

Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht

Didaktik und Methodik im Bereich Deutsch als Fremdsprache

ISSN 1205-6545 Jahrgang 14, Nummer 2 (Oktober 2009)

Citizenship Testing and Linguistic Integration in Australia and Germany

Martina Möllering

International Studies
Macquarie University
Sydney, Australia
Telephone: +61-2-9850-7012
Fax: +61-2-9850-6057
E-mail: mmolleri@hmn.mq.edu.au

Abstract. This contribution is concerned with German as a Second Language in the context of testing for citizenship requirements. The changes to German citizenship and immigration laws and the introduction of integration courses and citizenship testing in Germany are discussed and compared to the situation in Australia, a country of immigration *par excellence*. The importance of language in the context of citizenship testing in both countries is critically discussed and linked to an examination of a concept of “integration” that does not seem mutually inclusive, but rather assumes linguistic integration on the part of the immigrant aspiring to citizenship rights.

Abstract: Welche Rolle die Sprachbeherrschung, und damit auch die Messung und Bewertung des Sprachstandes sowie der Erwerb von sprachlichen Kompetenzen migrationspolitisch spielen, untersucht dieser Beitrag. Erläutert und diskutiert werden die neueren Entwicklungen der Einwanderungsgesetzgebung in Deutschland und die Funktionen der Orientierungs- und Integrationskurse dabei. Ein Vergleich mit der Situation in Australien, als klassischem Einwanderungsland, und eine kritische Evaluation von Integrationskonzepten im Lichte der Einwanderungspolitik beschließen diesen Beitrag.

Keywords: Language testing, citizenship testing, language competence, Australia, Germany, German as a second language, English as a second language

1. Introduction: Integration and citizenship testing

The political discourse regarding immigration and integration in Germany indicates that integration and citizenship rights are closely tied to one another in the German context. As the report by the Independent Commission on Migration to Germany stated in 2001 (1):

At present, 7.3 million foreigners are living in the Federal Republic of Germany; that is 8.9 percent of the entire population. Almost 40 percent of these people have been living here for more than 15 years. However, up to now, there has been no up-to-date and future-oriented overall concept for the structuring of immigration to Germany and the integration of these immigrants in place – two areas which are inseparably linked.

This statement expresses very clearly the linking of immigration policy on the one hand and migrant policy on the other. In this article, I will discuss the changes to German citizenship and immigration laws and the introduction of integration courses and citizenship testing at the federal level to show how this linkage plays out. The German situation regarding citizenship law and citizenship testing will be compared to Australia's, a classic country of

immigration with a longstanding history of naturalisation policies with regard to its migrant population.¹ The importance of language in the context of citizenship testing in both cases will become evident, a phenomenon that has very recently been described for a wide range of European as well as non-European countries (e.g., Extra, Spotti & van Avermaet 2009; Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero & Stevenson 2009; Slade & Möllering, forthcoming; Wright 2008). More and more countries are specifying language conditions for citizenship: a survey in 2002 showed that four out of 14 countries (29%) had language conditions for citizenship; the 2007 follow-up survey revealed that five years later this number had grown to 11 out of 18 countries (61%) (Extra, Spotti & Van Avermaet 2009: 14).

This emphasis on language competency in the national languages of the respective state can be seen as a move away from policies supporting cultural pluralism to those that are aimed at fostering “integration” into the majority culture. Extra, Spotti & Van Avermaet (2009: 14) describe the function of language as follows:

In many cases across Europe, it is language that fulfils the role of lubricant of the integration machinery and that works as a gatekeeper of the national order. Although differences in national approaches can be observed, it cannot be denied that a proliferation of integration tests and courses is spreading throughout Europe through policy emulation...

2. Australia and Germany: Two ends of the citizenship testing spectrum?

2.1 Citizenship by conferral in Australia

As an immigration country *par excellence*, Australia has had a Citizenship Act regulating the conferral of citizenship to applicants since 1948 (for the historical development of citizenship in Australia see Buck & Frew, forthcoming). The Act was superseded by the Australian Citizenship Bill 2007, later revised by the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing), Bill 2007. The bill sets out the requirements for granting citizenship as follows:

An applicant must:

