Language teacher supply: A content analysis of newspaper coverage across the 'Anglobubble'

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In the monolingual English-speaking world referred to as the 'Anglobubble', governments are finally recognising the advantages of a citizenry able to engage in and between multiple languages and cultures. As a result, increased efforts are being made to introduce and expand educational programs to teach languages. Thus, now more than ever, an appropriate language teacher supply is needed to support the internationalisation process of citizens. However, a language teacher supply crisis is emerging. The content analysis study reported here, explored how the issue of language teacher supply was portrayed in print-based newspaper media from six English-speaking countries between 2010 and 2015. The findings indicate that there is an ongoing crisis with the supply of language teachers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Further, in areas where language education is being propelled by top-down political agendas, sustainable progress is limited. Attention is focused on a small number of 'popular' languages, with indigenous languages all but forgotten. In contrast, in areas where grass-roots community movements are present, actions are being undertaken to find genuine and sustainable solutions. This is also bringing a more positive media discourse, and, as such, increased social awareness of and value for language education.

Introduction

A shortage of language teachers is threatening the efficacy of language education programs across many English-speaking countries (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011; Friedman, 2015; McElroy, 2015; Ratcliffe, 2013). While the shortage of language teachers has been given some attention in political and academic circles, this paper attempts to investigate public perceptions and popular social discourse, as reflected in its representation and portrayal in mainstream media. The authors were encouraged by a recent paper published in *Issues in Educational Research*, which analysed media coverage of teacher shortages in Australia, and encouraged other researchers to "examine the reporting of other educational issues to ascertain whether the tendency to negative and superficial reporting is widespread" (Shine, 2015, p. 511). This paper presents insights about the particular issue of language teacher supply, and takes an international focus.

This paper investigates the media coverage regarding language teacher supply in six English-speaking countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. These countries have been referred to collectively as the 'Anglobubble', a "part of the world, with a concentration of monolingual English speakers, that operates in English, thinks it only natural that everything should happen in English and should logically be experienced and understood in English" (Hajek, 2014,

para. 2). In each of these countries various programs and policies have been adopted to improve the state of language education, and important inroads have been made. However, there is still much more to be done to ensure that the opportunity to learn other languages is available for all students.

Despite the broad commonalities of the six countries, there are key social, political, and historical differences which make each country's situation unique. Unfortunately, the space limitation of this paper precludes a more in-depth discussion of each country, although key differences are presented throughout the paper as they become apparent through the differences in media coverage.

Research methodology

The design of the study was a content analysis of paper-based newspaper articles from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Paper-based newspapers were chosen because, despite the rapid growth in online channels for news distribution, most newspaper reading still happens in print (Barthel, 2015). Furthermore, print-based newspapers remain a powerful tool in shaping public opinion and influencing policy (Greenslade, 2011).

Data were collected from print-based newspapers, using the online databases *ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest Australia and New Zealand Newsstand, Canadian Newsstand Complete*, and *UK Newsstand*. These databases were selected because they cover more than 2000 newspaper titles from all six countries under investigation. Combinations of the search terms 'foreign', 'second', 'language', 'teacher', 'supply', 'recruitment', 'attrition', 'retention', and 'shortage' were used. Included in the analysis were original, full-text, print-based newspaper articles, from January 2010 to December 2015, which made at least one mention of the supply of language teachers in schools. Editorials and letters to the editor were not within the scope of this study because they are of personal and opinion-based nature.

Content analysis is an empirically grounded method of analysing meaningful matter, "that is, data whose physical manifestations are secondary to what they mean to particular populations of people" (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 5). Newspapers often come under the eye of content analysis researchers, due to their significant impact on public awareness. Online channels are becoming increasingly popular methods for the dissemination and consumption of news media. However, with a longer history of investigative journalism, newspapers have been found to wield considerable influence over the content of newer media (McCombs, Holbert, Kiousis & Wanta, 2011; Pew Research Centre, 2010). "As well as *influencing* public opinion, mass media *reflect* opinion and perceptions through reporting what other people, companies and organizations are saying and doing" (Macnamara, 2005, p. 21), and as such is an ideal way of better understanding the issue of language teacher supply.

