
Language awareness and its relevance to TESOL

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ABSTRACT

Language awareness (LA) is widely considered to be an important dimension of ESOL teachers' professional knowledge. This paper considers how language awareness has been defined and examines which aspects are foregrounded in various conceptions of language awareness. Samples of professional competency statements and tasks commonly given to pre-service teachers are provided to illuminate the aspects of language awareness that are given prominence in ESOL. The paper examines the aspects of language awareness that are fostered by current practices in teacher education and professional development and discusses which aspects of language awareness are desirable for teachers to develop. Excerpts from studies of pre-service and in-service teachers are used to suggest that teacher LA is strengthened by L2 learning experience, and to argue for the value of *language learning awareness*. It is argued that LA has been through a pendulum swing from a cross-lingual focus to a focus on English-only, and is now in the process of returning to a renewed and reinvigorated multi-lingual focus.

DEFINING LANGUAGE AWARENESS

'Language awareness' (LA) is a term commonly heard in TESOL teacher education; often as part of a discussion about whether teachers-in-training have 'sufficient' LA to do well in their practicum

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and, ultimately, in the classroom. What exactly is language awareness and what relevance does it have for teachers and learners of ESOL? Like many such terms it has multiple meanings, and the intention of this paper is to explore some of those meanings and attempt to isolate the meanings most useful for the TESOL field. This paper does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the field of LA. To do so would require incursions into cognitive aspects of second language acquisition, such as attention and noticing, and a more in-depth treatment of teacher cognition. For these aspects the reader is referred to Svalberg's thorough treatment of multiple aspects of LA (2007) and Borg's book-length overview of language teacher cognition (2009). In this paper, I wish to locate the origins of LA within a multilingual contrastive tradition, trace its change into a monolingual model, and argue that the time is ripe for a renewal of its multilingual roots, albeit with new insights resulting from recent research into the dynamic nature of multilingualism.

A current definition of LA is that of the Association for Language Awareness (ALA), which states that LA can be defined as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use" (ALA, 2012). Their definition continues: "[i]t covers a wide spectrum of fields. For example, Language Awareness issues include exploring the benefits that can be derived from developing a good knowledge about language, a conscious understanding of how languages work, of how people learn them and use them...". Language awareness, according to ALA, is relevant for the learner, the teacher, the teacher-learner, the bilingual and the layperson. The paper touches on each of these (except the layperson which is outside the scope of this paper), but takes its main focus as the TESOL teacher-learner.

Many of the early views on LA in the English-speaking world came from language education in the U.K., including first language education, language across the curriculum, and second language learning. The focus was firmly on the learner with English as L1. One of the most influential and frequently-cited definitions of LA is that given by Donmall (1985) in her report prepared for the UK National Congress on Languages in Education (NCLE) (p.7):

Language awareness is a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of language and its role in human life.

The NCLE arose out of concerns expressed in the Bullock Report (DES, 1975), which had been set up to address growing anxiety about standards of literacy in schools in England. In fact the Bullock Report went beyond its brief and considered the broader question of the role of language in education (Hawkins, 1999, p.126). The NCLE sought to “co-ordinate the interests and needs of all language areas with the language awareness framework” (Donmall, 1984, p.32). These language areas included mother tongue teaching of English and other languages, foreign languages, EFL, ESL and linguistics. Key drivers behind national reports and working parties were several: the view that the UK’s record of teaching foreign languages was dismal and compared poorly with equivalents in the European Union (then the EEC) countries; increasing immigration and the concomitant desire of communities for support in maintaining their children’s first language; the realisation that with the demise of formal grammar teaching, children’s knowledge of English as a mother tongue was poor; and the need for ESL in an increasingly multicultural society (Donmall, 1984).