- be a permanent resident;
- satisfy the residency requirement:
 - for applicants becoming permanent residents before 1 July 2007: they must have been living in Australia for two years as permanent residents in the five years immediately before applying;
 - for applicants becoming permanent residents on or after 1 July 2007: they must have been living in Australia on a valid Australian visa for four years immediately before applying, including one year as permanent residents, and not have been absent for more than one year including no more than 90 days in the year before applying;
- be 18 years or over;
- be of good character;
- be likely to reside, or to continue to reside, in Australia or to maintain a close and continuing association with Australia;
- understand the nature of the application;
- have a basic knowledge of English;
- have adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship;

In order to prove that the last three requirements items on this list have been met, applicants must take a citizenship test if they are between 18 and 60 years of age. The citizenship test is said to be designed to encourage applicants to find out more about life in Australia and what it means to be an Australian citizen. It is supposed to test the applicants’ understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship as well as the rights that they will enjoy once they have become citizens.²

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2.2 Revision of citizenship law in Germany

Whereas Australia has traditionally defined itself as a country of immigration, this is a more recent phenomenon in Germany. Although Germany has had a large intake of immigrants since the late 1950s, the stance ‘*Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland*’ (‘Germany is not a country of immigration’) has been a common one in political discourse, which was up until 2000 confirmed by the legislation regarding immigration and citizenship. Up to 2000, Germany was one of the few European countries that based its citizenship laws primarily on *Ius Sanguinis*, the right to obtain citizenship on the basis of descent, rather than place of birth (*Ius Soli*), and very few migrants obtained German citizenship because a confusing array of residency categories showed no clear path to citizenship (cf. Göktürk et al 2007: 4). German citizenship law was comprehensively revised under the amended Nationality Act (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*) on 1 January 2000 and underwent another revision with the implementation of the Immigration Act (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) on 1 January 2005. When the new Immigration Act took effect in 2005, Germany became officially a country of immigration, which it had been *de facto* since the late 50s.

Under the old legislation, at least one parent had to be a German citizen for a child to acquire citizenship by birth. As of 1 January 2000, a child born in Germany to non-German parents automatically receives German citizenship at birth if at least one parent has lived legally in Germany for at least eight years and has the right to permanent residence. Under the new legislation, children can keep dual citizenship – the German one and the nationality of their parents – but only up to the age of 23. If the person chooses German citizenship at that age, he or she must give up their foreign citizenship, unless it is impossible or unreasonable to do so. If he or she chooses the foreign citizenship, they lose their German citizenship. By the end of 2006, 270,352 children of non-German parents had received German citizenship in addition to that of their parents (Federal Ministry of the Interior, April 2008, 112); but how many will retain it when they have to decide between the two at age 23 is yet to be seen (see also Faist 2007 and Green 2005).

The Nationality Act (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*) as last amended by the Act to Implement Residence- and Asylum-Related Directives of the European Union of 19 August 2007, which entered into force on 28 August 2008 spells out the requirements that an applicant has to fulfil. Immigrants are now eligible for naturalization after eight years of habitual residence in Germany if they have permanent residence status and if they meet the relevant conditions, instead of the fifteen years previously required. They have to declare their commitment to the “free democratic constitutional system enshrined in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany” and affirm that they do not pursue or support any activities opposed to it. Furthermore, they have to be able to support themselves and their family financially, and they cannot have been convicted of a crime. The Act further specifies that an applicant for citizenship must have an “adequate knowledge of German” and knowledge of the legal system, the society and the living conditions in Germany. Since September 2008, this knowledge has been tested in a formal citizenship test.

3. Current citizenship testing regimes

3.1 The introduction of citizenship testing in Australia and the Citizenship Test Review Committee

On 11 December 2006, the Australian Government declared that it would be introducing a formal citizenship test.³ The Australian Citizenship Act (2007) was introduced, followed by the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill (2007), which stated that the test was to ascertain that the applicants understand their application and have a basic knowledge of English and an adequate knowledge of Australia and Australian citizenship. (Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill 2007, Section 21(2)).