As proposed by Neuendorf (2002), analyses were conducted of both the form and content characteristics of the newspaper coverage in relation to language teacher supply. In a content analysis, it is important to consider content and form characteristics, in particular, because "form characteristics are often extremely important mediators of the content elements" (p. 24). Therefore, the research study adopted a six-step process to analyse the content and form of the articles, starting with familiarisation, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes, before developing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure reliability and replicability of the findings, explicit coding instructions were used by two coders to ensure that obtained ratings were "not the idiosyncratic results of one rater's subjective judgement" (Tinsley & Weiss, 1975, p. 359). The results of the analyses are also available for review, introducing transparency and accountability.

Results and discussion

When interpreting the outcomes of the data analysis, it is important to bear in mind that regional, national and international news competes constantly for limited space in print-based newspapers. The issue of language teacher supply is educational in nature, thus may not have the edge needed to compete with other more sensational headlines (West, Whitehurst & Dionne, 2009). Despite this competition for space, the issue of language teacher supply is one that was discussed in 80 articles between 2010 and 2015. These articles met the criteria for inclusion in the study, and were given a code from M1 to M80. In summary, the articles came from the six countries of the 'Anglobubble', in order of frequency these were Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States, and Ireland, with details shown in Figure 1.

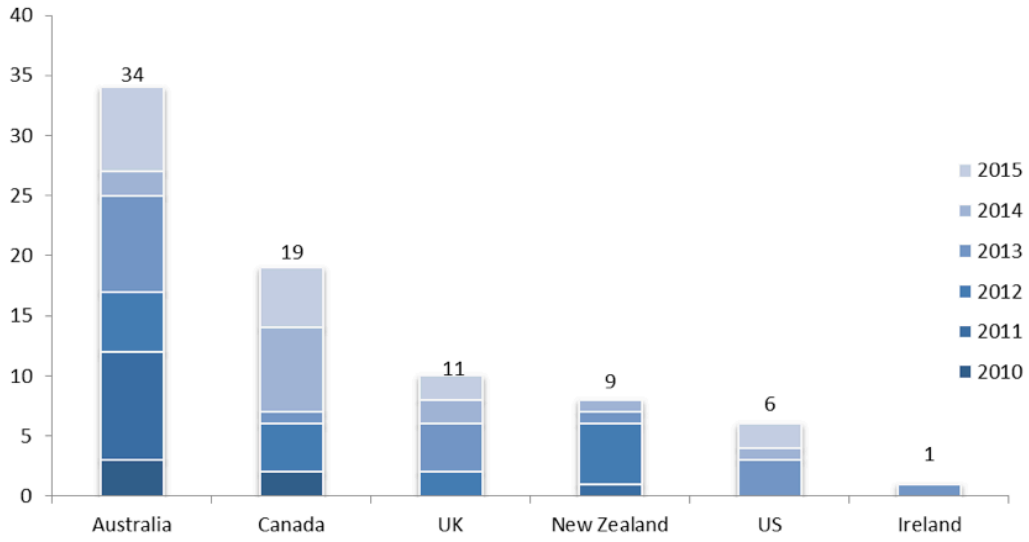

Figure 1: Frequency of newspaper articles mentioning language teacher supply, by country and year

The higher level of visibility of language teacher supply in Australia is most reasonably explained by the high level of policy development that has been seen there for over three decades (Liddicoat, 2010; Poyatos Matas & Mason, 2015). One article (M9) reported that "every new minister at some point has a love affair with languages and (promises) a lot of short-term funding … Then it disappears" (Ross, 2014). Adding to this, the new *Australian Curriculum: Languages* was being drafted, debated and implemented during the analysis period, and this has kept issues of teacher supply visible. Figure 2 shows unsurprisingly that increases in media attention are often seen prior to and immediately following the release of educational policy. While this regular policy activity is driving media coverage, it has also been noted as one possible factor exacerbating the language teacher shortage, as it engenders instability in employment opportunities, which ebb and flow depending on the aims of each new policy (M9).