Eric Hawkins, sometimes called ‘the father of language awareness’, had been advocating since the 1960s for explicit reflection on both native and foreign languages as an integral part of the school curriculum. He proposed a ‘trivium’ of language studies, which consisted of mother tongue study, foreign language study and language awareness work (Hawkins, 1984, p.36). In this model, learners would be assisted to develop skills such as ‘noticing’ and the articulating of linguistic intuitions, and to apply them both to their mother tongue and to the language(s) they learn. There was a strong emphasis on broadening of students’ thought and of guarding against ethnocentrism in Britain’s increasingly diverse society. Hawkins (1984) saw LA work as (p.6):

...light[ing] fires of curiosity about the central human characteristic of language which will blaze throughout our pupils’ lives. While combating linguistic complacency, we are seeking to arm our pupils against fear of the unknown, which breeds prejudice and antagonism.

LA, then, was thought to be beneficial firstly in terms of a lifelong ability to understand how language affects human life, and secondly in terms of increasing the likelihood of cross-cultural understanding – a desire echoed in Australia’s own first National Languages Policy (Lo

Bianco, 1987) and followed by research on the contribution of language learning for intercultural communication (Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999).

There were three main ways in which Hawkins (1999) saw foreign language learning contributing to language awareness (p.134):

- *providing positive feedback on the mother tongue and cultural stereotypes;*
- *encouraging the learner to pay close attention to words and their meanings;*
- *building confidence in what Halliday (1975) called the 'mathetic' function of language (i.e., using language to learn about the world).*

Carl James (1999), another British researcher working with the same model as Hawkins, claimed that (p.142):

.. one's understanding of the workings of the foreign language can be illuminated by mother tongue study, by transferring one's mother tongue metacognitions to the task of foreign language learning. Seeing mother tongue and foreign language 'objectively', first in terms of their immanent systematicity, and then each in terms of the other, is to develop one's linguistic metacognitions of each.

We see then the preoccupation of these early contributors to the LA movement in the English-speaking world with the links between L1 and L2 learning. This is hardly surprising since James was a major force in Contrastive Analysis, which actively encouraged the contrasting of L1 and L2. While Contrastive Analysis itself has given way to more nuanced views of learner language, there has been in recent years more interest in the role of L1 in the second and foreign language classroom (Oguro, 2011; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002).

EFL TEACHERS' LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Here I examine the view of language awareness within a particular tradition of language teacher training: that which had its origins in London in 1962 in the organisation International House (IH). This tradition consists of "short, highly intensive, highly practical

course[s] of initial teacher training for TEFL.....[which] have for many years remained a popular avenue of entry into the EFL teaching profession” (Ferguson & Donno, 2003, pp.26-27). Such courses, aimed initially only at native-speakers of English, require no previous teaching experience. They have long included training in language awareness as an important and desirable attribute for teachers of EFL (Haycraft, 1978; International House, 2011). Offered initially by IH and then by similar private sector organisations, these courses offered short intensive teacher training courses which over time came under the umbrella of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and later UCLES.ⁱⁱ These courses are currently known as the University of Cambridge ESOL Certificates and Diplomas in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA, DELTA and related courses). Another system of accrediting such courses is conducted by Trinity College, London, and attracts similar numbers, according to Ferguson and Donno (2003).

While of course there are many other traditions in language teacher training worldwide, I would argue that the IH/CELTA model has been particularly influential among English native speaker teachers and particularly in contexts where British, Australian and New Zealand Englishes are taught and valued. There are 10,000 graduates of CELTA courses annually from 308 accredited centres worldwide, including 17 centres in Australia (Cambridge ESOL, 2012), and since these graduates often find work in non-English speaking countries where native speakers are sought-after, I argue that this tradition in language teacher training has been influential in maintaining the English-only, native-speaker model of ESOL which was critiqued by Phillipson (1992) and Canagarajah (1999) as inappropriate for many contexts outside the English-speaking world. Ferguson and Donno (2003, p.26) concur that “..the influence of the accrediting bodies within the profession....gives these courses a prominence out of proportion to the numbers involved”.

CELTA courses and their forerunners have long included a section called ‘language analysis’: topic 2 of 5 in the current syllabus is termed ‘Language analysis and awareness’, and its purpose is to impart knowledge of grammar from a pedagogical perspective, but also to develop and nurture the trainee teacher’s language awareness, which in this context means intuitions about and insights into how the (English) language works. The focus of CELTA is here is

quite specific, being aimed at the native speaker trainee teacher who has most probably not studied English grammar as part of their schooling, and who may or may not have foreign or second language learning experience. This trainee has native-speaker intuitions about English, and can usually make accurate grammaticality judgements, but may not know the names of major structural groupings, and has still less understanding of their functions and semantic roles.

