International Journal of Turkish Education and Training
Uluslararası Türkçe Eğitimi ve Öğretimi Dergisi
Sayı/Volume: 1
Yıl/Years 1
ISSN:

Lise Son Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Dil Eğitimi: Viktorya'da Türkçe Öğretimi Araştırması

Language Education of Senior Secondary Students: Turkish in Victoria Study

Zeynep F. Beykont[1]

Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı Avustralya'da yaşayan Türk öğrencilerin lise seviyesinde Türkçe eğitiminde karşılaştığı sorunları incelemektir. Saha çalışması Türklerin yoğunlukta yaşadığı Viktorya eyaletinde lise seviyesinde Türkçe dersleri veren 19 okula devam etmiş 1983 öğrencinin katılımıyla 2005-2013 yılları arasında yapıldı. Geniş çaplı literatür taraması, çalışma gurubu toplantıları, öğrencilerden toplanan anketler, okul ve sınıf ziyaretleri ve yönetici ve öğretmenlerle görüşmeler sonucunda derslere devam eden öğrenciler ve katıldıkları Türkçe programları hakkında detaylı bilgi toplandı. Toplanan verilerin analizinde Avustralya'da dil programlarının kalitesini belirleyen kriterler esas alındı (örneğin haftalık ders saati, öğretmenlerin dil bilgisi, ailelerin programa katılımı gibi). Araştırma bulguları Viktorya'da devlet okulları, özel okullar, etnik okullar ve dil okullarında Türkçe derslerine devam eden lise öğrencilerinin öğrenme kaynaklarının arttırılması ve eşitlenebilmesi için dil politikalarında ve dil programlarında yapılması gereken değişiklikleri ortaya çıkarması açısından önem taşıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avustralya'da dil politikası, ana dilinde eğitim, lise öğrencilerinin dil eğitimi, Türkçe program özellikleri

Abstract

Low student participation in senior secondary language classes has been a persistent policy challenge in Australia. This article reports on a study examining the characteristics, participation patterns, and learning resources of senior secondary students pursuing a well-maintained immigrant language, Turkish, in Victoria, Australia. These students (n=1983) attended senior secondary Turkish classes offered via varied educational sectors including government schools, independent schools, ethnic schools, and the Victorian School of Languages from 2005-2013. The participant characteristics and the features of the language programs that they attended were documented in a mixed-method study that

[1] Doç. Dr., Independent Researcher, Human Development, beykont@post.harvard.edu

The author would like to thank colleagues at RUMACCC, Horwood Language Center, and Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne for hosting her during study visits; Denis Cunningham for his active involvement and collaboration in data collection from all campuses of the Victorian School of Languages; Atilla Akgüner for his support in data collection in independent and ethnic schools; the Ethnic Schools Association for organizing focus group meetings with students, community leaders, teachers, and parents; and teachers and administrators in all participating schools for generously sharing their views, experiences, and recommendations.

included a comprehensive literature review, focus-group discussions, wide-scale student surveys, and campus and classroom visits. Analyses revealed diversity in participant profiles, gender gap in student participation, and variation in student access to learning resources across Victoria's Turkish programs. The study generated empirical evidence on the extent to which Australia's language policy supports equal access to quality language learning opportunities via different language providers. Study findings should inform policy development and languages education through senior secondary years, especially in languages that are not widely taught in government schools.

Keywords: Australian language policy, language education, gender gap in language education, student demand for senior secondary language classes, language providers, Turkish program features

Study Context

The language policy in Australia supports teaching of a broad range of indigenous, European, Asian, and other languages spoken in Australian homes across elementary and secondary years and accredits language study as a matriculation subject. The national policy move to endorse languages as one of the key learning areas in the mainstream curriculum affirmed the value of language study for all students (MCEETYA, 1999). Australian students are expected to study a language other than English and, in some states such as Victoria, language study is mandatory through Year 10. Across all Australian states and territories, language study is an elective subject in senior secondary years (Year 11 and Year 12). Students have the option of receiving academic credit for proficiency in a language other than English by pursuing languages as a matriculation subject and sitting for the senior secondary language exams offered in over 60 languages (DEECD, 2013a; Liddicoat et al., 2007). Senior secondary exams are of high stakes as they effect decisions on high school graduation and student entry into university.

In the Australian context, student demand for language classes is considered an important indicator of language policy success. The policy supports language teaching via varied educational sectors in order to enable wide student access to formal study of a broad range of languages across all years. Language classes are taught as part of the weekly curriculum in day schools including government schools, independent schools, Catholic schools, and Training and Further Education (TAFE). Students who do not have access to the language of their choice in their day schools attend after-hour language programs on the weekend. After-hour language programs are offered via ethnic schools and government-operated language schools. A review of the different versions of the Australian language policy over time suggests that there has been a shift in federal policy emphasis regarding which languages are to be taught as part of the weekly mainstream curriculum in government schools.