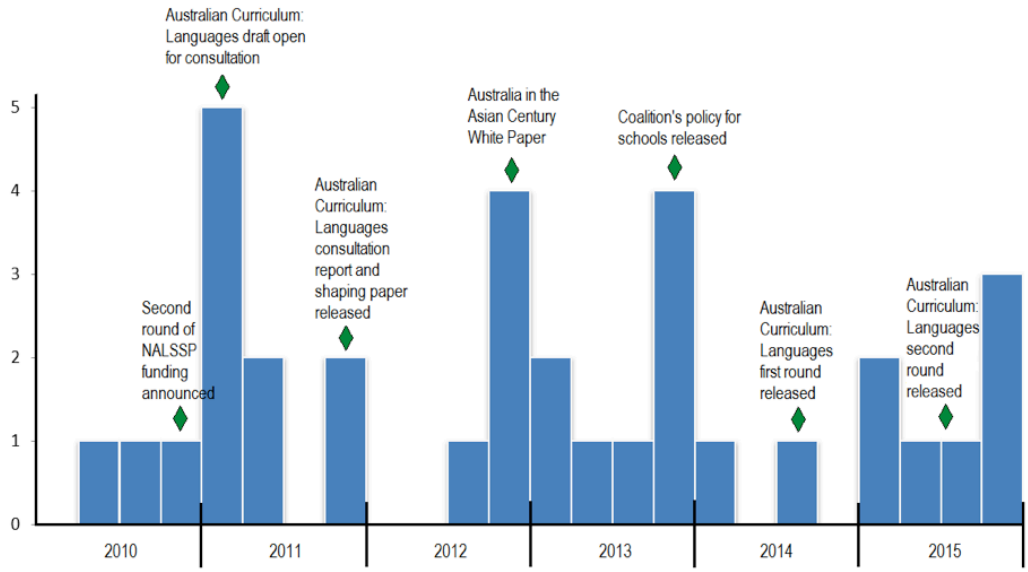

Figure 2: Media attention to language teacher supply in Australia, and the release of policies and documents relating to language education, 2010-2015

Stance of media coverage

As shown in Table 1, over 96% of articles (77/80) reported a shortage of language teachers. The exceptions include the single article from Ireland, which reported a lack of job opportunities for Irish education graduates. The article noted that Irish teachers were leaving to fill gaps in supply in England, with modern languages cited as an area of high demand. While the article did not mention specifically the state of language teachers in the country, it cited better working conditions and a "shortage of teaching posts" in general as possible reasons for teachers' move from Ireland to England. This suggests that concerns lie in a lack of quality job opportunities for graduates rather than issues of low teacher supply, and this would also explain the absence of media attention to the issue. Two

further exceptions come from the state of New South Wales in Australia, where the Department of Education and Communities was cited in two articles published within three days of each other, that there was an adequate supply of language teachers (M12, M13). This position seems to have been contradicted by the statement that recent policy includes "a range of initiatives to further increase (language) teacher supply" (M12).

Table 1: Stance on the issue of language teacher supply in newspaper reports

Country	N	Reports a shortage of language teachers	Reports an adequate supply of language teachers	Reports conflicting information	Other
Australia	34	32	1	1	0
Canada	19	19	0	0	0
Ireland	1	0	0	0	1
New Zealand	9	9	0	0	0
United Kingdom	11	11	0	0	0
United States	6	6	0	0	0
Anglobubble	80	77	1	1	1

Excluding these three exceptions, all of the articles in the study framed language teacher supply as a problem. While some of the articles merely stated the existence of, or potential for, a shortage of language teachers, many used descriptive language which painted the problem as one of urgency and importance. Teacher shortages were presented as acute (M2, M7, M39), serious (M33, M36, M38) severe (M20), significant (M45), chronic (M53), critical (M37, M80), and widespread (M37, M38, M39). There were reports of challenges (M35, M37, M38, M40, M43, M67), major hurdles (M27) and struggles (M5, M19, M35, M62, M76) in filling positions and meeting demand. Languages were identified as an area of particular demand (M3, M13, M49, M77), whereby filling positions was reported as being more difficult than in other subject areas (M25, M31, M57). The demand for teachers was said to 'outstrip' capacity (M43, M47), and, as such, teachers were in 'red-hot demand' (M39). A 'looming' shortage provided a negative forecast in one article (M6), while another talked of policy to increase language education that was "likely to be hamstrung by a shortage of teachers" (M72).

Depth and scope of media coverage

Despite the regular presence of the language teacher supply crisis in the media between 2010 and 2015, the articles were often shorter than 800 words, placed away from the front pages, and did not include images (Table 2). These three factors could impact negatively on the perception by readers of this educational crisis, compared to other social and political issues addressed in the media (Cissel, 2012). Thus, in the long term, the problem is deprived the attention that is needed to stimulate further public awareness and discussion.