Wright and Bolitho (1997, p.173) write of the expectations that language teachers are “both proficient users and *skilled analysts* of the target language” (emphasis added). Materials developed for such contexts are at least partly illuminative of the way ‘language awareness’ is conceived of within the system. A popular text recommended for CELTA trainees is ‘Discover English’ (Bolitho & Tomlinson, 1995) and this follows what Wright and Bolitho (1997, p.180) maintain are “some of the processes which may usefully be adopted in LA work in teacher education. Most of these materials belong firmly within an ‘enquiry-oriented’ or ‘reflective’ tradition”.

Wright and Bolitho distinguish LA from ‘knowledge about language’, by the latter of which they mean what Woods (1996) terms ‘declarative knowledge’ about grammar, phonology, lexis and discourse. LA, on the other hand, involves teachers ‘talking about language’; it has an “affective element – it engages and helps to evolve attitudes and values” ... it encourages teachers to become “autonomous and robust explorers of language” (Wright & Bolitho, 1993, p.299).

Teachers are encouraged to examine texts and discuss the attitudes and feelings of the interlocutors, the relationship between form and meaning, the choice of structure and vocabulary made by the speaker/writer, but also to challenge preconceived ideas about language and to explore the pedagogical myths and ‘sacred cows’ which are often enshrined in grammar ‘rules’ or style guides.

Thornbury, another prolific writer in the sphere of English language teacher education, distinguishes LA from the formal study of language known as ‘linguistics’ which he sees as an end in itself. He sees LA as strictly pedagogical, asking what a teacher needs to know about English in order to teach it effectively? (Thornbury, 1997). Similarly to Wright and Bolitho and Bolitho and Tomlinson, Thornbury

emphasises the teacher or teacher-learner working it out for themselves in an enquiry-oriented approach. This is illustrated by an excerpt from a language awareness task by Thornbury (1997) presented in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1
Example of language awareness task

Imagine a student of English asks you the following. How would you respond?

- a) How do you answer the phone in English?
- b) What is the correct spelling: *specialise* or *specialize*?
- c) What is the past of *must*?
- d) Why can you say *I'm absolutely furious* but *not I'm absolutely angry*?

(Source: Thornbury, 1997, p.7)

In the tasks Thornbury sets, there is a focus on vocabulary, syntax, appropriacy and style, phonology, morphology, text types, discourse competence and pragmatic competence, with an emphasis on making explicit what the native speaker knows implicitly, but not all of which will be found in pedagogical grammars.

Pre-course language tasks are commonly administered to CELTA applicants, with two main aims. The first is to determine if applicants have sufficient language awareness to commence the course and have a reasonable chance of succeeding. The second aim is to give applicants an idea of the kind of language analysis they will be expected to engage in during the course. Sample extracts from two CELTA language awareness pre-course tasks from Australian centres are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

The focus here is on form and function, knowledge of parts of speech, the ability to recognise and match complex verb phrases, recognition of word stress and use of appropriate punctuation. The focus is firmly on English and there is no mention of other languages.

FIGURE 2
Language awareness task for prospective CELTA candidates

2. Mark the stress on the following words.

Examples: America syllable regret

oxygen Japanese determination Japan vegetable
 interest allergic Photograph allergy photographic

3. Match a sentence on the left with one on the right according to their verb structures. Choose a term from the box below to label each pair. Follow the example in italics.

1. <i>I'd often seen her there.</i>	a. He comes from India.
2. You arrived late.	b. They've already seen it.
3. She speaks Greek.	c. She missed the bus.
4. They've just signed it.	d. We're going to crash!
5. It's going to rain.	e. I'm leaving in ten minutes.
6. She's having a baby soon.	f. We'd already finished.