The first comprehensive national language policy (NLP) presented all languages spoken in Australian homes as an enriching national resource to be developed in schools and recommended that students gain language and literacy skills in English and in at least one other language of students' choice (Lo Bianco, 1987). A few years later, a modified version of the national language policy, Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP), underlined the significance of student acquisition of English literacy and prioritized teaching as part of the weekly mainstream curriculum a limited number of Asian and European languages that are strategically important for the future of the country (Dawkins, 1991). A later version of the policy, the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS), emphasized the economic potential of student engagement and learning of several Asian languages (primarily Indonesian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) and proposed increased funding for teaching of these languages (COAG, 1994). In the next decade, different versions of the language policy prioritized teaching and learning of a limited number of Asian and European languages thereby contributing to creation of a hierarchy of Australian languages to be taught in government schools. While more recent language policy documents have deemphasized the distinction between the 'priority' and 'non priority' languages, the trend to limit the number of languages taught in government schools continues (DEECD, 2013a; MCEETYA, 2005). Consequently, fewer government school students have access to classes in non-priority languages as part of the weekly curriculum.

Influential studies and national reviews have identified several challenges to the successful implementation of the language policy in Australia. Low student demand for languages education beyond mandatory years has been a persistent challenge; student attrition beyond elementary years results in low student participation throughout junior and senior secondary years and low percentage of students who elect languages as a matriculation subject (Baldauf, 2005; Baldauf et al., 1998; Clyne, 1997; Liddicoat et al., 2007; Mercurio and Scarino, 2005). Retention of male students in language classes beyond mandatory years has been particularly challenging; compared to female students, male students persist in senior secondary language classes and pursue languages as a matriculation subject in smaller numbers (Carr and Pauwels, 2005; Clyne, 2005; Liddicoat et al., 2007). Furthermore, reviewers highlighted wide variation in language program quality and recommended that all language providers make a concerted effort to improve student learning opportunities (Baldauf, 2005; Clyne et al., 2004; DEECD, 2013b; Ingram, 2005; Liddicoat et al., 2007).

The study reported in this article aims to describe the characteristics, participation patterns, and access to learning resources of students pursuing language study beyond mandatory years via different language providers in the state of Victoria, Australia. Specifically, the study focuses on students pursuing a high-demand and well-maintained language, Turkish, throughout senior secondary years in Victorian schools. Victoria presents a

positive policy context for the study. It has had a long tradition of teaching a broad range of languages through varied providers across all years. For example, in 2013, Victorian language providers taught classes in 65 languages and students had the option of pursuing some 50 languages, including Turkish, through senior secondary years (DEECD, 2013a; VCAA, 2013). Furthermore, Victoria's language requirements exceed that of other Australian states and territories and typically a larger number of students pursue language study across all years. Specifically, Victorian schools are expected to offer a language other than English through Year 10. Language study is an elective subject in Year 11 and Year 12. Senior secondary students are encouraged to include languages as a matriculation subject. In the context of Victoria a matriculation subject is a subject that counts toward the Victorian Certificate of Education (henceforth VCE). Students have the option of sitting for the comprehensive VCE language assessments to receive academic credit for their proficiency in a language other than English (DEECD, 2009; MACLOTE, 1994).

Victorian language policy documents draw on the extensive literature on language learning in formal settings to offer guidelines to schools regarding the critical features of quality language programs such as weekly contact time, teacher qualifications, curriculum, and other material instructional resources (DET, 2002; DEECD, 2013a; MACLOTE, 1994). Schools are advised to work with their communities to implement the language policy by designing their language programs using these research-based pedagogical guidelines. The study reported in this article documented features of the senior secondary Turkish programs with the ultimate goal to generate empirical evidence on an important policy question regarding the extent to which Australia's language policy supports access to high quality language learning opportunities via varied language providers.

In the following, a review of the current status of Turkish education in Victoria describes the initial Turkish program uptake and general patterns of student participation in Turkish classes over time. The next section presents the design and findings of the Turkish in Victoria study. Concluding thoughts and suggestions follow.

Status of Turkish Education in Victoria

Turkish language programs in Victoria were first organized for primary years in 1970, soon after the first large wave of Turkish immigrants arrived. Language instruction was expanded to cover secondary years and the first high school completion exam was administered in 1975. A unique set of sociolinguistic and policy factors has contributed to initial Turkish program uptake and rapid expansion through 1970's, 1980's, and early 1990's and then a significant decline in the number of government schools offering Turkish since 1995 (Beykont, 2007, 2008).

