

South Asian Languages in Higher Education: An Exploration of Implementation of Title VI of the Higher Education Act

Geeta A. Aneja

University of Pennsylvania

Since the passing of Title VI of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, the notion of national need has permeated discourse surrounding foreign language education in the United States. Language programs are supposedly designed to enable students to develop communicative competence sophisticated enough to conduct international negotiations in critically needed languages. However, in practice, few students attain even rudimentary language ability. This paper explores the historical foundations of Title VI, its manifestation in South Asian language programs in three major U.S. universities, and some of its implications for program construction.

Multilingualism and Title VI

Since the aftermath of World War II, overt U.S. policy has expressed the relevance of foreign language competence to national security. The Departments of Defense, State, Commerce, and Education, and every branch of the military declared needs for speakers of some 78 uncommonly taught languages (U.S. Department of Education Consultation, 2012). However, despite such lofty discourse, the United States is notorious for the inadequacy of its public language programs (Lambert, 1987). The majority of the federal institutions listed above conduct their language training independently of public systems, either in branch-specific intensive institutes such as the Foreign Service Institute and the Defense Language Institute, or through private companies that provide personalized language training. Such patterns call into question the purpose and effectiveness of federally funded university-based language initiatives.

This paper explores how the motivations and overt goals of Title VI of the Higher Education Act¹ are realized at the institutional and classroom levels of policy implementation for South Asian languages. I first discuss the roots of Title VI as a matter of national security and follow it through its legal history. I then discuss Title VI as language policy and the frameworks relevant to analysis of its implementation. Following an examination of the language departments it sanctions through three major U.S. universities (University of Texas, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and University of Pennsylvania), I discuss literature that has sought to evaluate these

¹ Title VI was originally under the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. In 1965, Title VI of the NDEA became Title VI of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965.

programs, and conclude with a brief description of further questions and issues in education of Least Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs).

A Brief History of Title VI

Since the United States emerged as an international power in the late 19th century, every crisis or war has brought a new appreciation for the relevance of what Merckx calls *foreign area competence*, defined as a comprehensive familiarity with an area's history, culture, and social values in addition to language (Merckx, 2010). Merckx observes that prior to World War II, civilians received such exposure primarily via government-funded education programs in Western European or Classical languages. Some institutions of higher education offered specialized programs in areas considered more exotic, but for the most part exploring such distant corners of the globe was left to NGOs and missionaries. At the time, Military Intelligence Divisions and the Office of Strategic Services recruited and trained their own specialists, largely independently of initiatives in the public sectors. Only after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, when the War Department realized it had to fight a two-front war without personnel with necessary foreign area competence, did the military begin to draw upon the resources of university faculty. While these wartime necessities were funded by the military rather than as federal education initiatives, they set a precedent for future university-government collaboration for cultivating foreign language and area studies competence to meet national needs (Merckx, 2010).

In 1958, shortly after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I, Congress passed the first large-scale policy for U.S. language education: The National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The NDEA's purpose was to "ensure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States" (OPE, 2011). Title VI was its "Language Development" section, drawing funding from the U.S. Department of Defense as well as the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller foundations (Brown, 1961). Title VI focused on four areas: (1) language and area centers; (2) fellowships for language study; (3) support for research; (4) institutes for training language teachers and program administrators (Merckx, 2010; NDEA, 1958). Even though subsequent reincarnations of Title VI employed a discourse of economic progress rather than defense, the notion of national or critical need for certain LCTLs remains apparent (Lambert, 1991).

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson proposed the International Education Act (IEA) to broaden the base of U.S. international education and promote international collaboration. Though the act was never funded due to the rising costs of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Merckx, 2010), several of its aspects were incorporated into subsequent ratifications of Title VI: (1) citizen education; (2) international business education; (3) internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum; (4) language research; and (5) overseas research centers (Scarfo, 1998). Title VI was rejuvenated in 1980, after a decade-long stagnancy in the 1970s and near elimination under the Nixon administration, with the creation of a cabinet-level Department of Education. At that time, Title VI of the NDEA became Title VI of the Higher Education Act (HEA), originally passed in 1965. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the United States once again called for language competence relevant to intelligence for what President Bush called "The Global War on Terror"

(Wiley, 2010). Title VI funding was briefly increased to provide university students access to critical needs languages, only to be slashed almost in half under the Obama administration.

Since its inception, Title VI has been revised and reauthorized ten times, most recently in 2008, making it the longest running public federal foreign language support program in U.S. history (Moore, 1994). Despite threats of budget cuts, especially in peacetime, the program has persisted and matured through the support of the academic and intelligence communities (Merkx, 2010; Scarfo, 1998). Though initially Title VI was focused on developing linguistic competencies, it has grown to provide the bulk of the funding for foreign language education and research overseas.