1. = past perfect simple	4. =
2. =	5. =
3. =	6. =

past perfect simple / present perfect simple / present continuous /
 present simple / past simple / be going to + verb

(Source: Noble, 2012)

FIGURE 3
Language awareness task for prospective CELTA candidates

Part One: In language you think might be comprehensible to a learner of English, explain the difference in meaning between each of the following pairs of sentences:

i) a) I've been working there for 5 years.
b) I worked there for 5 years.

ii) a) David comes to work by car.
b) David is coming to work by car.

iii) a) I used to live there.
b) I'm used to living there.

Part Two: What part of speech are the underlined words?

i) It's been a great day.

ii) She's been waiting patiently for you.

iii) They've gone home.

iv) I'd love to but I've got to work.

v) Please give the papers to me when you've finished.

Correct the error:

Melbourne is famous for it's restaurants

Please give them there essays back

(Source: Cambridge ESOL, n.d.)

LANGUAGE TEACHER COGNITION AND BILINGUALISM

I turn now to the literature on language teacher cognition, which is the study of language teachers' knowledge, beliefs and assumptions about language, language learning and language teaching. Arising from the interest in teachers' cognitions in general education in the 1980s (e.g., Shavelson & Stern, 1981), the focus on language teacher cognition developed impetus with Woods' (1996) book 'Teacher cognition in language teaching'. The field has grown rapidly (Ellis,

2009) and investigates teachers' knowledge and beliefs about learners and pedagogy as well as language, but the part of it most relevant here is 'what teachers know about language systems', or what Andrews (1997) termed 'metalinguistic awareness'.

Metalinguistic awareness has also been a consistent theme in the study of bilinguals' language and cognitive skills. Early work by Peal and Lambert (1962) – the first to point out that bilingualism actually brought benefits rather than liabilities – claimed that metalinguistic awareness was a crucial element of bilinguals' superior cognitive skills compared with those of monolinguals, and was followed by similar findings by Ben-Zeev (1977). It was claimed by Lambert and Tucker (1972) that bilinguals indulge in language analysis, practising a form of 'incipient contrastive analysis'. They do this, claimed the authors, because bilinguals must work hard to keep their languages separate by maximising their perception of the structural differences and looking out for contrastivity. Research findings on bilinguals' superiority in tasks requiring metalinguistic skills are not always unambiguous (see, for example, Bialystok, 2009), but do suggest, for example, that early bilinguals are more adept than monolinguals at distinguishing between form and meaning (Bialystok, 2009, p.5), an important component of language awareness.

There has been a resurgence of interest in metalinguistic awareness in multilingualism by researchers such as Jessner (2006). Herdina and Jessner's (2002) dynamic model of multilingualism suggests that knowledge of each language system interacts in complex ways to produce 'multilingual proficiency' which is characterised by enhanced LA. She draws on Hawkins' (1999) notion of 'language apprenticeship' – the idea that as learners acquire L2, they gain important understandings about language in general, about how languages are structured, and about learning strategies that they can put to good effect in learning future languages.

LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND MULTILINGUAL TEACHERS

Returning now to language awareness as it relates to teachers of ESOL, Ellis (2004) reported a study which sought to establish the knowledge and beliefs of bilingual and monolingual ESOL teachers (i.e., those with substantial L2-learning and L2-using experience, and those with little or no expertise in a second language). The teachers'

language biographies were categorised according to a number of criteria such as age of learning a second language and context of learning to produce a rich picture of the complexity of bi/multilingualism, rather than a simple binary division between bi/multilinguals (henceforth referred to as bilinguals for brevity) and monolinguals. However, for our purposes here, I focus on the distinction found between teachers with L2, L3, and/or L4 experience and those with little or no bilingual language experience.

Bilinguals displayed cross-linguistic insights when discussing classes observed as part of the study, and when discussing their teaching practices in general. These insights included both knowledge about language and the more elusive 'sensitivity to and conscious awareness of language and its role in human life' found in Donmall's (1985, p.7) definition. They made frequent unprompted references to structural differences between other languages they knew and English in order to highlight the challenges for their learners regarding tense, case, conjugations, use or absence of determiners and other features. They were keenly aware of the lack of direct semantic equivalence between languages, giving examples from a wide range of European, Asian and other languages and referring to the pitfalls of false cognates.