Strong parental support for Turkish instruction in schools aided initial Turkish program uptake. Parents demanded that schools offer Turkish language classes as per the bilateral agreement signed between the Australian and Turkish government that brought a large number of Turkish immigrants to staff Australia's factories (ABS, 1991; Akçelik, 1993; Akçelik and Elley, 1988; Başarın and Başarın, 1993). Many of the Turkish settlers and the family members who followed them had poor command of English; the low English skills of the early immigrants created an authentic need for Turkish use at home (ABS, 1991). Furthermore, the group members' preference to live in concentrated neighbourhoods and the tendency to marry within the group (and often with men and women born and raised in Turkey) also contributed to Turkish group's slow shift to exclusive use of English (Clyne and Kipp, 1997, 2002; Kipp, Clyne, and Pauwels, 1995; Yağmur, 2004). These conditions continue today. Turkish is used in an overwhelming majority of Turkish homes and ongoing Turkish use in the family and neighbourhood provides young people authentic opportunities to hear and use the language beyond school and motivates them to pursue it formally (ABS, 2011; Beykont, 2007, 2010b, 2012).

Turkish program uptake was also facilitated by the fact that Turkish is a standardized language. The educators, parents, and community leaders who organized Turkish instruction were not divided over which language variety should be taught in Turkish programs (Beykont, 2008, 2010b). Books and instructional materials developed for native speakers in Turkey could be readily accessed and used. Language classes were staffed by proficient community members with no teaching credentials and overseas-trained educators holding credentials to teach a variety of other subjects (such as math, English, biology) (Beykont, 2006, 2013).

Victoria's policy emphasis on teaching a wide range of languages through varied language providers contributed to rapid expansion of Turkish language programs in the 70s, 80s and early 90s. Turkish classes were initiated through the Victorian School of Languages and ethnic schools that offer language instruction on the weekends. In Turkish-concentrated neighbourhoods, a number of government schools and independent schools also started teaching Turkish as part of the weekly curriculum. Historically, TAFE and Catholic schools have not offered Turkish classes; students in these schools participate in after-hour Turkish programs offered via ethnic schools and the Victorian School of Languages (VSL henceforth).

Turkish has been a high-demand language. It is one of the top ten frequently chosen languages of study in Victoria across all years including senior secondary years (DEECD, 2013a). While student demand for Turkish has stayed relatively steady, major providers of Turkish classes have changed over time. In particular, some government schools serving large numbers of Turkish students have stopped offering Turkish since 1995 following a policy trend to prioritize teaching of a limited number of European and Asian languages as part of the weekly curriculum. Furthermore, increasing geographic mobility of the Turkish families has

resulted in discontinuation of Turkish classes in some government schools due to low concentration of Turkish students. Specifically, the number of government schools teaching Turkish at the primary level has dropped from eleven to four and the number of secondary schools offering Turkish has dropped from three to one over time (Beykont, 2007, 2010b; DEECD, 2009, 2013a). Consequently, fewer government school students have access to Turkish instruction in their day schools. In the past two decades independent schools offering Turkish have increased rapidly and independent schools have become the largest Turkish provider from Year 1-Year 10 followed by the VSL, government schools, and ethnic schools (Beykont, 2007, 2010b). For students pursuing Turkish in Year 11 and Year 12, the VSL has always been and remains today the largest provider of Turkish classes, followed by independent schools, government schools, and ethnic schools (Beykont, 2007, 2010b, in prep.).

Regarding the general patterns of student participation over the past two decades, students have participated in Turkish classes in larger numbers from Year 1-Year 10 and the enrolment rates have dropped beyond mandatory years and fewer students have pursued Turkish as an elective in Year 11 and Year 12 (DEECD, 2009, 2013a). Specifically, since 1995, approximately one of every two school-age children of Turkish background has participated in Victoria's Turkish classes and one of every three has pursued Turkish beyond mandatory years (Beykont, 2007, 2008, 2010a, 2012). In weekday programs, male and female students have participated in Turkish classes in equal numbers from Year 1-Year 10 and female students have elected Turkish in larger numbers in Year 11-Year 12 (Beykont, 2010b; DEECD, 2009, 2013a). In weekend programs, female students attended Turkish classes in larger numbers than male students throughout mandatory and senior secondary years (Beykont, 2010b; DEECD, 2009, 2013a).

Study Design

The Turkish in Victoria study (henceforth TIV) sought to examine the characteristics, participation patterns, and instructional resources of students in senior secondary Turkish classes offered via Victoria's varied Turkish providers. A mixed-method study design was used to collect data on the historical and policy context of the study, the participant characteristics, and the language program features from varied sources including a comprehensive literature review, focus group discussions, program and classroom visits, and large-scale student surveys. Participants include eight cohorts of students who attended senior secondary classes via varied Turkish providers from 2005-2013 (n=1983). Taken together, the mixed-method research design permitted rich depiction of student profiles in senior secondary Turkish classes and student access to language learning resources across varied Turkish providers in Victoria including government schools, independent schools, ethnic schools, and the Victorian School of Languages.