The analysis showed that around half of the articles gave only a cursory mention of language teacher shortage. This was defined as a single phrase or sentence (or a repetition of the same phrase) that stated or implied that there was a shortage or potential shortage

of language teachers, but gave no further or specific attention to the problem, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Descriptive variables of newspaper articles referring to language teacher shortage

Country	N	Type		Scope		Length^			Position			Image	
	Tot.	Broad-sheet	Tab-loid	Met-ro	Reg-ional	Long	Med-ium	Short	Front page	Page 2-5	Page 6 +	Yes	No
Australia	34	24	10	30	4	7	18	9	1	11	22	7	27
Canada	19	13	6	12	7	7	10	2	3	2	13	9	10
Ireland	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
NZ	9	8	1	3	6	1	7	1	0	5	4	2	7
UK	11	8	3	9	2	1	7	3	1	1	8	1	10
US	6	6	0	3	3	3	3	0	3	1	2	1	5
Anglobubble	80	60	20	58	22	20	45	15	8	20	50*	20	60

^ Short is less than 400 words, medium is between 400-800 words, and long is more than 800 words.
* The page number could not be determined for M41 (Canada) and M74 (UK)

Table 3: Depth and scope of newspaper coverage in relation to language teacher supply

Country	N	Cursory statement of problem only	Further discuss-ion	Further discussions covered …*		
				possible causes of the problem	possible solutions	actions undertaken
Australia	34	20	14	6	4	10
Canada	19	10	9	4	1	6
New Zealand	9	5	4	1	1	2
United Kingdom	11	4	7	3	2	3
United States	6	4	2	0	0	2
Anglobubble	79	42	37	14	8	23

* Totals higher than N are reported as articles were coded for all the categories that applied.

Content and nature of discussions

While 42 articles were cursory in nature, a further 37 provided further discussion, which focused for the most part on current actions being undertaken to address the problem (n=23), followed by possible causes (n=14), and to a lesser extent possible solutions (n=8).

To get teachers into classrooms, a common course of action reported in the media was the recruitment of teachers from other areas of the country (M19, M37, M39, M41, M44, M46). This is likely exacerbating the shortage in regional and remote areas, where it is generally more difficult to recruit teachers. In Australia, attempts have been made to recruit overseas-trained teachers through a skilled migrant visa scheme (M9, M17). This scheme allowed visa applications to be expedited for those with in-demand qualifications. However, it was revealed that the scheme failed to address any teacher shortage, with only

fifteen applicants successfully acquiring a visa to fill positions teaching in the priority areas of maths, science, language, or special education in 2013 and 2014 (M2).

The concern with teacher shortages is that they sometimes result "not just in unfilled posts but in underqualified staff or excessive teacher workloads" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002, p. 66). This has been seen in Australia, with the employment of native speakers without teaching qualifications (M5), and teachers who have not passed proficiency examination requirements (M10). While online learning is becoming more commonplace, in some cases it is being used as a reactive measure to counter a lack of staffing availability in face to face programs, rather than a decision based on knowledge of best practice (M18, M29). It is unclear if these practices are being used to cope with teacher shortages in countries other than Australia, and are merely not being questioned or discussed.

In Australia and Canada there were reports of cuts, reductions, or delays to language programs (M25, M31, M35, M48). In Canada, where there are often more applicants than places in bilingual programs, schools have adopted a range of strategies to cap enrolments. This includes lottery systems where entry is selected randomly, or in first-in, first-served policies (M45, M46, M47). In response to these strategies, some community members have held campouts to secure an early morning meeting (M47), or organised 'telephone parties' where friends and family members gather to use multiple devices to continuously attempt to call the district's education centre until a connection on the busy lines can be made (M45). The main problem with these strategies is that they do not promote equity of access to these programs. Therefore, parents with access to more resources and wider social networks are more likely to be successful. This has caused frustration among some parents, with one quoted as saying "I am a parent with a true interest in having my children learn the French language… and it is reasonable to expect that my child be given the same opportunity" (M46).