The Language Policy Onion and Title VI Implementation

This analysis and discussion of Title VI has so far been entirely at the national level and has only addressed general concerns for LCTL education. However, overt national policy is rarely representative of its implementation (Shohamy, 2006). Spolsky (2004) identifies three components of a more comprehensive understanding of language policy: beliefs, management, and practice. He defines *beliefs* as basic ideologies on which the *management* or overt policy is founded. *Practice* considers language ecology and ground-level enactments within the spaces the management creates. Spolsky (2004) also urges policy analysts to remember that “the real policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in management” (p. 222). It is with this perspective that I turn now to the levels of Title VI’s implementation.

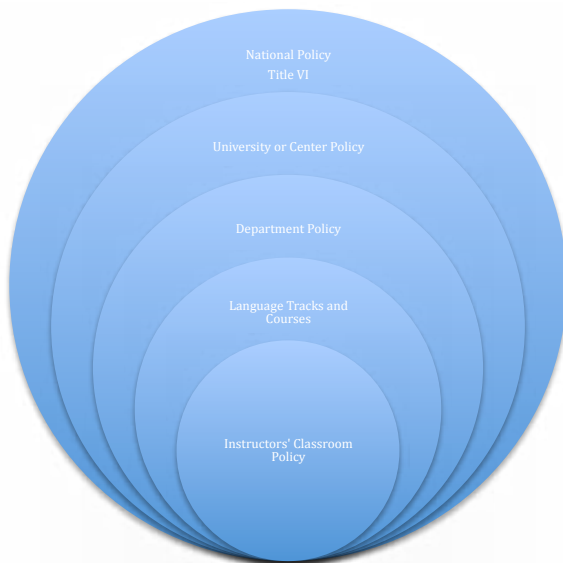


Figure 1. The Title VI Policy Onion

Ricento and Hornberger (1996) pose the metaphor of an onion to present “a schema of agents, levels, and processes of language planning and policy (LPP) in terms of layers that together make up the LPP whole and that affect and interact with

each other to varying degrees” (p. 408). Within this onion, each layer “permeates and is permeated by others” (p. 408). The outermost layers of the onion consist of “broad language policy objectives articulated in legislation or high court rulings at the national level” (p. 409). These objectives are modified and reinterpreted at every subsequent level of policy implementation. Since states have relatively little influence on LCTL policy in higher education, the institutional level follows, which consists of universities and large-scale national initiatives such as National Resource Centers, Language Resource Centers, and international institutes for language study. Universities support language and area studies departments, which in turn fund individual language tracks and courses. Instructors then negotiate their departments’ standards with their personal philosophies of pedagogy as well as their students’ needs. Following Spolsky’s (2004) terminology, policy makers interpret and negotiate Title VI’s national management with their own beliefs and limitations in order to practice the allocation of resources within their jurisdiction (Fishman, 1979; Spolsky, 2004). One layer’s practice generally becomes the subsequent layer’s management, though there is some bottom-up influence such as students’ end-of-semester feedback and evaluations.

This paper seeks to explore how the overt, explicit statements of Title VI as United States federal law create spaces at smaller levels of the onion for the implementation of cultivation programs (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). I also consider how such programs negotiate national policies with their students’ individual needs. With that, I will turn to the place of South Asian languages² within Title VI as well as their changing role in American social infrastructure.

The Case of South Asia: History and Problems

The United States has been aware of the relevance of university-based South Asian language and area studies at least since the early 1950s, when the Joint Committee on Southern Asia published a survey of South Asian studies scholars in the United States. At the time, only University of California, Berkeley, Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania housed South Asia Studies (SAS) departments (Merkx, 2010). The few students from other universities who were interested in the area either enrolled in courses at these three schools or studied overseas in England, Germany, or India (Merkx, 2010). Fulbright Scholar grants for India and Pakistan, which funded scholars’ travel for research in the area, had just been created, funded by the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations.