Specifically, initial focus group discussions with parents, students, teachers, and program administrators explored issues and challenges in Turkish education in Victoria and helped to refine study goals. An extensive literature review included international research on language acquisition of background speakers in school settings, Australian language policy documents and census results, as well as studies on Turkish immigrants in Victoria. Historical data on student participation across varied Turkish providers were gathered from the yearly reports released by the Department of Education and sector-based reports documenting student demand for Turkish classes across elementary and secondary years. Visits to all school campuses offering senior secondary Turkish classes and a review of the sector-based and school reports allowed detailed description of specific language program features that are highlighted in Victorian policy documents to be essential features of quality language programs, including contact time and frequency, teacher qualifications and language skills, community involvement, curriculum and other material instructional resources (DET, 2002; DEECD, 2013a; MACLOTE, 1994).

In addition, large-scale surveys were used to collect information on student profiles. In open-ended and closed-ended questions, surveys gathered detailed information on participants' personal and family immigration and education history, the extent of daily Turkish exposure and use beyond school, years of formal Turkish study, and specific reasons for pursuing Turkish through senior secondary years. Survey forms were made available in both languages and young people were free to answer in the language of their choice. On average, it took half an hour to complete the survey. Three of every five responded in English and the remaining group used Turkish when completing survey questions.

Study Findings

Analyses of student responses to surveys revealed diverse background characteristics of study participants. Campus visits and a comprehensive review of school and sector reports on language program features indicated variation in student access to learning resources such as instructional time, qualified teachers, and classroom technologies.

Student profiles in senior secondary Turkish classes

Student surveys indicated that all study participants are of Turkish background including 1159 female students (58.4%) and 824 male students (41.6%). Regarding their immigration and education history, a high percentage (85.4%) were born and raised in Australia and schooled through English. The rest (14.6%) were either born abroad and/or received a significant portion of their formal education in Turkey. An overwhelming majority of their parents were born, raised, and educated in Turkey and attended school for an average of six years with a range from 1-18 years. Taking into consideration the immigration history of participating students and that of their parents, 13% are first generation, 81% are second

generation, and 6% are 2.5 generation having one parent born in Australia and the other abroad. Only two study participants are third generation immigrants having both parents born in Australia. Participant profiles suggest that senior secondary Turkish classes are serving predominantly Australian-born background learners.

Study participants also reported on daily Turkish exposure and use beyond school. Accordingly, Turkish is the main language used in 52% of participants' homes, while in 40% of their homes English and Turkish are used equally, and in the remaining 8% of homes Turkish is used only rarely, if at all. These young people are also exposed to Turkish via ethnic media (including 85% watching Turkish TV for an average of eight hours per week, 40% reading Turkish papers and books and/or 22% listening to Turkish radio for an hour per week). Furthermore, close to half of the participants hear the language beyond their homes (49%) as they live in neighbourhoods where Turkish is used regularly. Close to 92% study participants indicated that they use only Turkish or both Turkish and English when speaking with their parents and relatives in and outside of Australia and only or mostly English when speaking with their siblings and friends. The remaining 8% used Turkish infrequently. In short, it appears that an overwhelming majority of study participants hear Turkish fairly regularly beyond school and use it in daily conversations with the older generation.

Participating students cited cultural, communicative, and educational reasons for pursuing Turkish throughout senior secondary years. Specifically, they wanted to acquire Turkish proficiency because of the significance of Turkish language in their cultural identity. Furthermore, they expressed the need to improve Turkish skills in order to enhance communication with extended family in and outside of Australia. In addition, participants wanted to receive academic credit for their Turkish language and literacy skills and appreciated the bonus points added to their university entrance scores for pursuing languages as a VCE subject. Interestingly, only a few participants reported that they elected Turkish through senior secondary years because they expected economic gains for their Turkish proficiency in the generally English-monolingual business context of Australia.

Participants reported varied number of years of formal Turkish study. Some attended Turkish classes continuously from elementary years and others entered into Turkish classes at a later point in their educational career, as late as in Year 11 or Year 12. Specifically, these students studied Turkish for an average of four years with a wide range from 1-12 years; 33% attended Turkish classes for 7-12 years, 39% for 3-6 years, and 23% for two years. The remaining 5% of the participants joined Turkish classes in Year 12 and sat for the comprehensive senior secondary Turkish exam after one year of formal Turkish study. The wide variation in these students' years of formal Turkish study reflects the flexible nature of the language policy in Victoria. While students in Victoria are expected to study a language other than English through Year 10, they have the option of studying a language continuously across

all years or pursuing one language and then switching to another language at any point in their educational career.