Two main reasons are presented in the media as to why supply and demand has not been brought into balance. First, language education is not being widely studied in schools and universities – due to lack of value for or interest in languages (M9, M11, M22, M46, M70, M74). Another cause put forward was the poor working conditions for language teachers, which has caused teachers to leave for other subject areas. In Australia, heavy workloads, large numbers of students, and short periods of contact time, "had forced about 250 qualified language teachers to take on classroom roles" (M25). Meanwhile in Canada, many "teachers start out in French, but leave to teach English because of challenges like parent scrutiny and a lack of resources" (M39). Put together, these two issues create a vicious cycle, where there are not enough students studying a language, and not enough graduates wanting to choose language teaching as an option, which places further pressure on the quality of language programs and the nature of the job, thus perpetuating the cycle.

Several possible solutions to the problems are put forward through the media. According to the president of the Asian Studies of Australia, "additional inquiries are not needed … What is needed is a range of straightforward, concrete and economical programs". Several suggestions are presented to the media, including cash incentives (M26), to "ensure the

recruitment of a trained workforce" (M71), a "significant expansion in language learning during teacher training" (M72), and mandatory French methodology courses as part of all teacher certification in Canada (M47). In New Zealand, the Waikato Principals' Association president proposed a system whereby specialist teachers work across a number of schools (M56), a strategy that has had adverse effects in neighbouring Australia (Australian Council of State School Organisations, 2007; Mason, 2015).

Concrete data were presented only in the Australian and Canadian media, although the Australian data often presented more questions than it answered. For example, in the Australian state of Queensland, it was reported that 70 unregistered teachers were found to have been employed to teach languages (M5) as well as 25 teachers who had failed the proficiency examination (M9). It is unclear if these teachers were working on short-term contracts, or if efforts were being made to ensure they could gain the credentials required. In Canada, various reports commissioned by the non-profit volunteer parent-led organisation *Canadian Parents for French* were cited (M37, M38, M39, M40, M41, M43, M44, M46, M47), although it was not always clear which report was being referred to. A statistic quoted in four of the articles was that 85% of school districts reported challenges in finding qualified applicants for French bilingual programs (M37, M38, M40, M43). This finding comes from an analysis of data collected from 96% of school districts, and as such has much more rigour than the piecemeal information provided by the Australian media. The lack of rigorous and comprehensive data available in much of the Anglobubble has a serious impact on the ability of jurisdictions to make well-informed decisions for the future sustainability of language teaching.

Focus of media coverage

Practicalities mean that decisions will always need to be made about which languages to teach in schools. Within the media coverage, more than half of articles (n=48) referred to or focused on particular languages or language groups, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Languages, language groups, and program types referred to in the media (n=48)

Country	N	Asian languages	French immersion	Indigenous languages	French core	Spanish immersion	Latin	Bilingual programs
Australia	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	19	0	16	0	1	1	1	0
Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Zealand	10	6	0	4	0	0	0	0
UK	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
United States	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Anglobubble	48	18	16	10	1	1	1	1

Figures 3 and 4 feature *Word Clouds*, "visualization(s) of text in which the more frequently used words are effectively highlighted by occupying more prominence in the representation" (McNaught & Lam, 2010, p. 630). *Word Clouds* provide a visually rich method to illustrate the dominance of particular terms in texts (McNaught & Lam, 2010).

Eighteen newspaper articles made reference to Asian languages as a collective, or to specific Asian languages. The conceptualisation of 'Asia' differed across the media coverage, as is indeed seen across language education policy. As illustrated in Figure 3, the generic term 'Asian' was the most prominent, used in two thirds of the articles under investigation (12/18). In seven of these cases, Asia was left undefined. Others defined it as a combination of languages, which reflected the policy or curriculum documents it referred to. Overall, Chinese, Mandarin, and Chinese (Mandarin) were given the most attention. Even where Chinese was left undefined, in educational policy in the Anglobubble, 'Chinese' is generally accepted as Mandarin. While Japanese was given some detailed attention, Indonesian, Hindi and Korean were all mentioned in passing. A further article (M34) mentioned Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, and Arabic, but these were left out of the *Word Cloud*, because the article used the terms only to point out the lack of focus on these languages (which, ironically gave detailed attention to Chinese and Indonesian).