From then until the two most recent budget cycles (2011-2012), SAS grew by leaps and bounds. The wealth of government resources for language and area studies fostered an academic and cultural interest in the subcontinent. As of 2010, Title VI funded over a dozen programs to fill the United States’ language need. However, in the 2011 and 2012 budget cycles, Title VI funding was slashed almost in half. As a result, some South Asian languages with particularly low enrollment have been removed entirely while others have been forced to consolidate resources and combine levels (Flax, 2012; J. Chavez, personal communication, November 8, 2012; <http://sasli.wisc.edu>). The irony of these cuts is their circular progression: low enrollment causes budget cuts, which reduces the resources and quality of

² Although the UN Geoscheme includes Afghanistan and Iran as part of South Asia, because most language departments classify them as ‘Middle East’ I will do the same.

instruction (e.g., by forcing departments to place high-advanced and low-beginner students in the same class led by an instructor who is unprepared to teach a multi-level class), which makes classes less appealing to students, further decreasing enrollment. Departments and students suffer. If the nationalistic discourse of a language need is valid, then there may ultimately be national or international repercussions of these cuts (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Despite the stark national need for speakers of South Asian languages and the almost unanimous agreement among federal agencies that the United States is in critical need of linguistic capital (U.S. Department of Education, 2012), university-based programs are being denied the funding necessary to effectively train fluent speakers, language instructors, and area scholars. The Department of Defense and Department of State in particular have identified the inadequacy of students' language proficiency from the U.S. academic sector as a primary reason for budget cuts (Lambert 1987, 1994a, 1994b). Because these departments and the U.S. military must run their own language institutes to supplement Title VI initiatives, Lambert (1987, 1994a, 1994b) argues that Title VI is not accomplishing its stated goal of contributing to the national need for language and area specialists and that funding of academic language tracks squanders resources that could be more effectively used elsewhere.

Therefore, the question arises: why are Title VI Language Resource Centers and National Foreign Language Resource Centers (NFLRCs) unable to adequately train students for real-world use of South Asian languages? At least two phenomena contribute to this shortcoming: low initial enrollment in South Asian languages, and a 50% attrition rate between language levels. Approximately 91% of university-level foreign language enrollment is concentrated in Western European languages (Starr, 1994), leaving 9% who study uncommonly taught languages. Of those studying uncommonly taught languages, 98.9% study one of the ten most commonly taught non-Western languages, which include Chinese, Arabic, and Korean, but no South Asian languages. Thus, less than 0.1% of the total number of foreign language students study South Asian languages or other LCTLs. Thus, nation-wide enrollment in most South Asian languages is a miniscule fraction of enrollment even in other uncommonly taught languages. Together with what Lambert (1994b) calls the *Natural Law of 50 Percent Attrition*, low enrollment produces the shortage of South Asia language and area specialists. The Natural Law of 50 Percent Attrition is Lambert's observation that there is an almost universal 50% decrease in enrollment between levels of any given foreign language in a given institution; a language with 100 beginning students will have roughly 50 intermediate students and roughly 25 advanced students. For widely taught foreign languages such as Spanish, French, and German, this 50% attrition rate is expected and even encouraged. However, when the same attrition rate manifests in South Asian language classrooms, which might begin with just a dozen students, advanced courses may have just a few students enrolled, if they are offered at all. Without advanced courses, students cannot be expected to develop the higher-order communicative skills sought by various federal departments. Lambert observes repeatedly that the most pressing issues in South Asian language education are structural, not pedagogical (1994a, 1994b, 1999), though structural values manifest themselves in pedagogy.

Thus, it seems that there are at least two solutions: to increase enrollment in the beginning levels and thus mitigate the impact of the 50% attrition rate, or to isolate

and resolve the issues contributing to attrition. Lambert has identified a number of such contributing factors, including the outdated pedagogical strategies used by teachers who often have little training in language teaching (Lambert, 1989), poorly defined policy goals (Lambert, 1987), the “many many separate initiatives afoot” in both the public and private sectors (Lambert, 1987, p. 11), and the lack of vocational benefit from foreign language fluency (Lambert, 1990a).

South Asian Languages as Heritage Languages

An additional consideration has until recently been relatively neglected in the literature: the changing demographics of learners of South Asian languages. Gambhir (2008) notes that Hindi in particular and South Asian languages in general have experienced a paradigm shift since the early 1980s. Before then, most students in South Asian language classrooms had little to no prior exposure to Indian languages or cultures. Now, the vast majority of undergraduate enrollees have some level of prior exposure, though the nature of that exposure varies greatly from student to student. This shift most likely resulted from increases in Indian immigration to the United States, Britain, and other English-speaking countries in the aftermath of World War II and India’s partition in 1947 (Gambhir, 2008; Khadria, 1991). While some were political refugees, many immigrants were highly educated and came to pursue respected careers in the United States. In the 1970s and 1980s, waves of students and young professionals continued to immigrate to the United States.