The test was introduced on 1 October 2007, and a resource booklet, *Becoming an Australian Citizen*, was published in November 2007. The booklet, 46 pages long, contains all information that might appear in the 20 questions of the actual multiple-choice test. Although the test must be taken in English, the resource booklet is available in 29 community languages. Sample test questions are available in the resource booklet, and a five-question practice test can be accessed on the Citizenship Test website, but applicants do not have access to all possible test questions – a fact that has been much criticised. The test is administered in a computer-based multiple-choice

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format. It is comprised of 20 items drawn at random from a pool of 200 questions. The pass mark is currently set at 60%, but will be increased to 75%, following a Government-commissioned review. Applicants with low levels of English literacy may apply for special assistance, including access to staff to read aloud the test questions.⁴

In November 2007, a new Labour government under Kevin Rudd as prime minister came to power in Australia, and within five months, the new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, announced the formation of an independent committee to review the citizenship test. The brief for the Australian Citizenship Test Review Committee – which has been criticised for not including an expert in testing methodology, in particular in language testing (McNamara 2009) – was, quite clearly, to examine the operation and effectiveness of the current testing regime, with the aim to amend and improve it rather than to question the need for a formal citizenship testing regime altogether:

The Rudd Government believes that a citizenship test can play a valuable role in both encouraging people to find out more about our great nation as well as understanding the responsibilities and privileges which being an Australian citizen brings... A test is also a useful mechanism for determining whether a person meets the general legal requirements for becoming an Australian – including whether they possess a basic knowledge of the English language. (Evans 2008)

The Australian Citizenship Test Review Committee carried out cross-national consultations for a period of six months with a wide range of stakeholders: representatives of government and non-government organizations, business and community groups and individuals directly affected by the citizenship test, such as refugees and migrants admitted on humanitarian grounds. The final document, accompanied by the Government's responses to the report, was made public in late November 2008. The key findings reached in the cross-national consultations and written submissions were unanimous and supported the vast body of criticism of the test voiced from the early stages of its proposal through to its implementation in October 2007:

- Citizenship is a valued and important concept and is a key factor in nation building. Its acquisition should be encouraged and facilitated by government.
- The purpose of any citizenship test should be to assess whether a person who wants to become a citizen is conscious of the main responsibilities underpinning the Citizenship Pledge of Commitment.
- The present test is flawed, intimidating to some and discriminatory. It needs substantial reform.
- The legislative requirements for a “basic knowledge of the English language” and an adequate knowledge of Australia and the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship” require definition before a revised and more appropriate test can be established.
- Alternative and improved education pathways to acquire citizenship need to be established for different people seeking citizenship.
- The special situation of refugee and humanitarian entrants and other disadvantaged and vulnerable people seeking citizenship must be addressed.
- The test questions (at present confidential) should be published in any revised test.
- The contents of the resource book should contain relevant, clearly defined testable information.
- The resource book should be re-written in basic English by professional educators.

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- There should be a more coordinated whole-of-government approach to civics and citizenship policy and programs. (*Australian Citizenship Review Report*, henceforth *Report*, 2008: 3)

A set of major recommendations centres around the Committee's proposal to focus the contents of the test on the Pledge of Commitment, which applicants for Australian citizenship have to make at the conferral ceremony. The Pledge reads as follows:

From this time forward, (under God)*,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
Whose democratic beliefs I share,
Whose rights and liberties I respect,
And whose laws I will uphold and obey.

*A person may choose whether or not to use the words "under God".

The Committee recommended that the three notions represented in the pledge – democratic beliefs, responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship and the requirement to uphold and obey the laws of Australia – be used to develop a new catalogue of testable material (*Report*, 2008: 23-24).

3.2 The introduction of citizenship testing in Germany

The changes to German citizenship law were not without controversy, and in 2000 *Ausländerpolitik* (policy on foreigners) was brought to the fore as a key concern in the forthcoming elections, starting what has become known as the *Leitkulturdebatte*. The term *Leitkultur* – which can be literally translated as “guiding culture” or “leading culture”, but in this political debate is often taken to mean “core culture” – goes back to Bassam Tibi (1998, 2000) who used the term to summarize a set of norms and values characterizing the European cultural community (Pautz, 2005: 43). From 2000 on, the term became a key feature of the political debate surrounding immigration and integration, and it took on connotations of cultural assimilation and a monocultural vision of German society (cf. Stevenson & Schanze 2009).