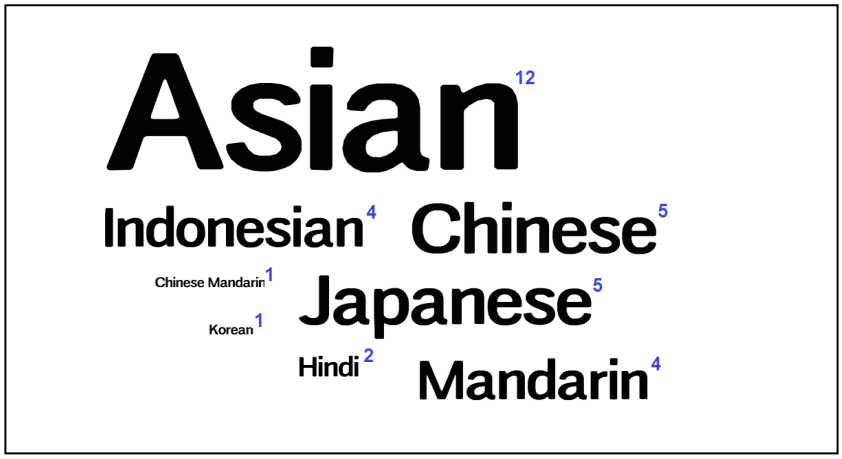

Figure 3: *Word Cloud* illustrating the conceptualisations of Asian languages in 18 newspaper articles. Representation is indicated by font size and superscript number.

The focus on Asian languages was seen predominantly in Australia and New Zealand, where governments of both countries have given strategic policy attention to increase economic and political ties in the region. Part of these policies has been a commitment to increasing the number of students learning an Asian language, including the widespread introduction of language education in primary schools from the late 1990s (Ministry of Education, 2012; Pietsch & Aarons, 2012).

The reason for the concerted focus on Mandarin is twofold. Firstly, there is a strong desire from Anglobubble governments to strategically align themselves with one of the world's biggest economic powers (Yueh, 2013). However, the economic rationale does not explain the lack of focus on Hindi, with India recently recognised as the world's fastest growing economy (Pandey, 2015), a prediction that was made more than a decade ago (Diamond, 2005). Nor does it explain the continued popularity of Japanese in educational policy, a country that continues its economic decline (Fujioka, 2015;

Matthews, 2015). The answer then might be explained by the commitment of some governments to promote their languages and cultures around the world. *The Confucius Institute* and the *Japan Foundation* both have significant presence in the Anglobubble, while countries such as Indonesia are unable to fund such initiatives to support the wider teaching of its languages (McDonald, 2010). While the role of such initiatives is to promote language education, they have conveniently helped to fill gaps in teacher supply. In the United States, where there is "no specific funding for K-12 language instruction" (Schoof, 2013), *The Confucius Institute* has supplied language teacher assistants to schools (M80), and this was also reported in New Zealand (M63).

With its reductive definition of Asia, more than two thousand other languages which are spoken across the Asian continent are excluded (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2016). That is not to forget the plethora of other languages that have cultural and historical significance across the Anglobubble, particularly indigenous languages, which were present in 10 articles. A large number of indigenous languages exist within the Anglobubble. There are over 350 languages that are indigenous to Australia (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2016), over 60 languages indigenous to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2015), while *te reo Māori* (the Maori language) is indigenous to New Zealand. There are currently ten indigenous languages spoken in the United Kingdom (NicDhùghaill, 2013), with Scottish Gaelic, Irish, and Cornish ratified by the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (Council of Europe, 2014). In the United States, around 160 languages native to Northern America were identified in the 2010 census (United States Department of Commerce, 2011).

Almost all indigenous languages around the world are in danger of disappearing forever (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2016), and those in the Anglobubble are all suffering from a shortage of teachers to teach the next generation of speakers (Gilles & Battiste, 2013; Inspectorate of Education, 2011; United States Department of Education, 2015; Worrall, 2014). Despite this, the discussion of indigenous languages in the media coverage analysed was limited to just two languages (Figure 3), te reo Māori and Scottish Gaelic, both of which have current educational policy which aims to protect and expand teaching of the language in schools, and their use in the wider community.

In Scotland, the 2011 census showed a slight decrease in the number of speakers of Gaelic, down to 1.1% of the population (National Records of Scotland, 2013). This led to the drafting of a major language revival policy, which included a goal of increasing the number of students engaged in Gaelic-medium instruction.