Now, three decades later, these immigrants’ children are university and graduate students themselves and comprise the bulk of enrollment in South Asian language courses (Gambhir, 2008). Rather than the prototypical learner being a Caucasian graduate student aspiring to conduct research in South Asia or gain government employment, as was the case prior to the mid-1970s (Gambhir, 2008), the prototypical learner now is a second-generation Asian American undergraduate pursuing language study for reasons including watching Hindi films, communicating with family, developing literacy skills, fulfilling language requirements, and being able to travel and conduct business (Gambhir, 2008). If programs expect to maintain or increase enrollment and ultimately enable their students to communicate in their target languages, then their courses must meet students’ needs. Furthermore, training these students to build on the linguistic and cultural resources they already possess may be more efficient than constructing academic registers that are not necessarily representative of natural language use. Not utilizing students’ home knowledge base in the classroom increases both the resource investment of language departments and the frustration of the learner. On the contrary, creating spaces for students’ existing linguistic resources in the classroom may increase student motivation, decrease the enrollment attrition that Lambert (1994b) describes, and ultimately increase students’ competence.

With this understanding of Title VI codification and some issues of funding and implementation, I now consider the application of Title VI funds to the creation of university-level programs for the study of South Asian languages, and those programs’ negotiation of funding policy with university and student needs.

University-level resources for South Asian Language studies

Of the 33 American universities that receive Title VI funding, 13 serve as South Asia National Resource Centers. Of these, I have chosen three to focus on: University of Texas at Austin (UT), University of Wisconsin-Madison (UWM), and University of Pennsylvania (Penn). These schools were selected based on their historical prominence in the field, comparable size, and varied program types. Each also houses innovative programs beyond traditional language and literature coursework: the Hindi-Urdu Flagship (HUF) at UT, the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI) at UWM, and the Lauder Institute at Penn.

Table 1 gives a brief description of each university's language programs based on their degrees, language requirements, course offerings, and in the case of non-traditional programs, length, offerings, and cost, accompanied by a brief discussion.

Comments on traditional language programs

While individual language and degree offerings differ across universities, commonalities among traditional language programs reveal patterns in Title VI implementation. For instance, not only is it possible for an undergraduate student to earn a BA in area studies without taking a single South Asian language course, but there is also an upper limit to the number of semesters of language study valid towards fulfilling a degree requirement. Functionally, department policy sets an upper limit to students' language development in their program. The notable exception is Penn's Undergraduate Language Certificate, which rewards advanced academic proficiency in the target language as demonstrated through the completion of special topics courses. Nonetheless, only UT explicitly states a proficiency requirement for graduation, and even then only for graduate students' literacy. These requirements represent a language-and-literature approach to language studies, and seem to be the antithesis of the more dynamic, communicative approach that the Department of Defense advocates.

The lack of explicit standards for proficiency evaluation causes additional complications for determining initial language placement and exemption, especially since many students have been exposed to South Asian languages outside a classroom setting.

Comments on HUF

The Hindi-Urdu Flagship at UT (HUF) is currently the only South Asian language program of its kind in the United States. It is part of a national network of Language Flagship centers and programs, which emerged from a partnership among federal departments, educational institutions, and businesses across the country. It encourages undergraduates to pursue advanced study in Hindi and Urdu, two critical needs languages, simultaneously, while also earning a degree in a possibly unrelated field. It differs from traditional language and area studies departments by requiring a full year of immersion as well as a senior capstone project, and also emphasizing communication and application over advanced reading ability. The cost of the program is completely covered by students'

Table 1: A Comparison of South Asian Language Programs

	UT	UW-M	Penn
Traditional Program			
Degrees offered	Asian Studies (BA / MA) Asian Cultures and Languages (BA / MA / PhD)	Asian Languages (BA) Asian Humanities (BA) Asian Languages and Cultures (MA) Civilizations and culture, Religions of Asia, Language and Literature (PhD)	South Asia Studies (BA / MA / PhD)
Language Requirements			
<i>BA non-language track</i>	None	None	No non-language track
<i>BA language track</i>	4 semesters of advanced topics in 1 language	4 semesters of 1 language	4 semesters of 1 language
<i>MA</i>	“demonstrated proficiency”	6 semesters of 1 language OR 4 semesters each of two.	Intermediate-High fluency in 1 language; minimum 2 years study
<i>PhD</i>	“advanced reading ability in at least one modern research language”	6 semesters of 1 language AND 4 semesters of 1 OR 2 semesters each of 2 additional	4 advanced topics courses in 1 language AND 2 intermediate classes in an additional language
Languages Offered	Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu	Hindi, Pashto, Sanskrit, Telugu, Tibetan, Urdu	Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Pashto, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Urdu
Additional Programs	n/a	Undergrad language certificate (7 courses, max. 2 language courses) Doctoral minor (4 courses, max. 2 language courses)	Undergrad language certificate (3 special topics courses in target language)

SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

	UT	UW-M	Penn
Special Institute	<i>Hindi-Urdu Flagship (HUF)</i>	<i>South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI)</i>	<i>Lauder Institute at Wharton School of Business</i>
Length	4 years	8 weeks	2 years
Funding	Title VI U.S. Dept. of Defense National Security Education Program	Title VI South Asia National Resource Centers	Title VI Center for International Business Education and research (CIBER)
Distinguishing Program Features	Focuses on <i>two</i> critical needs languages simultaneously Pursue language study with an outside major Stresses communication over academic literacy	Simulated immersion Provides 1 year of traditional language study in an 8-week intensive course	Supplements MA coursework Stresses business communication over academic literacy
Area Studies	Mandatory coursework, 1 year of international study, multidisciplinary capstone presented in target language	Includes cultural events, field trips, etc.	2 summers of international internships, 3 hrs / wk special topics discussions
Languages and Levels	Hindi, Urdu Beginning-advanced; special topics courses; mandatory tutoring	Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Pashto, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu, Tibetan, Urdu Beginning-intermediate	Hindi only Advanced
Cost	Cost included in undergraduate tuition and fees, additional scholarships available.	Tuition/ fees: \$4,600 Living: ~\$2,000 / mo Total: ~\$8,600	\$34,710 (in addition to Wharton MBA fees; total for 2 year program)

Table 1: A Comparison of South Asian Language Programs³

³ All three universities can offer additional language courses if there is sufficient student demand. Information from programs' websites: (<http://www.southasia.upenn.edu/>) (<http://hindiurduflagship.org/>) (<http://sasli.wisc.edu/>) (<http://www.southasia.wisc.edu/>) (<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/insts/southasia/>) (http://lauder.wharton.upenn.edu/pages/admissions/mba_ma_cost.php)

undergraduate tuition and fees, and the program also offers additional scholarships and grants for students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievements or financial need.

Comments on SASLI

Since its 2003 inauguration, budget cuts have forced the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI) at UWM to reduce the number and levels of languages it provides. The elimination of advanced coursework contradicts Title VI's explicit goal of establishing higher levels of language competency. While SASLI's website states the expectation that its students will pursue more advanced language study elsewhere (<http://sasli.wisc.edu>), its implementation reflects the tendency of U.S. foreign language programs to favor high enrollment at the beginning levels only to neglect to provide appropriate resources to attain functional fluency (Lambert, 1989, 1994a; Moore, 1994; Starr, 1994). Furthermore, courses and programs designed to help students attain more advanced proficiency are being cut across the board, limiting students' access even more.

Recently, SASLI has also been forced to increase its tuition and fees. The total estimated cost of the Summer 2012 program was \$8,600 for eight weeks of instruction, which is out of reach of most students without significant financial aid. By comparison, the American Institute of Indian Studies' 10-week immersion program in Jaipur, India costs roughly \$5,000 (\$2,500 tuition + \$1500 airfare + \$1000 living expenses: <http://www.indiastudies.org/language-programs/>).

Comments on Penn Lauder

The Lauder Institute at Wharton School of Business seeks to establish a "cultural and linguistic connection that allows you to build trust and to do business as an overlay on that foundation of trust and relationships and respect for the culture that you're dealing with" (knowledge@Wharton, n.p.). It is one of 33 CIBERs (Centers for International Business and Education Research) funded under Title VI of the Higher Education Act. Lauder's language courses are designed to expand intermediate-advanced and advanced students' communicative competencies on varied topics and in varied settings. In the classroom, students are encouraged to debate issues and negotiate business deals as realistically as possible, and they spend their summers abroad immersed in the language and culture of Indian business interactions. While this may be an ideal model for advanced proficiency development, Lauder's courses would not be sufficient to train new speakers of a language, nor are they intended to develop advanced literacy skills.

