscious decisions to shift to the use English as the language of the Church were acts associated with balancing national, linguistic and religious identities. These acts remind us of the fact that identity can only be interpreted as a 'contextualised' term (Fishman, 2010, p. 28). The historical perspective is a reminder that such language choice decisions are part of an 'ongoing socioreligious experience' (Omoniyi & Fishman, 2006, p. 21). Further research is necessary in the modern context of "ethnic churches" to explore their role in micro-level language planning and the potential internal

and external pressures and ideologies which impact upon such decisions. Ethnic churches are often accused of spreading anti-Australian and anti-western sentiments or overemphasising the national identity of their origin, but empirical evidence is often scarce which can support or refute such arguments. Exploring the discourses of church periodicals is one way to gain a better understanding of identity tensions and the motivations behind language decisions in context. Such contextualised research can help us move away from stereotypical and superficial classification of immigrant groups and their language maintenance patterns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge the rigorous feedback from two anonymous reviewers, Gerhard Fischer for his helpful comments about the historical data and discussion and John X. Keenan for his editorial assistance. I would also like to acknowledge the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide for their most supportive services and the University of Southern Queensland for funding my field trip.

REFERENCES

- Ager, D. (2001). *Motivation in language planning and language policy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Baldauf, R. B. (2006). Rearticulating the case for micro language planning in a language ecology context. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 7(2&3), 147-170.
- Baldauf, R. B. (1994). "Unplanned" language policy and planning. In W. Grabe, (Ed.), *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (vol. 14, pp. 82-89). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Barth, F. (Ed.). (1969). *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organisation of cultural difference*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Clyne, M. (1968). Transference patterns among English-German bilinguals. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 2, 5-18.
- Clyne, M. (1970). Some aspects of the bilingual language maintenance of Australian-born children of German-speaking parents. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 9, 35-47.
- Clyne, M. (1988). The German-Australian speech community: Ethnic core values and language maintenance. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 72, 67-83.
- Clyne, M. (1994). What can we learn from Sprachinseln? Some observations on 'Australian German'. In K. Mattheier & N. Berend, (Eds.), *Sprachinseln* (pp. 105-122). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Clyne, M. (1997). The speech of third generation German-English bilinguals in Australia. In W. Wölck & A. de Houwer, (Eds.), *Recent studies in contact linguistics* (pp. 36-43). Bonn: Dümmler.
- Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. (n.d.). *Germany-born people in Australia*. Retrieved March 1, 2006, from http://www.immi.gov.au/statistics/publications/community_profiles/germany.net.pdf.
- Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia. (1920). *The Lutheran Church in Australia and its schools*. Melbourne/Adelaide: ELISA.
- Fischer, G. (1989). *Enemy aliens: Internment and the homefront experience in Australia 1914-1920*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

- Fischer, K., Rev. (1999). *The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Of Australia: A brief history*. Retrieved June 26, 2011, from <http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/lutheranism/24350>.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift : theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J. A. (2000). *Can threatened languages be saved? reversing language shift revisited: A 21st century perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J. A. (2010). Sociolinguistics: Language and ethnic identity in context. In J. A. Fishman & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: Disciplinary and regional perspectives* (2nd ed.) (vol. 1, pp. xxiii-xxxv). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornberger, N. H. (Ed.). (1996). *Indigenous literacies in the Americas: language planning from the bottom up*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Isajiw, W. W. (1974). Definitions of ethnicity. *Ethnicity, 1*, 111-124.
- Joseph, J. E. (2004). *Language and identity: national, ethnic, religious*. Houndmills, Basingstoke New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kaplan, R. B. (2005). Is Language-in-education Policy Possible? In D. Cunningham & A. Hatoss, (Eds.), *An International Perspective on Language Policies, Practices and Proficiencies. Festschrift for David E. Ingram* (pp. 59-82). Belgrave: FIPLV.
- Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. (1997). *Language planning: from practice to theory*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Karan, M. E. (2000). Motivations: language vitality assessments using the perceived benefit model of language shift. In G. Kindell & P. M. Lewis, (Eds.), *Assessing ethnolinguistic vitality: theory and practice; selected papers from the Third International Language Assessment conference* (pp. 65-77). Dallas: SIL International.
- Leske, E. (1996). *For faith and freedom. The story of Lutherans and Lutheranism in Australia 1838-1996*. Adelaide: Openbook Publishers.
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Baldauf Jr., R. B. (2008). Language planning in local contexts: Agents, contexts and interactions. In A. J. Liddicoat & R. B. Baldauf, Jr., (Eds.), *Language planning and policy: Language planning in local contexts* (pp. 3-17). Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters.
- Lutheran Church of Australia. (2004). *About Lutherans*. Retrieved February 28, 2006, from <http://www.lca.org.au/lutherans/>.
- Meyer, C. (1990). *A history of Germans in Australia, 1839-1945*. Melbourne: Monash University Press.
- Nahir, M. (1998). Micro Language Planning and the Revival of Hebrew: A Schematic Framework. *Language in Society*, 27(3), 335-357.
- Omoniyi, T., & Fishman, J. A. (Eds.). (2006). *Explorations in the sociology of language and religion*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Pfützner, V. (2009). Forty years of theological education in the LCA 1968-2008. *Journal of Friends of Lutheran Archives*, 19, 17-39.
- Ram, U. (2008). Why secularism fails? Secular nationalism and religious revivalism in Israel. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 21(1/4), 57-73.
- Safran, W. (2002). *Secular and the sacred: Nation, religion, and politics*. London: Frank Cass Publishers.
- Schule der Deutschen Sprache e. V. (1991). *25 Jahre Deutsche Schule: A brief history*. Unpublished manuscript. Lutheran Archives, Adelaide.

ARTICLES

- Smolicz, J. J. (1981). Core values and ethnic identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 4, 75-90.
- Smolicz, J. J. (1999). Who is an Australian? Identity, core values and the resilience of culture. In M. Secombe & J. Zajda, (Eds.), *J. J. Smolicz on education and culture* (pp. 11-49). Melbourne: James Nickolas Publishers.
- Smolicz, J. J., & Lean, R. (1980). Parental and student attitudes to the teaching of ethnic languages in Australia. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 49-50, 91-116.
- Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language management* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolsky, B., & Shohamy, E. (2000). Language practice, language ideology, and language policy. In R. D. Lambert, (Ed.), *Language policy and pedagogy* (pp. 1-35). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- The Australian Lutheran. (1913, July). *The Australian Lutheran*, 1(2), 1-5.
- Volk, V. (1962). *The closing of the Lutheran Primary Schools in South Australia during the First World War*. Unpublished manuscript, Adelaide.
- Woods, A. (2004). *Medium or message?: Language and faith in ethnic churches*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

ENDNOTES

- i For example, in Greece, in the 1920s and 1930s the conceptual boundaries of the Greek nation were contested and historical descent, language, culture and religion were 'triumphant in circumscribing the parameters of the reconstructed Greek ethnonational identity' (Safran, 2002, p. 149). More recently, religion and language were the dominant identity markers in the case of the Kosovo Albanians which lead to political tensions in the Balkans (Safran, 2002 p. 164).
- ii The Huguenots found refuge in Germany after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Edict of Nantes was a decree which allowed Protestants in France the free exercise of religion. This Edict was revoked by Louis XIV in 1685 and a persecution of the Protestants started.