Bilinguals also drew copiously on their experience of pragmatic features of language in use, with accounts of how greetings are accomplished in Uzbek, and dinnertime discussions of politics take place in Austrian German. A key point here is that while some of this knowledge, such as that about structure, falls into the category of 'knowledge about language' – that can be gained from formal learning about the features of languages – virtually all the cross-linguistic insights in the data came from the teachers' own experiences and were offered confidently. There was a clear qualitative difference between these insights and those of the monolinguals, whose limited experiences led them to make tentative statements such as "I have heard that (Mandarin doesn't use articles)" and "I think I read that (in French you have to give opinions very firmly)". Apart from specific insights into language systems mentioned above, bilinguals also expressed understandings about language in general and about the process of learning and using languages – again, from an

unprompted reflection on their own language-using experiences (unpublished data from Ellis, 2003):

[knowing another language] helps you [as an ESL teacher] because you've got that understanding of what they might be - how they might be approaching what you're trying to explain or - so knowing that there are different systems, and - I suppose it helps me just recognising if the Vietnamese put the adjective - in the wrong place sometimes and things like that, just analysing what they're doing, yeah (Jeannine)

...when they [students] translate into their language, three words in English might go in one in theirs, which is something I've learned from Finnish as well, because Finnish has about - words this long, complex - lots of prefixes and suffixes and everything that you can put on a word, well I would like say that in 4 words in English, they might say it in one long word - so it might not always sound right when they translate to each other but it probably is - just because it doesn't sound good in my ears - not to kind of think that they're not knowing the right one [word] (Samira)

...awareness of how - language and culture - go together - I think if you only operate within one culture and with one language, how do you get that perspective? (Louise)

...and the way the syllables are put together in Indonesian, there's no way you can't read something but that's not so in English, no, because the letter combinations change the pronunciation (Nora)

Let us recall that 'reflection' on what is known about language is a key part of both Wright and Bolitho's characterisation and of Hawkins' ideal 'trivium' – the latter emphasising how knowledge of other languages contributes to an understanding of the mother tongue. When the mother tongue is English and the person in question is an ESOL teacher, it becomes clear that the usefulness of

Hawkins' model is borne out by the above examples. In other words, language awareness gleaned from knowledge of other languages contributes to the LA resources considered desirable for ESOL teachers as viewed by Wright and Bolitho (1993, 1997) and Thornbury (1997) and as evidenced in the CELTA tasks discussed above.

This theme of 'reflection upon learning' is a powerful and long-standing one in the field of adult learning. Originating from the work of Schön (1983, 1987) who made a distinction between 'research-based theories and techniques' and 'knowing-in-action', it has since been incorporated into many teacher education programs in the English-speaking world. The concept of reflection is most often applied to the pedagogical process – the actual classroom encounter between teacher-learner and learners, and journaling and group discussion are common vehicles for encouraging and formalising such reflection as part of the learning process. I contend, though, that reflection on the teacher's own foreign and second language learning and experiences of language use are much less present in ESOL teacher education in English-speaking countries, and, I argue, have a useful place in developing the ESOL teacher's language awareness.

While Schön's notions were developed in the context of professional learning in several disciplines, Wallace (1991) reconsidered them, and found the distinction between types of knowledge useful but in need of modification for language teachers. He proposed the term "received knowledge" for two reasons: first that not all the 'knowledge' language teacher trainees are expected to acquire is based on research, but is often speculative, and second that it echoes the widely-accepted phrase "received wisdom", meaning that which is commonly accepted without proof or question (Wallace, 1991, p.12). He contrasts 'received knowledge' with 'experiential knowledge' which he defines as "...knowledge-in-action by practice of the profession, and [the trainee] will have had, moreover, the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge-in-action" (Wallace, 1991, p.15).