Discussion

Even though every program described above is funded under Title VI of the 1965 Higher Education Act, each is realized differently depending on how its respective host university interprets and implements national mandates. While the explicit objective of Title VI is to produce graduates with "international and foreign language expertise and knowledge" for the purpose of preserving "national security, stability, and economic vitality" (HEA, 1965, §601), the two

programs that receive the largest proportion of non-Title VI funding—HUF and the Lauder Institute—are also the two that most emphasize the development of sophisticated communication for real-world use. Contrary to their stated purpose, Title VI-funded programs provide far more resources for basic-level instruction and academic literacy than they do for developing communicative competence. Furthermore, program requirements for undergraduates and masters students measure achievement in terms of courses completed rather than competence attained. In fact, most degree programs have a cap on the number of language study hours that can be counted towards a degree or certificate, effectively discouraging students' continued language study. Penn's Language Certificate is unique among undergraduate distinctions in that it recognizes language fluency rather than merely course completion, but its admission requirement of intermediate proficiency makes it inaccessible to undergraduate students who have no previous exposure to South Asian languages.

Lambert (1989) classifies these and other factors that he claims contribute to the United States' subpar language standards as either structural or pedagogical. Structural discontinuities tend to be macroscopic and built into national and institutional language education policy, infrastructure, and implementation. Pedagogical discontinuities are more microscopic, operating at the classroom or the departmental level. The majority of issues in LCTL education are caused by structural inefficiencies rather than pedagogical inadequacy (Brecht & Ingold, 2002; Moore, 1994; Starr, 1994). According to Lambert (1994b), structural discontinuities can be categorized as *horizontal* or *vertical*. Horizontal discontinuities manifest among different programs within one level of what Ricento and Hornberger (1996) call the language policy onion. For instance, Lambert considers the Department of Defense and Department of State running distinct language programs a horizontal discontinuity and an inefficient allocation of federal resources. Vertical discontinuities, such as curricular gaps among levels of language courses at a single university, discourage students' long-term language study.

However, Lambert's binary distinction between horizontal and vertical discontinuities cannot account for discontinuities between levels of the policy onion, such as the national Title VI emphasis on developing communication skills not being realized at the departmental or classroom levels. Therefore, I propose a tertiary distinction among *horizontal*, *vertical*, and *longitudinal* discontinuities. Horizontal discontinuities conform to Lambert's definition: discontinuities between different programs at the same level of the policy onion (Lambert 1994a). I redefine vertical discontinuities to mean misalignments between different levels of the policy onion, and what Lambert calls vertical discontinuities, I call *longitudinal discontinuities*: structural problems that inhibit students' long-term language study or development of higher-order competencies. Such a reclassification is necessary to fully conceptualize the implications of the shortcomings of language cultivation policy.

I focus here on the realizations of horizontal, vertical, and longitudinal discontinuities at various levels of the policy onion.

Horizontal Discontinuities

According to Lambert (1994a), multiple initiatives have been established at various levels of the language policy onion to serve similar purposes. As a result,

he says, substantial monetary and human resources are diverted from student learning towards maintaining unnecessary bureaucracies and redeveloping pedagogical strategies and curricular materials (Lambert 1987, 1994a). In this section I consider horizontal discontinuities with respect to national program structure and interdepartmental communication.

Program Structure

At the national level, multiple federal departments support their own language institutes. The State Department maintains the Foreign Service Institute, the Department of Defense has the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, and the Department of Education funds domestic overseas language and resource centers in addition to public and private universities' language programs. Each develops its own curricular and pedagogical materials, independently trains its language instructors, and hires graduates from its own institutes. Unifying these multiple systems of instruction, or at least streamlining their language instruction component, might reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, enable the development of standards for pedagogy and assessment, and streamline funding. However, interdepartmental politics and slightly different pedagogical emphases render such unification unlikely (Calhoun, 2010). While the federal resources may be able to support such inefficiencies, when similar lapses occur at smaller levels of the policy onion, the repercussions are magnified.

Each university described in this paper houses at least two distinct language tracks. At UT, non-HUF students are not allowed to enroll in HUF language courses, nor are they given access to the tutors, international travel opportunities, or other resources that HUF students receive to further their language development. Similarly, non-Lauder Penn students are not permitted to enroll in the Lauder language courses, even if their mutual goal is developing communicative competencies rather than academic literacies. Therefore, separate departments within a single institution are forced to independently develop extraordinarily similar programs to meet similar student demands.

Resource Dissemination

Lambert (1994a) observed in the mid-1990s that language programs often developed their own curricula and pedagogical resources independently. Because materials could not be efficiently disseminated across universities or sometimes even within departments, every teacher reinvented the wheel, patching together pieces of dated books to provide students with adequate readings and exercises. Today, these difficulties are being somewhat resolved by the contributions of various institutes (e.g., HUF, COERLL, Penn's South Asia Center) to a growing corpus of web-based open-source resources, including interviews, videos, dictionaries, readings, etc. In fact, a tech-savvy instructor could likely design a course without ever using a traditional textbook. Therefore, departments should encourage students and instructors alike to develop the skills necessary to access and utilize the wealth of information at their fingertips.