The *Leitkulturdebatte* has had a strong impact on the discussion about citizenship tests in Germany. The first models for such testing were developed in the CDU/CSU-governed states of Hessen (*Leitfaden Wissen und Werte*, 2006) and Baden-Württemberg (*Gesprächsleitfaden für Einwanderungsbehörden*, 2006). These guidelines for questions to be asked of applicants for citizenship not only contained detailed questions on German geography, history and law, but also on embedded cultural values. They were clearly aimed at immigrants of Muslim faith who are assumed to have divergent value systems regarding the status and treatment of women, for example. The introduction of such guidelines at the federal level was hotly debated, very much along party lines (*Spiegel online*, 23 March 2006), with the strong opposition by the SPD and the Greens slowly softening (*Spiegel online*, 24 and 26 March 2006). The result was the introduction of a compulsory integration course (*Orientierungskurs*) of (originally) 30 hours duration, now 45 hours, focusing on German language and law, history and culture. The integration course was to be attended by all future applicants for citizenship and presupposed an intermediate level of German language skills (Level B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR). The course was funded by the Government; applicants for citizenship had to contribute only one Euro per class, the same as for the language classes offered, with a maximum of 600 hours leading up to level B1.

The former decision to refrain from formal testing at a national level was revoked and a formal citizenship test was introduced in all German states from 1 September 2008 on, based on an amendment to the Nationality Act in 2007. The tests are administered by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, *BAMF*) on behalf of the German *Länder* and in conjunction with adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) which serve as test centres. The test is a paper-based multiple choice test and consists of 33 questions, of which the applicant needs to answer 17 correctly in order to pass. The questions are to be answered within 60 minutes and the test papers are then marked centrally. Of the 33 questions on the test, 30 are related to three areas of civic knowledge, which the description of the test on the *BAMF* website outlines as: “Living in a Democracy”,

“History and Responsibility” and “People and Society”. Three test questions relate to the *Land* in which the test is taken. The database with all 300 general and 10 *Länder*-related questions is available to applicants via the web pages of the Federal Ministry of the Interior as a printable document. Applicants can also prepare for the test through an interactive online sample test or via an interactive questionnaire that provides access to and feedback on all 300 possible general questions.

4. The role of language in citizenship testing regimes

4.1 Defining “basic knowledge of the English language” in the Australian context

Although the Australian Citizenship Act of 2007 states that as a requirement for obtaining citizenship through conferral a “basic knowledge of English language” is needed it does not provide a legal definition of the term. Since 2007, the successful completion of the citizenship test has been taken to prove the applicant’s fulfilment of the language requirement. A large number of submissions⁵ to the Review Committee have pointed to the discrepancy between the level of English described in the legislation as “basic” and the language of the test and resource booklet. The level of English used in the test exceeds the level of English referred to as “basic“, and the English used in the resource booklet designed to prepare the applicants for the test implies language skills higher than “basic”, as shown by Piller & McNamara (2007) based on a lexical analysis of the resource booklet. They argue that “... the resource booklet *Becoming an Australian Citizen* is certainly out of the reach of a basic user of English and would present difficulties for many native speakers of English with limited education and/or limited familiarity with texts of this type.” (1)

The Citizenship Review Committee proposed that a “basic” knowledge of the English language be understood to mean “a sufficient knowledge of English to be able to exist independently in the wider Australian community”. The Committee likens this level of knowledge to level A1/A2 in the Common European Framework of Reference, for which the general descriptors read as follows:

A1: Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help

A2: Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need

The Committee also recommended that the level of English knowledge defined as “sufficient” be applied to the re-writing and development of the resources supporting the applicants’ preparation for the citizenship test. It further suggested that English testing be separated from other parts of testing for citizenship, if required, and to this effect suggested a pathways model.

Concern about the equity and fairness of the current test has been a major issue emerging from the submissions to the Review Committee (*Report*, 2008: 26). A first evaluation of the testing regime⁶ shows that applicants who entered Australia as refugees, rather than as skilled migrants or through the family stream, have the lowest pass rates for the test (84% versus 99% in the skill stream and 95% in the family stream). The report also points out that there has been an overall decrease in the number of applications for citizenship since the introduction of the test.

With the aim of improving “the unduly onerous testing regime” (*Report*, 2008: 26), the Committee proposed to introduce a system of citizenship education programs in which the test – and the preparation for it – takes into account the needs of the applicants, in particular those of disadvantaged groups. The Committee proposed three

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alternative pathways for obtaining citizenship that would represent a less exclusionary process of assessment and would consider the variety of literacy skills, life experiences and personal circumstances of the candidates (*Report*, 2008: 28).