Regarding the day schools, a large group of study participants attended government schools (68.1%) or independent schools (23.9%) followed by a relatively small group in TAFE (2.2%) and Catholic schools (1.4%). While an overwhelming majority participated in mainstream English classes in their day schools (85.4%) only a small proportion of participants received English as a Second Language (ESL) support specifically designed to help students acquire English proficiency and use English for academic purposes across the curriculum (14.6%). Closer examination of the background characteristics of those who received ESL support indicated that they were born and/or had received a few years of education in Turkey. Victoria's ESL placement policy warrants further consideration in light of the study participants' generally poor performance on the senior secondary English test (Beykont, in prep.). It seems that student access to extra English support in their day schools was determined by their immigration history rather than their actual command of academic English and many of the Australian-born Turkish students who may have benefited from ESL provision did not receive it.

Participants attended senior secondary Turkish classes in one of Victoria's 19 campuses from 2005-2013. The table below compares the number and percentage of female and male participants in senior secondary Turkish classes offered via government schools (two campuses), independent schools (six campuses), ethnic schools (three campuses), and the Victorian School of Languages (eight campuses).

Table1. *Male and Female Students in Senior Secondary Turkish Classes Offered via varied Turkish Providers from 2005-2013*

Turkish Provider (Campus)	Female	Male	Total
Government (2)	85 7.3%	45 5,5%	130 %6,6
Independent (6)	215 18.6%	165 20.0%	380 19.2%
Ethnic (3)	86 7.4%	77 9.3%	163 8.2%
VSL (8)	773 66.7%	537 65.2%	1310 66.0%
Total (19)	1159 58.4%	824 41.6%	1983 100%

The table shows that 66.7% of female and 65.2% of male participants attended senior secondary Turkish classes offered via the VSL Centres while 7.4% of female and 9.3% of male participants attended senior secondary Turkish classes offered via ethnic schools. Furthermore, 18.6% of female participants and 20% of male participants pursued senior secondary Turkish classes in independents schools and 7.3% of female participants and 5.5% of male participants pursued senior secondary Turkish classes in government schools. In other words, close to three of four study participants attended senior secondary Turkish classes on the weekends and the remaining one of four studied Turkish as part of the weekly curriculum in their day schools. The table also indicates that, across all Turkish providers, female students elected Turkish in larger numbers than male students and about three of five students pursuing Turkish beyond mandatory years were female and two of five students were male students. Gender gap in student participation in senior secondary Turkish classes documented in the TIV study corroborates research on other high-demand languages in Australia (Carr and Pauwels, 2006; Clyne, 2005; Liddicoat, et al., 2007) and in other countries (e.g., Murphy, 2010; Pavlenko and Piller, 2008).

Student access to essential learning resources via Victoria's Turkish providers

Visits to schools and a comprehensive review of sector and school reports on language program features revealed variation in student access to many essential learning resources across Turkish providers, in some cases, across the 19 campuses that the participants attended. Table 2 below summarizes study findings on student learning resources including instructional time (weekly contact hours and frequency of weekly contact), human resources (teacher qualifications, teacher language proficiency, and program involvement of proficient adults in the community), and material instructional resources (a well-stacked borrowing school library, classroom technologies, a well-developed curriculum and suitable reading materials). Some learning resources are described 'mixed' to indicate variation across school campuses. For example, mixed student access to material instructional resources in ethnic schools suggests that students attending Turkish classes in some ethnic schools have access to classroom technologies or a well-stacked library while those in other ethnic schools do not.

Table 2. *Senior Secondary Student Access to Learning Resources via varied Turkish Providers*

Turkish Provider	Contact Hours	Contact Freq.	Teacher Language Proficiency	Teacher Professional Qualification	Community Involvement	Material Instructional Resources
Government	4-5	2-3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Independent	4-5	2-3	Yes	Mixed	No	Yes
VSL	3	1	Mixed	Mixed	No	Mixed
Ethnic	4	1	Mixed	Mixed	Yes	Mixed

Contact hours in senior secondary classes across all Turkish providers exceed the minimum of 150 minutes per week language instruction that the Victorian policy recommends for a quality language program (e.g. DET, 2002; DEECD, 2013b). Specifically, in government schools and independent schools, Turkish classes meet for a total of 4 hours in Year 11 and 5 hours in Year 12. Regarding contact frequency, language classes in government and independent schools meet over 2 to 3 sessions thereby reinforcing students' language skills several times throughout the week. One disadvantage of this program design may be that all other classes are taught in English, which may make student focus on Turkish language study difficult. The after-hour Turkish programs operated via the VSL and ethnic schools meet once a week, generally on Saturdays for a block of time. Specifically, the VSL Centres offer 3 hours of Turkish instruction and ethnic schools offer 4 hours of instruction per week. By design, weekend programs allow students to hear, speak, and study Turkish and focus on language and literacy learning for a few consecutive hours as a block. A disadvantage of a program design that limits teacher-student interaction to once a week is that language instruction is susceptible to frequent interruption by long weekend vacations.