Vertical Discontinuities

While horizontal discontinuities exist within the same institutional level, vertical discontinuities exist between different institutional levels and generally manifest as gaps between policy codification and implementation.

Title VI was born in a Cold War scramble to provide language and area competence to supplement the resources for the overtaxed military forces in a national security crisis. At the time, the need for language competency was clearly defined: to maintain security and contribute to the war effort. Students hailing from military schools and academia alike were, in theory, being equipped with the tools necessary to fill this need. Today, while government agencies do have a clear, defined demand, Title VI programs are not successfully “creating a national capacity to meet those needs” (Moore & Morfit, 1993, p. v). Lambert (1999) considers knowledge of how languages function in their sociocultural contexts and a sense of human identification central to development of such a capacity. Nonetheless, the federal focus seems to be on language exclusively; however, with the exception of agency-specific institutes (e.g., FSI), few graduates of prominent language institutions actually utilize their language skills in their future employment (Lambert, 1990a). This suggests that programs are not meeting employment needs, that the need is not as dire as we have been led to believe, that students are not taught to adequately market their skills, or that there is some other disconnect between language education programs and the fields in which skills are used.

At the university level, coordinators and professors at Penn and UT have told me that despite the importance of delivering engaging, multimodal lessons that stress communication skills, classroom policy continues to emphasize the development of academic literacies over communicative competencies. Valdés (2001), Starr (1994), Lambert (1999), and Gambhir (2008), among others, have discussed similar discontinuities among national, university, and classroom policy. If “the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practice than its management” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 222), then the real policy in the United States contradicts the explicit values of Title VI.

Longitudinal Discontinuities

Horizontal and vertical discontinuities are ultimately realized as longitudinal discontinuities: structural problems that inhibit students’ long-term language study or development of higher-order competencies. Here, I will consider K-12 structural discontinuities and then analyze tertiary-level discontinuities in terms of language requirements, the attrition rate and its contributing factors, and a paucity of resources.

K-12 Structural Discontinuities

The structure of U.S. language education inhibits the maintenance of language skills across educational levels (Lambert, 1994a). The current system eradicates bilingual children’s non-English language so efficiently that within three generations immigrants’ descendants will be monolingual English speakers (Spolsky, 2011).

Furthermore, it provides inadequate resources for even the most dedicated students to attain higher order fluencies without exchange or international study.

At the elementary level, little to no foreign language programming exists. Bilingual students or speakers of languages other than English quickly learn to prefer English because their home language is treated as a means of transitioning into mainstream English-only education, a practice that quashes their existing multilingual competencies (Menken, 2008; Menken & García, 2010; Spolsky, 2011). This English-only trend continues in middle school, where languages are merely electives, if they are offered at all (Spolsky, 2011). At the high school level, most schools require one or two years of language study, but offerings are overwhelmingly Spanish or other Western European languages (Spolsky, 2011). Before university study, most South Asian language exposure takes place through relatively informal community-run initiatives (Gambhir, 2008), and even these programs are rare, in part due to the structural dominance of English (Valdés, 2001). Thus, students interested in studying or maintaining South Asian languages have limited access to resources before reaching university, despite these languages' supposed significance to government agencies.

According to Valdés (2001), language teaching requires considerable and repeated reinforcement. Once students enter grade school, their home language education is often abandoned as their formal schooling is conducted almost entirely in English (Starr, 1994). Furthermore, since there are no Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or SAT Subject Tests for South Asian languages, unlike for more commonly taught non-European languages like Chinese and Arabic, students are implicitly discouraged from enrolling in these courses despite their critical need. Similarly, because many schools weight grade point averages (GPAs) by the level of the classes in which students enroll, students who choose to take this non-honors coursework may not earn GPAs as high as their peers. Testing creates *de facto* language and education policy that privileges some languages, in this case colonial and commonly taught critical needs languages, and devalues others (Menken, 2008; Shohamy, 2003).

Higher Education Discontinuities

At the university level, Title VI provides South Asian students the opportunity to reconnect with their heritage language identity. Introductory and intermediate South Asian language classes are dominated by heritage students whose motivations range from a desire to fulfill a language requirement to aspirations of graduate study in the subcontinent (Gambhir, 2008). However, many students are unable to break through the ceiling that provides access to higher-level skills, even if they are allowed to enroll in advanced coursework. This limitation may be caused by inadequate language requirements to earn course degrees, limited course offerings, an insufficient number of hours devoted to language study, and a lack of continuity between degree programs.