The government agreed with the Committee's assessment of the mismatch between the language requirement as "basic" English and the reality of the current test and resource booklet. It accepted the Committee's recommended definition of "basic" English and it committed to redeveloping the resource book and test questions in plain English. It also endorsed the development of a citizenship course as an alternative pathway to citizenship for refugees and disadvantaged or vulnerable migrants, stating that this would include "people who understand English but whose level of literacy does not allow them to undertake a formal computer-based test" (*Government Response*, 2008: 3). It did not agree, however, with the Committee's recommendation to set up a pathway that provides for a citizenship education program in languages other than English for disadvantaged applicants. The Committee had recommended that for candidates participating in this pathway program, testing a basic knowledge of English language be separated from testing an adequate knowledge of Australia and testing the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship. The assessment relating to this pathway would have consisted of a) a Certificate of Participation, proving the fulfilment of the legislative requirement to have an adequate knowledge of Australia and of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship, and b) an oral interview in English with a citizenship referee to assess the basic knowledge of English language required. Questions for the language interview would have come from a bank of questions separate from the standard test and would have focused on testing a level of English required from the candidate to be able to exist independently in the wider Australian community.

Arguing that "migrants with better English are more successful at settling and finding employment" (*Government Response*, 2008: 4) the Government did not accept this recommendation.

4.2 "An adequate knowledge of German" – citizenship and integration

The German Nationality Act sets out that an applicant for citizenship has to have an "adequate knowledge of German", which it defines as follows:

The conditions specified in sub-section 1, sentence 1, no. 6 are fulfilled if the foreigner passes the oral and written language examinations leading to the *Zertifikat Deutsch* (equivalent of level B 1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Where a minor child is under 16 years of age at the time of naturalization the conditions of sub-section 1, sentence 1, no. 6 shall be fulfilled if the child demonstrates age-appropriate language skills. (Nationality Act, Section 10/4)

Applicants can show that they have met the language requirement by providing one of the following types of documentation:

- successful attendance of an integration course by presenting a certificate issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees or the successful completion of a language course as part of an integration course, as certified by BAMF (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*);
- completion of the *Zertifikat Deutsch* (equivalent of level B 1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) or above;
- four years of successful schooling in German;
- a school certificate from German school;
- having been admitted to Year 10 of a German school (*Realschule*, *Gymnasium* or *Gesamtschule*);
- a university degree from German-speaking university;

- completed vocational training.

In case none of these can be provided, an applicant for citizenship may be asked to take a language test at an adult education centre (*Volkshochschule*). Applicants can be exempted from having to prove their German language skills in case of illness or disability or due to their age.

Van Avermaet (2009), in a discussion of testing regimes across Europe, describes a range of required levels of language proficiency for immigration and entry (23-25) as well as in the context of integration and residency policies (27-28). Germany's requirement for language proficiency at level B1 sits at the high end in comparison to the countries included in his study.⁷ The general descriptor for Level B1, which is labelled the 'Threshold' level and is the third of six defined levels, reads as follows:

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise when travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dream, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

A closer look at the different language skills and the abilities described at level B1 lists the following language and communication skills. The learner can:

<i>Reading</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Spoken Interaction</i>	<i>Spoken Production</i>
>understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language.	>understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. >understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest, when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	>write simple connected text on topics which are familiar, or of personal interest. >write personal letters describing experiences and impressions, as well as semi-formal letters and formal letters, such as enquiries or complaints.	>deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. >enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	>connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. >briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. >narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe reactions and interpretations.

The major role that is accorded to German language skills in the naturalization process becomes clear when looking at the provisions for a reduction of the required eight years of residence for those applicants demonstrating strong efforts at integration (Section 10/3):

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This qualifying period may be reduced to six years if the foreigner has made outstanding efforts at integration exceeding the requirements under sub-section 1, sentence 1, no. 6, **especially if he or she can demonstrate his or her command of the German language.** (my emphasis)

The shift in citizenship legislation to include naturalization on the basis of *Ius Soli* is based on the shift in perception of the role of immigration in the German context. The report of the Independent Commission on Migration to Germany states (2001: 1):

Germany needs immigrants. An overall plan defining clear goals is needed to structure immigration to Germany as well as integration: in order to meet its humanitarian responsibilities, to contribute to the safeguarding of economic prosperity, to improve the co-existence of Germans and immigrants to Germany as well as to foster integration.