Teachers are an important learning resource for Turkish classes. Turkish teachers' bilingual competency in English and Turkish is particularly important in senior secondary years because the VCE language assessment elicits translation skills from Turkish to English and vice

versa (Board of Studies, 2000; VCAA, 2013). The TIV study indicated that Turkish teachers' bilingual skills and professional qualifications vary across Turkish providers (Beykont, 2006, 2012; 2013). Specifically, English skills of Turkish teachers range from fluent to proficient. With respect to teachers' Turkish competency and professional qualifications, the current Turkish teaching force can be divided into three groups. The first group includes adults who speak Turkish fluently and are trained to work in fields other than education. The second group includes Turkish-proficient educators who received teaching credentials in Turkey or in Australia to teach classes other than Turkish, such as science and math. The third group consists of second-generation Turkish immigrants with varied Turkish language and literacy skills and professional training. Regarding ongoing professional development, compared to weekend programs, Turkish teachers in weekday programs have access to a wider range of professional learning opportunities that help them to upgrade their knowledge of languages pedagogy, understanding of the Victorian curriculum standards, and familiarity with the Australian school culture. Furthermore, across all Turkish providers in Victoria, teachers do not have professional learning opportunities to improve their Turkish language and literacy skills because there are no university programs that teach Turkish.

Proficient community members are another important language resource for senior secondary Turkish classes. Only ethnic schools appear to capitalize on this resource to create authentic language learning opportunities and foster their students' language skills and motivation to learn. Ethnic schools draw on the language skills and cultural knowledge of proficient community members by involving these adults in class projects, cultural celebrations, and extracurricular activities that extend weekly contact time in class. The extracurricular activities, such as folk dancing and theatre groups, help to familiarize students with Turkish culture, arts, and history and encourage Turkish use among peers beyond class time. Generally, community involvement in Turkish classes is limited in government schools, independent schools, and at the VSL Centres.

The TIV study found that student access to material instructional resources (such as a well-stacked borrowing library, computer lab, and classroom technologies) that support and enhance motivation and learning in language programs varies across Turkish providers and school campuses. Part of the variation in student access to these instructional resources in after-hour Turkish programs stems from the fact that these programs operate on the weekends in classrooms borrowed from government or independent schools. Some administrators are more cooperative than others in allowing use of the technological and educational resources of the school housing the after-hour Turkish programs. Consequently, student access to material instructional resources varies widely across school campuses offering after-hour Turkish programs.

Yet another essential material resource for Turkish classes is a cohesive and relevant curriculum to teach all language skill areas (including speaking, listening, reading, and writing) systematically. Curriculum is not listed on Table 2 because at the time of writing this article teachers and students across all Turkish providers do not have access to a well-developed and sequenced curriculum that is closely aligned with the curriculum standards in Victoria (Beykont, 2010a, 2010b, 2012). Additionally, there is a dearth of Turkish books, articles, CDs, and videos that are specifically designed to support Victoria's curriculum frameworks and to guide, reinforce, and complement class activities. A positive development in this regard is the decision of the Australian Curriculum Assessment Resource Authority to include Turkish in a select group of languages for which a national language-specific curriculum will be developed (ACARA, 2011).

Concluding Notes

The TIV study examined the characteristics, participation patterns, and learning resources of students who attended senior secondary Turkish classes offered via Victoria's varied Turkish providers from 2005-2013. The research focus on Turkish teaching in Victoria permitted an investigation of challenges and opportunities in teaching a high-demand, well-maintained immigrant language through senior secondary years. In addition, the study documented the features of the instructional programs offered via the four Turkish providers thereby generating empirical evidence on the important policy question regarding the extent to which Australia's language policy supports via different language providers student access to quality language learning opportunities. While the study focused on Turkish only, it has important implications for languages education especially teaching and learning of those languages that are not widely taught in Victorian government schools. Study findings should contribute to successful implementation of the current Victorian government's plan for languages education that is articulated in *Languages: Expanding Your World: Plan to implement the Victorian Government's Vision for Languages Education 2013-2025* (DEECD, 2013b).

A limitation of the TIV study is that it focused only on students who elected Turkish as a senior secondary subject. These young people reported that they pursued Turkish through senior secondary years for cultural, communicative, and educational reasons. It would be incorrect to assume that study participants are representative of the population of students of Turkish background in Victoria. Over the past two decades, on average, one out of three students of Turkish background in Victoria pursued Turkish beyond mandatory years and two out of three did not. A follow-up study may help to reveal the characteristics of students who do not elect Turkish in Year 11 and Year 12 and their recommendations on the particular programmatic changes and policy incentives necessary to improve student retention and learning in senior secondary Turkish classes.