As previously demonstrated, undergraduate language requirements tend to emphasize the development of intermediate, not advanced, competencies. BA students need only four semesters of a single language to graduate. Furthermore, since some schools place a limit on the number of language courses that can be used to fulfill a credit requirement, the programs structurally oppose development

of the very competencies they profess to build. The requirements of graduate students are marginally better: MA students are generally required to be proficient in one language, and doctoral students to be proficient in one and have a working knowledge of another.

However, requirements and functional fluency may not be the sole criteria by which language tracks ought to be evaluated. If heritage learners' goal in introductory classes is to reconnect with an imagined diasporic community, then perhaps a language course should focus on providing some knowledge about South Asia or metalinguistic awareness of how the language works rather than functional competence. An additional perspective may be that the purpose of university language study is to give students the necessary foundation to benefit from full immersion. Nonetheless, the discourse of fluency for communication and security permeates department websites and mission statements without surviving to classroom-level implementation.

Student motivation, particularly for graduate students and upper-division undergraduates, also plays a prominent role. A doctoral student in Mughal history will require a very different skill set than will a masters student in anthropology, a medical student, or a future businessperson. Ideally, courses would be tailored to each individual student, especially since initial enrollment is so low. Lambert (1993) suggests that departmental politics and a traditional interest in area studies may push students toward historical studies or drain their interest in language study. He suggests that shifting the focus from academic literacy to authentic speaking and listening might more successfully maintain student interest and enrollment.

Reconsidering For Whom

Discourse about South Asian language study thus far has been focused on streamlining educational systems, but policy makers must also bear in mind that student demographics today are not the same as they were a generation ago. In Cooper's (1989) model of "who plans what for whom how" (p. 31), the "for whom" is changing. Gambhir (2008), among others, suggests that the profiles and needs of learners of South Asian languages are changing. Students' goals for language education may not be academic literacy so much as humanistic rewards (Cooper, 1989) or communication skills (Gambhir, 2008). That these students' prior experiences and roots should be accounted for in the classroom is incontrovertible. The question is how (Peyton, Ranard & McGinnis, 2001).

Conclusion

The inadequacy of U.S. language education systems has been emphasized and reemphasized at least since the mid-1960s, shortly after the initial implementation of Title VI (Lambert, 1993; Merks, 2010). Many of the same issues discussed in this paper have been presented periodically in evaluations over the last 50 years (see Brown, 1961; Gambhir, 2008; Lambert 1987, 1989, 1990b, 1994a, 1994b). Since then, dozens of solutions to U.S. foreign language problems have been posed. Lambert (1994b) states that the foremost issue is that the United States, almost alone among Western nations, offers basic level foreign language instruction at the university level. In lieu of a national overhaul of current language infrastructure, Lambert enumerates

the following university and department-level solutions in order of priority of institutional planning: (1) faculty development; (2) curricular development; (3) academically-oriented research programs; (4) expanding language choice; (5) student assistance, particularly for graduate students; (6) technological upgrading.

Such considerations encompass both pedagogy and planning. What is to be taught and how it is to be taught is left in the hands of instructors, while the department and institution remain responsible for providing the resources necessary to effectively implement lessons. Lambert (1994b) argues that planners should be concerned not with pedagogy in and of itself, but rather with structural problems that negatively affect the quality of instruction. Nevertheless, the two issues are not completely independent. While the focus of this paper has been primarily structural, pedagogical perspectives can consider and compensate for structural shortcomings. For instance, responsive pedagogy that caters to student demand and develops students' existing competencies may reduce the attrition rate, which in turn will increase upper-level class sizes more efficiently than increasing initial enrollment (Lambert, 1994b). Similarly, encouraging conversational use of language rather than focusing on traditional texts would appeal to heritage language learners, who constitute a majority of beginning and intermediate level students (Gambhir, 2008). This approach would provide a higher motivation for language maintenance than consistently teaching heritage learners that the colloquial language they learned growing up is categorically wrong.

However, despite inefficiencies in pedagogical implementation and funding allocation (Brecht & Rivers, 2000), the counterfactual must always be considered (Grin, 2006). Without Title VI funding for the last 55 years, LCTL education in general and South Asian language education in particular would likely be as impoverished as it was during and before World War II. While Title VI programs may not completely satisfy federal departments' demand for people with the ability to effectively cross between languages and cultures, they do provide students with background and skills they could not otherwise develop.

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Geeta Aneja is a second-year doctoral student in Educational Linguistics at University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Her research interests include South Asian language education in the United States, construction of classroom language ecologies, and pedagogical methods.

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