The German Government has allocated substantial amounts of funding to what it perceives to be a way of fostering integration: the introduction of so-called integration courses:

The main thrust of state integration measures and efforts is an integration course **consisting of a language course aimed at giving participants a good command of German** together with an orientation course in which immigrants learn about the German legal system, history and culture. First and foremost the integration course aims to smooth the integration of immigrants into German society by enabling them to participate in German social life and giving them the same opportunities as their fellow citizens. (*Concept for a nation-wide integration course*, October 2005, 4)

These integration courses were implemented at the federal level in 2005 and initially funded with 208 million Euro. They consist of two components: a) language courses of up to 600 units (45 minutes each) leading to the CEFR level B1 in a modular structure, so that, ideally, learners can choose an entry point in correspondence with their existing language skills, and b) an orientation course that presupposes B1 language skills and aims at teaching civic knowledge, now to be tested in the citizenship test. The orientation courses, which are based on a curriculum set nationally, have been extended from 30 to 45 units' duration.

5. Discussion

Piller (2001: 268) stated in her contribution on the relationship between naturalization language testing and ideologies of national identity and citizenship, that “Germany espouses a national ideology in which citizenship cannot be divided from national identity”, and Coulmas, cited in the same article (1995 in Piller, 2001), sees the continued vitality of linguistic nationalism confirmed through the act of German reunification where the principle of “one nation – one language” was accepted without question. In the current citizenship regime, language seems to continue to play an identity-building role. Where the Nationality Act makes reference to integration, it is the German language that is identified as the strongest marker of successful integration: special provision is made for an early application to citizenship – after six or seven instead of eight years of residence in Germany – where “the foreigner has made outstanding efforts at integration [...] especially if he or she can demonstrate his or her command of the German language” (*Nationality Act*, Section 10/13). Civic knowledge – as it is taught in the orientation course and tested in the citizenship test – assumes a sufficient level of language proficiency (B1, CEFR) without which the course materials and test questions cannot be understood.⁸

It is therefore not surprising that the German government has committed a substantial amount of funding to the integration courses, which are, in the main, language courses (600 out of 645 units), and that the financial contribution for immigrants taking these courses is minimal and can be waived upon application if the applicant proves that she or he does not have the financial means to pay (cf. Van Avermaet, 2009 for a range of other European countries). Figures for 2008 released by BAMF refer to about half a million migrants who have taken an integration course (BAMF 2009) since their introduction in 2005. The curriculum for the integration courses, however, has been heavily criticised. Krumm (2007: 170) talks about a “*Rückfall in die Steinzeitdidaktik*”, condemning the fact that although the concept for the integration courses makes reference to learner-appropriate course design and

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the resulting provision for differentiated learning and teaching approaches, the differentiation, in reality, is limited to the pace of progression. He states (Krumm 2007: 170-171):

... will man ein ernsthaft integrationsorientiertes Sprachangebot für MigrantInnen erarbeiten, so muss man den Prozess der Curriculumentwicklung mit einer differenzierten Bestandsaufnahme, einer Untersuchung der Sprachlerngeschichten, und der Lebens- und Lernkontexte der MigrantInnen beginnen, daraus im Sinne Barkowskis Konsequenzen für flexible Sprachvermittlungsmodelle ableiten, denen sich dann auch differenzierte Formen des Nachweises des Lernerfolgs zuordnen ließen. Stattdessen aber läuft der Prozess genau umgekehrt: das Abschlussniveau, der Stundenrahmen, sogar die zugelassenen Lehrwerke stehen längst fest: eine Bedarfserhebung sowie eine Curriculumentwicklung werden nachgeschoben und dienen lediglich einer nachträglichen Legitimierung dessen, was bereits vorher feststand....

Another criticism relates to the use of the CEFR in this context. Krumm (2007: 172) uses the following subtitle: *“Der gemeinsame europäische Referenzrahmen: (k)eine Messlatte, über die MigrantInnen stolpern (sollen)”*, and he and others criticise the fact that the common European Framework of Reference for Languages has been designed for the context of learning, teaching and assessing foreign language skills and not for the context of second language learning. Extra, Spotti & Van Avermaet (2009: 17) have remarked:

The CEFR descriptors at the lower levels clearly imply an already existing basic knowledge and literacy. This is problematic when they are used for integration and citizenship programmes and for tests where a large part of the target group are either functionally illiterate or have low literacy skills. The CEFR descriptors at higher levels presuppose higher levels of education. Lower- and semi-skilled people who have no higher education background or do not study at a higher level are not part of the target group.