The political context of language education in Australia has changed in the last two decades. The policy trend to teach a limited number of languages as part of the weekly mainstream curriculum has had an adverse effect on the status of Turkish education in Victorian government schools. Some government schools have stopped offering Turkish classes. Currently, only one government school teaches senior secondary Turkish classes. A close look at the educational backgrounds of the eight cohorts of study participants (n=1983) revealed that over 68% are government school students yet just below 7% attended senior secondary Turkish classes as part of the weekly curriculum in their respective day schools. In line with Victoria's historical commitment to teaching a broad range of languages via varied language providers, it is important to continue to teach languages through as many language providers as possible in order to enable wide student access to language study. Weakening policy support to teach a broad range of languages in government schools may have an adverse effect on student motivation and participation in Turkish classes. While it is unreasonable to expect that all government schools in Victoria would offer classes in all the languages spoken in students' homes, government schools with large numbers of Turkish students should teach Turkish thereby increasing visibility and status of Turkish as a legitimate subject to be taught as part of the weekly mainstream curriculum.

Student demand for language classes is considered as an important indicator of policy success in Australia. Turkish has been and remains today a high-demand language across all years. An examination of student participation patterns in Turkish classes across years indicated that typically a larger group of students participate in Turkish classes in Victoria throughout mandatory years and the number of students pursuing Turkish drop in Year 11 and Year 12 when language study is an elective subject. The drop in student participation beyond mandatory years holds true for other high-demand languages in Victoria (DEECD, 2009, 2013a; Lo Bianco, 2009; Mercurio and Scarino, 2005). While bonus points added to students' university entry score provides a positive policy incentive for students to include language study as a VCE subject, additional policy incentives such as offering college credit or scholarships may be needed to improve student retention in senior secondary language classes.

The TIV study found that senior secondary Turkish classes are characterized by great diversity in students' years of formal Turkish study. It was not unusual to find students with no prior experience studying Turkish formally in the same class with seasoned students who had pursued Turkish continuously from elementary school years. Specifically, nearly one of every four study participants started studying Turkish in Year 11 with no prior experience and one of twenty joined Turkish classes as late as in Year 12. Students who did not study Turkish continuously performed poorly on the VCE Turkish exam (Beykont, in prep.). A recent interview study of students who sat for the VCE Turkish exam after only one or two years of formal Turkish study revealed that many did not understand the time that it takes to acquire the

level of Turkish proficiency necessary for success on the VCE Turkish exam (Beykont, 2010b, 2012). Policy measures such as initiating eligibility requirements for participation in senior secondary language classes may encourage students to pursue language classes continuously from early years.

The Victorian government's plan articulated in *Languages: Expanding Your World: Plan to Implement the Victorian Government's Vision for Languages Education 2013-2025* (DEECD, 2013b) recommends valuable strategies to address the historical policy challenge of low student demand for language classes beyond mandatory years. Specifically, a communication and public outreach strategy is highlighted in order to build student demand for languages education across all years including senior secondary years. The Victorian plan includes appropriating funds to support a team of languages ambassadors responsible for promoting the educational and economic benefits of languages education to the larger Victorian school community. The TIV study findings indicate that a more comprehensive public outreach may be necessary to ensure student persistence in language classes throughout senior secondary years. In addition to the varied benefits of languages education, the cumulative nature of language development in school settings needs to be explained to the larger school community to encourage prolonged participation in language classes of all students, especially male students, from junior secondary, if not elementary years onwards.

The Victorian government's plan for 2013-2025 (DEECD, 2013b) also underlines the goal of strengthening delivery and learning resources in order to improve the quality of languages education offered via varied language providers. The TIV study documented inequities in student access to essential learning resources across educational sectors offering senior secondary Turkish classes and, in some cases, across the school campuses. While all Turkish programs exceed the Victorian policy recommendation of 150 minute minimum weekly contact time, compared to weekend programs, weekday programs offer an extra 60-120 minute Turkish instruction per week. Furthermore, student access to proficient and qualified teachers and material instructional resources vary widely across Turkish providers. Reliance on ongoing data collection, analysis, and reflection on language program features is an important means to improve quality of student learning opportunities. In addition to the current yearly reporting requirements of Victorian schools on student participation rates and student achievement in language classes it would be helpful that schools are asked to provide information on specific learning resources that the Victorian policy recommends to be essential for quality languages education.

References

ABS. (1991). *Census of population and housing*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS. (2011). *Census of population and housing*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ACARA. (2011). The s*hape of the Australian curriculum: Languages*. Sydney, NSW: Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.

Akçelik R. and Elley, J. Eds. (1988). *Turkish community in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian-Turkish Friendship Society Publications.

Akçelik, R. ed. (1993). *Turkish youth in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian-Turkish Friendship Society Publications.

Baldauf, R. B. (2005). Coordinating government and community support for community language teaching in Australia: Overview with special attention to New South Wales. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 8*, no 2 and 3, 132-144.

Baldauf, R. B. Jr., de Riva O'Phelan, J., Hooker, V., Di Biase, B., White, P., Vervoorn, A., Fane, B., Mangubhai, F. Pauwels, and Scott, M. (1998). *Advancing Australia's languages: Overview report: Evaluation of the commonwealth school languages programme*. Canberra: Evaluation and Monitoring Branch, Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs.