The idea that reflection on language learning can contribute depth to a teacher-learner's language awareness is not, however, by any means unknown in ESOL teacher education, as we can see from a brief review of the 'structured language learning experience' or SLLE (Ellis, 2006). An SLLE is a single lesson or series of lessons

introduced into a teacher training or development program, for the express purpose of encouraging reflection on the process of language learning. Examples in the literature include Lowe (1987), whose teachers followed a 12-week course in Mandarin, the objective of which was "...to give teachers a chance to renew their connection with language learning, and thereby to become more sensitive to the problems and processes confronting their learners" (Lowe, 1987, p.89). Another example is that a Language Learning Case Study formed part of a postgraduate diploma in Applied Linguistics at Griffith University in Brisbane, and involved students completing a residence in Thailand during which they taught English and learnt Thai (Birch, 1992). Birch concluded that the Language Learning Case Study was an invaluable experience for the trainee teachers, providing them with the opportunity to reflect on such issues as culture shock, expectations of teaching styles, fluency and accuracy, use of the first language in class and learning in a second (as opposed to foreign) language context. Birch (1992) points out that all these issues were familiar to the students from the theory component of the course, but that (p.294):

These notions took on a new significance in the light of their Thailand experience...what the Thai project had done was to add a dimension of personal experience ... with the effect of concentrating their thoughts on the examination of the various facets of common issues.

This comment highlights the distinction between received and experiential knowledge referred to above. Other reports of SLLEs include those of Bailey *et al.* (1996), McDonough (2002) and Suarez (2002) – for a complete list the reader is referred to Ellis (2003). All the SLLEs reviewed were reported as being highly beneficial to teacher trainees, pointing to an increased understanding of the challenge of learning a second language and increased empathy with learners. However they are limited in a number of ways: they tend to be short, ranging from a single lesson to a semester (and in one case a year (Bell, 1995)). They largely involved foreign rather than second language learning, reducing the threat to learners' identity, and all involved beginner-level language learning, thus restricting the language insights possible. They focussed almost exclusively on the 'teacher-as-learner' aspect, and, with the noteworthy exception of

Flowerdew (1998), do not exploit the possibilities of the SLLE to compare and contrast linguistic and extra-linguistic properties of the target language with English or others. They do not, or cannot, provoke insights into higher-level language learning, or into the development of bilingualism. In short they are valuable but limited and artificial compared to the variety and richness of the real language learning experiences on which teachers might be asked to reflect as a way of developing language awareness.

So what kinds of language awareness do teachers of ESOL need? One way of addressing this is to look at the standards developed by the profession for the purposes of establishing desired knowledge, skills and dispositions. The standards document produced by the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) contains 27 standards, of which 9 are considered 'key' and they include the following which are most relevant to a discussion on language awareness (ACTA, 2006):

2. Accomplished TESOL teachers appreciate the pivotal role of language and culture in learning, teaching and socialization

5. Accomplished TESOL teachers understand the linguistic, cultural and contextual factors involved in the development of English as an additional language

The question then becomes: 'what kinds of insights about **language** and **language learning**, arising from what kinds of experiences (formal learning or informal experience: received knowledge or experiential knowledge) are useful for ESOL teachers in the development of these professional standards?'

In other words, how do we ensure that our formal teacher education programs, and ongoing professional development lead to teachers developing the kinds of language awareness considered desirable? I should like to argue for an expanded version of language awareness and introduce a new but related term: *language learning awareness*. Language learning awareness is the understanding of and empathy with the challenges faced by learners of an additional language, and I would argue that it is only achievable through direct experience and reflection upon that experience. This is the rationale behind the Structured Language Learning Experience (SLLE) discussed above. However, the limitations identified in the value of

SLLEs are minimized if it becomes teachers' *real* and *lived* language learning experiences which are the subject of reflection. Thus the other-language repertoires of both native and non-native speaker teachers become important resources for them to reflect upon the nature of language learning.

Successful and high-level acquisition and use of another language provides one set of experiences: unsuccessful, abandoned or low-level acquisition provides another set, but all are useful on which to reflect and hence further develop an understanding of what it means to learn another language (Ellis, 2004). Experience which is distant in time may be less accessible for reflection, and this points to the desirability of language learning as ongoing professional development for TESOL teachers. To take one example of language learning awareness: a teacher who has experience of using learning strategies in their own FL or L2 learning (experiential knowledge) is likely to have a deeper and more informed understanding of their usefulness when combined with formal study of the literature on learning strategies (received knowledge), than a teacher who does not have access to that experiential knowledge.