Gogolin and Neumann (2008) argue that the introduction of integration courses with a very strong focus on language skills – directed at newcomers as well as those who have been living in Germany for a long period of time – is to be seen as an attempt to make up for the lack of integration measures in the past.⁹ In the German context, then, integration is largely measured in accordance with a degree of linguistic integration, as very clearly indicated in the National Integration Plan issued by the Government in 2007, which states that “language is the prerequisite for integration” (*“Sprache ist die Voraussetzung für Integration”*) (*Nationaler Integrationsplan*, 2007: 16). This definition of integration has been greatly criticized as “social integration that depends on a unilateral effort of the incoming minority to learn the “national” language of the state” (Stevenson & Mar-Molinero 2006), and it has been referred to as a societal view of integration that assumes a *Bringschuld der Zuwandernden* (Gogolin and Neumann, 2008: 39) – a duty that migrants owe to the receiving country.

But the example of Australia as a classic immigration country shows that this use of the word “integration” as not mutually inclusive is by no means limited to European nation states like Germany. The refusal of the Australian government to accept a pathway to citizenship that would make allowance for use of the migrants’ languages in a citizenship testing regime clearly shows the limits of the consultative process that was to be the base of the Australian Citizenship Review. “Migrants with better English are more successful at settling and finding employment” (*Government Response*, 2008: 4): the insistence on English language skills mirrors that of other countries with citizenship testing regimes: while the required level is set lower than in, for example, Germany (A1/2 versus B1, CEFR) it is not altogether negotiable. This might be an indication of the current government’s underlying view to hold on to a testing regime that serves its purpose not only in the attempt to “integrate” prospective citizens, but to also assure the other citizens of the suitability of the newcomers. As Goot and Watson (forthcoming) show, based on a series of national surveys from 1995 to 2003, there is significant agreement that “speaking English” is one of the factors that makes someone “truly Australian”, i.e., in the eyes of many Australians “speaking English” is a necessary prerequisite for being part of the Australian nation. Also of interest here is Lloyd Cox’ (forthcoming) concept of “identity crisis”, which he defines as the “collective apprehension by a named population about what distinguishes it from other named populations” – in most citizenship testing regimes discussed recently (e.g. Extra, Spotti & van Avermaet 2009; Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero & Stevenson 2009, Slade & Möllering, forthcoming), proficiency in the “native language” plays a crucial role in being admitted to citizenship.

Martina Möllering, Citizenship Testing and Linguistic Integration in Australia and Germany. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 14: 2, 13-27. Abrufbar unter <http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-14-2/beitrag/Moellering.pdf>.

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Anmerkungen

¹ A more in-depth discussion of the developments in Germany and the review of the Australian citizenship testing regime can be found in Möllering (forthcoming) and Möllering & Silaghi (forthcoming).

² Australian Government – Department of Immigration and Citizenship. http://www.citizenship.gov.au/applying/how_to_apply/migrant_perm_res/. Accessed on 19 September 2009.

³ For a discussion of the debate surrounding the introduction of the test see Cox (forthcoming) and Farrell (forthcoming).

⁴ The review of citizenship testing has shown that this option has only been taken up by very few applicants.

⁵ Input received from FECCA (Federation of Ethnic communities Councils' of Australia), Petro Georgiou, AMEP (ACT) (Adult Migrant English Program), Davidson and Court (ESL Teachers), Piller and McNamara.

⁶ *Australian Citizenship Test Snapshot Report, July 2009*. http://www.citizenship.gov.au/_pdf/citz-test-snapshot-report-jun09.pdf. Accessed on 31 August 2009.

⁷ The European countries involved in his comparative study of immigration policies are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁸ Whether the bank of 300 test questions that serve as a basis for each individual test are in fact situated at the B1 level in terms of their semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features would warrant a closer linguistic analysis.

⁹ Es ist in das politische Bewusstsein gerückt, dass die lange Phase der Enthaltbarkeit bei der Steuerung und Gestaltung von Zuwanderung zu einigem Nachholbedarf in der Förderung von Integrationsprozessen geführt hat. Dass die Nachsteuerung vorrangig im sprachlichen Bereich gesehen wird, wird etwa daran kenntlich, dass im Zuwanderungsgesetz "Integrationskurse" für neu Einwandernde ebenso wie für solche Menschen vorgesehen sind, die schon lange in Deutschland leben. (Gogolin & Neumann, 2008, 48)