The continued revival of te reo Māori in New Zealand has been given considerable policy attention over the past 25 years, including particular attention to language programs in schools. While there has been some progress (Benton, 2015), currently almost 80% of all New Zealand school students receive no Maori language education, or their learning is limited to simple words, greetings, and songs (Ministry of Education, 2015). Four articles focused on te reo Māori (M56, M57, M58, M62). However, all references were cursory or generic in nature. This is contrasted with the media focus on Chinese in New Zealand Schools, which in four of the six cases included further discussions.

Figure 4: *Word Cloud* illustrating all mentions of indigenous languages from the analysis of 80 newspaper articles. Representation is indicated by font size and superscript number.

The omission of other indigenous languages in the media coverage on teacher supply does not mean that efforts are not being made to reverse the decline of indigenous education in the Anglobubble. This is particularly true in Australia, where thirty years ago the *National Policy on Languages* argued strongly for initiatives to support the maintenance of indigenous languages (Lo Bianco, 1987). More recently, Australia made a significant step forward, with the development of the *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* (Troy, 2015). While this is a positive step, the lack of discussion about the supply of teachers to implement the framework leaves some groups concerned that current efforts are unlikely to succeed because they fail to "tackle the real problems in language programs" (Worrall, 2014, para. 15). While teacher supply is just one of those problems, it is worthy of more media representation.

Bilingual education also had significant coverage in the media, particularly in Canada from 2012 onward. Bilingual, or immersion, education sees "the use of two languages as media of instruction for a child or a group of children in part or all of the school curriculum" (Cohen, 1975, p. 18). There is a strong body of research which recognises the cognitive and social benefits of immersion programs, and Canada is in a unique position to draw on its bilingual history. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented increase in parents wanting to enrol their children in French bilingual programs. This increase has meant that the current supply of teachers is no longer sufficient.

Sources present (and absent) from the media

The media coverage in the analysis included both human and textual sources (Table 5). In both Australia and Scotland, politicians and policy are the main sources of information. The discourse in these articles generally involved criticisms on past and potential policy failures, rather than promoting bilateral discussions. There was overwhelming opposition reported to a proposal to increase the teaching of second languages, particularly Gaelic, in Scottish schools (M67-M72). An opposition spokesperson made the following quote, which sums up the tone of the coverage of the issue.

> …we reject utterly the idea that every pupil across Scotland should be taught Gaelic … There is already a shortage of Gaelic teachers and to try to wheel out Gaelic lessons across every school in the country is not only impractical, but also unaffordable (M68).

Table 5: Human and textual sources quoted in direct reference to language teacher shortages

Country	Human sources								Textual sources				
	Politician / education ministry officials	Academics	Parents/ parent groups	Principals/ principal groups	Union officials	Teachers / teacher groups	Language teacher assocs	Other	Govt policy document	Non-govt repts and studies	Govt repts and studies	Govt statements	Peer-reviewed studies
Australia	7	4	1	1	3	1	2	3	10	4	4	2	0
Canada	5	2	6	0	0	2	0	0	1	10(1)	1	0	0
NZ	0	1	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
UK	3(2)	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	6(2)	0	1	0	0
US	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Anglobubble	15	9	8	6	4	4	2	7	17	14	8	2	0

Note 1: All of these ten articles were commissioned by the *Canadian Parents for French* organisation
Note 2: All of the sources noted come from the media coverage of Gaelic education in Scotland

In Canada, parents, and in particular the *Canadian Parents for French* organisation, were largely driving media attention, even more so than first appears in Table 5, because all of the ten non-government research reports quoted in the media were commissioned by that organisation. Their active advocacy, research and lobbying has contributed to the wider visibility of the issue than in most other areas, and has promoted a more positive discussion, as their ultimate aim lies not in winning elections, but in ensuring "that children would have the opportunity to become bilingual in the Canadian school system" (Canadian Parents for French, 2016).

The collective efforts of *Canadian Parents for French* have been acknowledged as contributing to the advancement of language educational policy and the growth of English-French bilingualism in the country (Gibson & Roy, 2015). The collective, which began with a small group of parents in Ottawa, has grown to a national network with 10 Branch offices and 150 Chapters. They continue to voice their concerns to the media, to commission studies, and develop and disseminate advocacy materials, including templates of letters for parents to send to school councils and education ministers. They are following the model proposed by the authors in a previous paper, which encouraged concerned citizens through knowledge, activism, and collectivism, to become active policy influencers rather than passive consumers of policy, illustrated in Figure 5 (Poyatos Matas & Mason, 2015).