There are practical strategies which could be adopted to incorporate language learning awareness into ESOL teacher training. The first is to actively recruit those with multilingual skills, both native and non-native speakers, into ESOL teacher training courses. It is well-recognised that non-native speaker teachers can feel marginalized in the profession, being defined by their non-nativeness rather than by their bi/multilingualism (Garvey & Murray, 2004). Another could be to require a certain level of foreign or second language study for entry. Where feasible, teacher trainees lacking such prior study could be given the opportunity to study a language over a minimum period and complete reflective tasks along the lines of the SLLEs discussed earlier in this paper. Ford (2006) showed that teachers without second language learning experience were able to develop greater language awareness through guided cross-linguistic comparative work in relation to expressions of time. Yet another is to incorporate cross-linguistic comparisons into teacher education classes. These could come from materials provided by teacher educators, taking examples from a variety of languages that help raise teacher-trainee awareness of structural, semantic, pragmatic and

cultural differences between languages. Alternatively, they could come from the languages known by trainees. Teacher trainees can explore ways of drawing on their learners' L1 to assist the learning of L2 (O'Grady & Wajs, 1989) if that L1 is shared by the teacher or the teacher has a well-developed awareness of learners' L1. In situations where this is not the case (as is common in Australian multilingual ESOL classes), the teacher can nonetheless encourage learners to think about how certain concepts are expressed in their language and discuss similarities and differences with the class in general, and in same-language small groups.

Once in the workplace, teachers can foster a culture that recognizes and values learners' L1s by encouraging learners to work in L1 groups to discuss L2 tasks. Of course few would support a return to the days of pre-communicative teaching when the L2 was barely used, but the opposite position – that all classroom communication must be in English – is equally questionable, and an unthinking adherence to it can hinder learning, especially for beginning learners (Chau, 2007).

CONCLUSION

The concept of language awareness (LA) has been through many iterations and continues to evolve, but I contend that it arose as a multilingual concept, with an emphasis on the importance of drawing on school students' L1 *and* their growing knowledge of other languages studied in school to develop LA (Hawkins, 1984, 1999; James, 1999). However, conceptualisations of language awareness in the current CELTA teacher-training syllabus and textbooks which are widely used in English-speaking teacher-training contexts seem to have moved in a monolingual direction. The emphasis in such materials is on the teacher's LA in English, and the potential contribution of other languages has largely disappeared from view. The problem with this is that the teacher may be a skilled analyst of English, but, without experience in other languages, may be unable to see English 'from the outside' as a culturally situated artifact. I believe it is now timely to expand our understanding of LA to re-embrace it as a cross-linguistic concept. It is clear from the work of Herdina and Jessner (2002) and Jessner (2006) that speakers of multiple languages benefit from enhanced language awareness. It is

also clear from the SLLE literature and from Ellis (2003, 2004, 2006) that those who have learned an L2 after infancy also have the potential for *language learning awareness* – but only if that experience is accessible and can be reflected upon.

Implications for teacher education programs are that teachers' second language learning experiences should be regarded as a valuable resource for the development of language awareness and language learning awareness. Where such experience is lacking or is too long ago to be reflected upon, ongoing language learning should be encouraged and rewarded as part of professional development, while cross-linguistic comparisons can be introduced by teacher educators into course materials. Lastly, in current debates there are growing calls for re-inclusion of the learners' first language in the ESOL classroom (see, for example, Oguro, 2011; Taylor, 2009), and, if we are to take this seriously, it is time to reconsider the role of other languages as a fertile source of language awareness for both teachers and learners.

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ⁱ The term 'foreign language' has fallen out of favour in current discussion since many languages learned at school are languages of sizeable communities in Australia. Hence the terms 'additional language' or 'language other than English' are preferred. However, in this paper I adhere to Hawkins' (1999) and James' (1999) use of the term.

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