Başarın, H. H. and Başarın, V. (1993). *The Turks in Australia celebrating twenty-five years down under*. Melbourne: Turquoise Publications.

Beykont, Z. F. (2006). *Substantiating success and improving quality in secondary Turkish programs: Teacher perspectives.* Final Research Report. Melbourne, Australia: Turkish Teachers' Association.

Beykont, Z. F. (2007). *"We can't learn Turkish by osmosis": Youth reflections on language programs.* Seminar presented at the School of Languages and Linguistics Seminar Series, University of Melbourne, Australia, April 20.

Beykont, Z. F. (2008). *Heritage language maintenance in an English-dominant context: A study of Turkish youth in Victoria.* Paper presented at the Heritage Language Learner Conference, Cape Town University, South Africa, December 6-9.

Beykont, Z. F. (2010a). "We should keep what makes us different": Youth reflections on Turkish maintenance in Australia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 206*, 93-107.

Beykont, Z. F. (2010b). *Quality and sustainability in Victoria's languages education*. Seminar presented at the Language and Literacy Education Seminar Series, University of Melbourne, Australia, August 27.

Beykont, Z. F. (2012). "Why didn't they teach any of this before?" Youth appraisal of Turkish provision in Victoria. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics 35*, no2: 156-169.

Beykont, Z. F. (2013). Building a well-prepared languages teaching force: Turkish teacher perspectives. *BABEL 47*, no3: 16-27.

Board of Studies. (2000). LOTE study design, Turkish. Downloaded http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/turkish/TurkishSD.pdf

Carr, J., and Pauwels, A. (2006). *Boys and foreign language learning: Real boys don't do languages*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Clyne, M. (1997). Managing language diversity and second language programs in Australia. *Current Issues in Language and Society 4*: 94-119.

Clyne, M. (2005). *Australia's language potential*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Clyne, M. and Kipp, S. (1997). Trends and changes in home language use and shift in Australia: 1986-1996. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 18*: 451-473.

Clyne, M. and Kipp, S. (2002). Australia's changing demography. *People and Place 10*, no3: 29–35.

Clyne, M., Isaakidis, T., Liem, I and Rossi Hunt, C. (2004). Developing and sharing community languages through secondary school programs. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism 7*, 255-278.

COAG. 1994. *Asian languages and Australia's economic future: A report prepared for the council of Australian governments*. Brisbane: Qld Government Printer.

Dawkins, J. (1991). *Australia's language: The Australian language and literacy policy*. Canberra, ACD: Australian Government Publishing Service, Department of Employment, Education and Training.

DEECD. (2009). *Languages other than English in Victorian government schools*. Melbourne, VIC: The State of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

DEECD. (2013a). *Languages other than English in Victorian government schools*. Melbourne, VIC: The State of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

DEECD. (2013b). *Languages: Expanding your world: Plan to implement the Victorian government's vision for languages education 2013-2025*. Melbourne, VIC: The State of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

DET. (2002). *Languages for Victoria's future: An analysis of languages in government schools*. Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Department of Education and Training.

Ingram, D. (2005). Looking back, looking forward. In *An international perspective on language policies, practices and proficiencies*, eds. D. Cunningham and A. Hatoss, 133-168. Belgrave: FIPLV.

Kipp, S., Clyne, M., and Pauwels, A. (1995). *Immigration and Australia's language resources*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Liddicoat, A. J., Scarino, A., Curnow, T. J., Kohler, M., Scrimgeour, A., and Morgan, A. M. (2007). *An ınvestigation of the state and nature of languages in Australian schools.* Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education. University of South Australia/ Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Lo Bianco, J. (1987). *National policy on languages*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Lo Bianco, J. (2009). *Second languages and Australian schooling*. Melbourne, VIC: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Mercurio, A. and Scarino, A. (2005). Heritage languages at upper secondary level in South Australia. A struggle for legitimacy. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 8* (2and 3), 145–159.

MACLOTE. (1994). *Report to the minister for education*. Melbourne: Victorian Directorate of School Education, Ministerial Advisory Council on Languages Other Than English.

MCEETYA. (1999). *Adelaide declaration on national goals for schooling in the 21st Century*. Adelaide: The State of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services.

MCEETYA. (2005). *National statement for languages education in Australian schools: national plan for languages education in Australian schools 2005–2008*. Adelaide: The State of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Pavlenko, A., and Piller, P. (2008). Language education and gender. In S. May (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Vol 1* (2nd ed.) (pp. 57-69). New York: Springer.

VCAA. (2013). *Languages: Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design*. Melbourne: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Yağmur, K. (2004). Language maintenance patterns of Turkish immigrant communities in Australia and Western Europe: The impact of majority attitudes on ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 165*, 121–142.