The voices of language teachers were not widely present in the newspaper coverage, something that was also true in Shine's (2015) study. She explained the absence of teachers' voices, revealing that for journalists "it can be difficult to secure interviews with

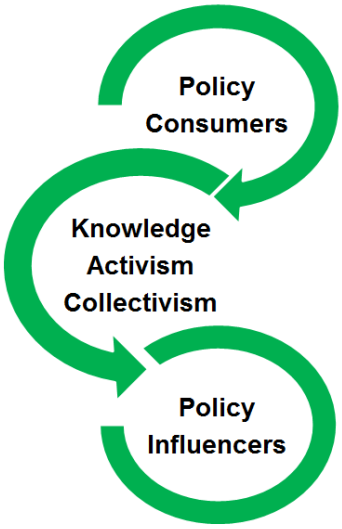

Figure 5: Moving from policy consumers to policy influencers
(Poyatos Matas & Mason, 2015, p. 18)

school teachers and principals in Australia because they are generally not able to speak to the media without express permission from their employer" (p. 511). This is also the case across the Anglobubble, where teachers have been punished for speaking in opposition to their employers (Edelman, 2015; Tickle, 2013; Veiga, 2015). In any case, language teacher associations and principals associations are better placed to speak to the media, removing potential conflicts of interest or restrictions placed on employees. Therefore, it may be expected that the voices of language teacher associations, which advocate on behalf of language teachers, might be more present, but this was not the case. This suggests that public advocacy and communication strategies could be improved.

Recommendations for future research

Decisions were made during the research process to limit the scope of this study. While these delimitations were explained and justified throughout this paper, new avenues for research are presented. This study was limited to print-based newspapers. Online newspapers, opinion-based letters to the editor, and public online comment sections also influence and reflect public perceptions about social issues and, as such, warrant further investigation. Further, six English-speaking countries were chosen due to their English linguistic imperialism and general ambivalence toward learning a language other than English. In-depth investigation of each of the six countries is an area for future research. Investigating language teacher supply in non-English speaking countries would also provide an important point of comparison.

Finally, media outlets make subjective choices, not only about what issues to cover but which groups to give a voice to regarding the issue, and it is vital to listen to the voices of

those who are missing. While academics are being called upon to provide their perspectives, empirical studies which present evidence-based solutions to address the language teacher shortage are not being discussed. The voices of language teachers themselves, those who sit at the pivot of policy and practice, are also not being heard. The authors make a call to both researchers and the media to give a voice to language teachers.

Conclusion

The content analysis conducted on newspaper coverage of language teacher supply across the Anglobubble between 2010 and 2015 found that in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, there is a shortage of qualified language teachers, and that this is framed in the media as a serious problem. Mirroring the findings of Shine's (2015) paper, this study also found that the issue of teacher supply was generally treated in a superficial manner, with more than half of the articles providing a brief mention of the problem, with no further discussion. The narrow nature of the media coverage can be seen as an indicator of the lack of social interest and political lobbying to bring visibility to the issue. In that sense, the issue of language teacher supply can be seen as reflective of the wider lack of social interest and value given to language education in many communities in English-speaking countries.

Interest in language education in the 'Anglobubble' is probably more widespread than the media focus would suggest, particularly as all of these countries have rich multilingual and multicultural populations. Language education has been used by many governments as a political tool for economic advantage. This has helped put and keep languages on the public agenda in many parts of the 'Anglobubble', particularly Australia. However, the economic rationale does not work as the main rationale for language education in schools. For those passionate about language education for their children, students, and citizens, there is much to learn from the grass-roots movement in Canada that is propelling changes in attitudes and action in improving language education, and challenging the monolingual mindset. Through activism and organisation, community members are engaging in the political process at a grass-roots level; lending their voices to the media, commissioning research, and driving public awareness. These actions are not only influencing the media coverage but also public perceptions about bilingual education and, in turn, there is more in-depth attention to the issue of teacher supply. By being fully engaged in the political process, these groups are also able to influence policy decisions, and place pressure on educational systems to provide the bilingual educational opportunities they value for their children.

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